6 Adapting the Swedish model

PSOE-SAP relations during the Spanish transition to democracy

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Introduction

This chapter analyses how the Spanish Socialist Worker's Party (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español* – PSOE) understood and used the concept 'the Swedish model' rhetorically during the Spanish transition to democracy in the mid-1970s. Furthermore, it aims to shed light on the bilateral relations between PSOE and the Swedish Social Democrat Party (*Sveriges Socialdemokratiska Arbetareparti* – SAP) during these years, providing an account of the exchange of ideas and experiences between SAP and PSOE. Thus, this chapter deals with the circulation and meaning of the Swedish model from a hitherto unexplored perspective – that of Spanish party politics.

Our focus on the relations between these two parties is justified by the state of the art. In the context of what has been called the crises in Southern Europe (Varsori, 2009), the European social democrats provided great support to PSOE during the Spanish transition to democracy. The German Social Democrat Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* – SPD) and the French Socialist Party (*Parti Socialiste Français* – PSF) in particular influenced PSOE (Ortuño, 2005; Muñoz, 2012; Granadino, 2016; Kassem, 2016; Salm, 2016). These parties represented two competing trends within the Socialist International (SI) in terms of foreign and economic policy, and they disagreed on the issue of the relations between socialists and communists in Western Europe. Notwithstanding all the above, it is still a common assumption in Spanish literature that one of the main sources of international inspiration for PSOE during these years was the Swedish/Nordic model (Mateos, 2016).

Focusing on the relations between PSOE and SAP will shed light on this puzzle. Choosing SAP, and no other Nordic social democrat party, as the representative of and catalyst for the Swedish model responds to three factors. First, the literature suggests that the Swedes were more deeply involved in the democratization processes in Southern Europe than any other Nordic social democrats. Second, at the time the Swedish social democrats were the main representatives of a Nordic model of social democracy – 'the Swedish

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model'. Third, the high international profile of the Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme, and his public criticism of Franco's dictatorship in Spain, suggests that SAP's relations with PSOE might have been especially significant.

Our main argument is that PSOE was interested in the political and ideological line of the Swedish social democrats, especially between 1976 and 1979. The leaders of the Spanish party emphasized the ideological affinity between PSOE and SAP and used the concept of the Swedish model to facilitate the ideological transition of the party from Marxism to social democracy in a context in which the latter term had been discredited among the Spanish left. Furthermore, this paper supports the argument that SAP tried to actively help the radicalized PSOE of the early 1970s towards a social democratic path. The Swedes provided the Spanish with economic, technical, educational, and moral support. In this process, SAP was influenced by the Iberian context and by the internal debates of the Spanish socialists. SAP re-conceptualized and re-branded their party and their model as part of an effective policy transfer to enhance Swedish soft power in Spain. As a result, SAP and the Swedish model were facilitators of the ideological moderation of PSOE.

Finally, we argue that the Swedish model, as understood by PSOE, changed during these years of rapid political transformations. Initially the Spanish socialists overlooked it; then, it went from being a model of social democracy that could lead to the radical transformation of the economy and society, to being a model of feasible international neutralism. These changes were connected to the image of SAP's leader Olof Palme, to the active support of SAP for PSOE, and to the rapidly changing political needs of PSOE in the context of Spanish transition.

This chapter is based on primary sources, mainly from the historical archives of PSOE and SAP, and on published sources. Its interpretative framework is based on the theories of cultural transfers and policy transfers. The former is understood as a process in which the national contexts of donors and receivers do not exist independently of one another before and during the transfers, and as a process in which there is active selection and appropriation on the receiving end (Bourdieu, 2002; Nygård and Strang, 2016). Furthermore, cultural transfers and reception processes are conceived here as a sequence of a broader and longer circulation process (Keim, 2014). In this sense, this paper offers a case study that constitutes a particular instance of the circulation of 'the Swedish model' during the Cold War. Policy transfer refers to the travel of country-specific policy models and best practices. Classical policy transfer theory has evolved around the parity of government-to-government transfers (Rom-Jensen, 2017: 33). In this case, we focus on two parties with very different positions in their respective countries at the time. However, this case represents a typical moment of projected rupture and urge for change stemming from dissatisfaction with a current policy, which is one criterion for policy transfer (Rose, 2005: 1). The dynamics of policy transfer become that of a lesson drawn from abroad being

used in domestic politics as proposals for new policy. Possible pre-existing policy traditions and path dependencies are thus combated not just with the policies themselves but also by selling a more comprehensive foreign image, in this case, the Swedish version of the Nordic Welfare State. This image leaned on established images of a progressive Scandinavia or Nordic region (Stadius, 2010). This broader image tradition, we argue, is also part of the argument and persuasive power offered by Sweden as a model. As Byron Rom-Jensen has showed in the case of policy transfers related to the United States, a general trend of Americanization supported US policy advancements internationally (Rom-Jensen, 2017: 36). The Nordic-Swedish case is far more modest but still carries a similar quality of attraction as a model.

Spain in the 1970s and the concept of 'the Swedish model'

At the beginning of the 1970s, everyone in Spain assumed that Franco's dictatorship could not continue unchanged after the death of the dictator (Preston, 2004). Franco had envisaged the continuation of his regime in the shape of a Monarchy. Although he had not foreseen the democratization of Spain, most of the political families[1] that composed the regime acknowledged that the country should evolve politically. However, when it came to possible democracy, there was an issue that concerned the regime. Surveys on Spaniards' political preferences showed that the majority of those who had political interests were in favour of socialism and/or social democracy[2] (Gillespie, 1989).

Political parties had been banned in Spain since 1939. However, at the beginning of the 1970s, the main party in the clandestine opposition in terms of members and activities was the communist party (*Partido Comunista de España* – PCE), which in the 1970s adopted the Euro-communist ideological line. Moreover, there were several socialist parties acting clandestinely. All these parties shared two ideological characteristics: anti-capitalism and the aim of 'democratic rupture', meaning the rejection of any kind of reformist alternative proposed by the regime after Franco's death.

PSOE was one of these parties. It was the oldest political party in Spain, and it carried weight in the historical memory of the people for the role it played during the Second Republic (1931–1939). However, after more than 30 years in exile, it was practically inoperative. In 1972, some members sought to rejuvenate the party. The organizational and ideological renovation split the party in two: PSOE renovado and PSOE *histórico*. In January 1974, the SI recognized the PSOE *renovado* (hereafter PSOE) as the only representative of Spanish socialism (Ortuño, 2005). From then on, PSOE tried to promote a new identity aimed at regaining its hegemony within the left-wing Spanish opposition (Guidoni and González, 1976: 40). It was built in opposition to both Soviet communism and West European social democracy. The latter was discredited among the Spanish left for having allowed Franco's regime to survive, for being too friendly with the United States (US) and for having become the managers of capitalism. PSOE's renewed

ideological line was sanctioned by the 13th Congress of the party in exile (Suresnes, October 1974), at which a new executive committee led by Felipe González was elected.

In this frame, the concept of 'the Swedish model' started to be used in Spain. Analysis of the main Spanish newspapers – *La Vanguardia Española* and *ABC* – suggests that the Swedish model was introduced to Spain in an echo of the discussions in Great Britain and France at that time.[3] Certainly, the concept became better known to the Spanish public from February 1971 onwards, after *ABC* published a translation of an interview with Olof Palme, entitled *El Modelo Sueco*. Palme described the main characteristics of Sweden's social system and policy of neutrality to conclude that 'Sweden does not offer a model, but a method' (Los Domingos de ABC (Madrid), 1971: 7–11).[4] In September 1973, *ABC* paved the way for the emergence of a genuine Spanish discussion on the Swedish model, publishing a column called again '*El Modelo Sueco*'. In these and other similar articles, the Spanish conservative media would assign certain values and meanings to the Swedish model before the transition to democracy. Thus, they anticipated and conditioned the appropriation of this concept by the Spanish left.

The Spanish media presented this model positively, implying that it could represent an example for post-Franco Spain. The reason was that Sweden, 'under the Swedish crown', had been living in harmony for decades. This was not only due to the stabilizing effect of the monarchy (Gómez-Salvago, 1975: 23) but also because the political left had managed the economy of the country 'always in a pacific and exemplary dialogue' with the opposition. Swedish democracy[5] was considered as the 'plus ultra' example among the western democracies, the Swedish secret being 'tolerance' (ABC, 1973: 26).

The Swedish model could be considered an example for the future of Spain, in which the socialists would probably have to play an important role, for one more reason. It was a system created by the left that had not led to socialism. It was an example precisely because the Swedish social democrats did not socialize the means of production and under their system private initiative had flourished (La Vanguardia Española, 1976: 21).[6]

Thus, in the early 1970s, the interest of the Spanish conservatives in the Swedish model functioned as a prescription for the socialists in the future democratic system. In a context of a banned and radicalized leftist opposition in Spain, the Swedish model illustrated to these parties what would be the acceptable limits of behaviour in a democracy. This, in turn, limited the potential attractiveness of the Swedish model for the Spanish leftist opposition in the early 1970s.

Initial SAP contacts and strategies when PSOE abandoned clandestine status

After the SI recognized the renovated PSOE in 1974, the main social democrat parties of northern Europe did not increase their contacts with the Spanish. They considered the new leaders of PSOE to be too young,

inexperienced, radical, and willing to ally with the communists. For Swedish diplomats, it was 'astonishing' that the Marxist character of PSOE was accentuated during the Suresnes Congress in October 1974.[7] At that time, the main international partner of PSOE was the PSF, which also experienced a leftwards shift at the beginning of the 1970s. The PSF tried to promote a trend called southern European socialism in the Iberian Peninsula, based on the ideas of building socialism in democracy, the implementation of self-management (*autogestion*) in every field of social life, and the programmatic union between socialists and communists (Granadino, 2019).

The passive attitude of European social democrats towards PSOE changed at the beginning of 1975 when the Portuguese communists strengthened their hand in the Carnation Revolution. The logic behind this change was that supporting PSOE would help it to become a moderate social democrat party that could regain its former dominant status in the Spanish Left (Muñoz, 2012: 184). Thus, PSOE could counterbalance the communist influence on the Spanish working class. Furthermore, this would prevent PSOE from importing the model of the French union of the left.

In the wake of the political developments in Southern Europe, SAP felt the urge to strategically downplay the communists both in Spain and in Sweden. In the post-May '68 context, the international economic crisis showed the limits of the ability of social democracy to transform society. SAP had to face strong criticism from the social democrat left, notably the youth organization and trade union leaders. Furthermore, the renewed Swedish communist party (*Vänsterpartiet Kommunisterna* – VPK) rejected the Soviet model and adopted a more attractive Euro-communist line that could threaten the hegemony of SAP among the Swedish left. For SAP, taking the lead in the solidarity activities with the Spanish opposition was a moral duty as well as a way of restraining the potential influence of Euro-communism.

SAP became interested in PSOE as a party that could be helped towards a social democratic path. The Swedes considered the strong position of the PCE in comparison with PSOE to be a potential problem after Franco's death. The estimation at the SAP-dominated Swedish Ministry of Foreign affairs was that

> [The] socialist Party, which probably has fairly strong support among the Spanish population for historical reasons, suffers from the lack of a strong organization. Difficulties in this matter will also continue to haunt the party later in the event of a freer post-Francoist era.[8]

Thus, SAP intensified its relations with the Spanish socialists. Felipe González visited a regional SAP Congress in Malmö in March and met Olof Palme, a meeting that helped the Swedish Prime Minister 'to understand the Spanish reality much better'.[9] Some weeks later, a high-level delegation of the Swedish party visited Spain. Officially, this was 'to strengthen the links

between Spanish and Swedish socialists' although according to the Spanish newspapers, the specific reason of the visit was to both provide economic support to PSOE and initiate a strategic cooperation supporting the construction of a viable party and union structure, which PSOE lacked (Pueblo, 1975).

SAP prepared its strategy to gather support for PSOE among its grassroot organization, the leading social democratic labour union *Landsorganisationen* (LO), and the Swedish people at large. There were solid grounds for activating the grassroot levels of SAP. Spain was a well-known tourist destination, and the dictatorship had been a hot topic and moral question among a larger Swedish public since the late 1960s. In Vilgot Sjöman's famous new left generation fiction documentary *Jag är nyfiken, gul* (*I am Curious (Yellow)*) from 1967, the main character, Lena Nyman, stops people in the street asking if Spain should be boycotted as a tourist destination; her father had been fighting in the Republican Forces in the Spanish Civil War. Spain was one of the more important stages for Palme's active and high-profile foreign policy. And there were also veterans, or relatives of veterans of the International Brigades, who could easily be mobilized to support the Spanish left at the prospect of a major political change. It was in SAP's strategic interest to monopolize this heritage, originally firmly rooted in anarcho-syndicalist groups (Lundvik, 1980), for the new cooperation with PSOE.

At the same time, the Swedish government had to be careful not to violate the Helsinki Declaration of 1975, which stipulated the rule of ideological non-intervention between the signatory states. In this light, financial support to PSOE became a sensitive issue. In fact, during the above-mentioned visit to Spain, SAP's international secretary Pierre Schori 'strongly denied any rumours in the press of economic aid'.[10] Notwithstanding this statement, clandestine economic support was key at the time. According to Swedish diplomatic sources, PSOE received 60,000 Swedish crowns (an estimated 840,000 pesetas) when González visited Sweden in March 1975.[11] Moreover, in January, SAP's treasurer, Nils-Gösta Damberg, and Bernt Carlsson had planned to meet with representatives of PSOE in Brussels, Paris, and Toulouse to discuss PSOE's needs of financial contributions.[12]

In April 1975, the vice mayor of Stockholm, John Olof Persson, asked Rolf Theorin, organizational secretary and member of the SAP board, to act strategically concerning the upcoming 40-year anniversary in July 1976 of the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War and to monopolize the heritage of the Swedish volunteers in the International Brigades for the current strategic causes of SAP. Persson urged Theorin, who was nicknamed the 'Fellini of SAP', to find old war posters and reprint them as postcards to be sold during the anniversary celebrations in Sweden. The idea was clearly to mobilize the memory of the Civil War towards SAP-driven, both ideological and financial, support for PSOE.[13] As Persson put it in a letter addressed to

Theorin, 'if we don't take the initiative now, the communists will make the cause of Spain their own'.[14]

In September 1975, PSOE's international secretary, Pablo Castellano, was present at SAP's Congress, where he had a private talk with Palme.[15] After that, SAP initiated a campaign 'For the freedom of Spain' (*För Spaniens frihet*) in Sweden. The slogan was a conscious re-connection with the solidarity for Spain expressed internationally during the Civil War. Starting in October 1975, circular letters were sent to local party and labour union organizations, urging them to collect money. In the first days, 400,000 SEK was collected, and after that, the party received between 10,000 and 25,000 SEK on a daily basis, which was channelled clandestinely to PSOE.[16] At the same time, the SI created the Spanish Solidarity Fund to support democracy in Spain. The Bureau asked the member parties to provide urgent and generous financial and material aid to PSOE (Ortuño, 2005: 39–40). On November 20, the day of Franco's death, the SAP donated 75,000 SEK through this fund.[17]

The Swedish Social Democratic Youth League (SSU) became especially active in promoting democratic change in Spain. In a letter to the local clubs, dated 3 March 1976, members were urged to support the Spanish democracy against fascism economically:

> The decisive battle for democracy has to be fought by the Spaniards themselves. However, we in Sweden can also help in this battle through solidary acts of support. That is the reason why the Spanish social democracy pleads for support from Sweden.[18]

The wording here is interesting since the members of the SSU are asked to support 'Spanish social democracy'. There are apparently two different narrative standards: one for the south and one for the north. When Palme spoke at the PSOE party congress on 5 December 1976, he called it a 'congress of the democratic and socialist alternative'.[19] Before Spanish audiences and in communications with PSOE, he tended to use the term democratic socialism instead of social democracy for both the Spanish and his own party. This shows deliberate re-conceptualization.

The challenge for SAP was both factual and conceptual: how should social democracy be re-conceptualized for a southern European audience? In the dossier, the leftist non-communist groups (basically only PSOE) are described under the label 'democratic socialism'.[20] This concept had been used by Palme on some occasions and stemmed from the Minister of Finance during the 1930s and 1940s, Ernst Wigforss (Berggren, 2010: 422). It now came in handy in promoting northern European social democracy, widely unpopular among the radicalized Spanish left. This concept would be used during the following years to re-brand Swedish social democracy in Spain and Mediterranean Europe at large.

The Spanish left embraces the Swedish model

After the establishment of closer relations and cooperation with SAP and other European social democrats in the spring of 1975, PSOE's leaders understood that these parties expected them to temper their ideological stance (Muñoz, 2012). While the support of SAP and other parties of the SI for PSOE fomented political moderation, it simultaneously augmented criticism against PSOE from the rest of the opposition for being a moderate and social democrat. This in turn increased the need to radicalize the PSOE's public discourse, which led them to criticize European social democrats for being puppets of the capitalist US. However, in this narrative PSOE separated the Scandinavians[21] from the rest of the social democrats. The reason for this was that the Nordics were not marionettes of the United States, demonstrated by the fact that they 'kept an active neutrality' in the international arena (El socialista, 1975: 11).

In this frame, it is our argument that the leaders of PSOE used the concept of the Swedish model – considered equivalent to Swedish social democracy – to facilitate the ideological shift of the party from anti-capitalist socialism to social democracy between 1976 and 1979. But before that could happen, the meaning of this concept had to change in Spain.

This occurred in the second half of 1975. Between August and September, the Spanish regime condemned to death and executed several members of the opposition. Before the executions, Palme and the Swedish Minister of Finance, Gunnar Sträng, took to the streets of Stockholm to demonstrate against the sentences, and they raised funds for the Spanish democratic opposition using the above-mentioned slogan *För Spaniens Frihet* (Figure 6.1). Furthermore, at the annual SAP party congress the day after the executions, Palme used harsh language against Franco's regime, calling its members 'satanic murderers'.[22]

The reaction of the Spanish conservative newspapers to the Swedish leaders' initiative was furious (ABC (Madrid), 1975a: 79). Palme's attempts to damage the Spanish image and to 'fund the Spanish opposition with the aim of overthrowing the Spanish regime' (Blanco y Negro (Madrid), 1975: 29) made him a public enemy of official Spain. The media started a smear campaign against him that also modified the image of the Swedish model in Spain (ABC (Madrid), 1975b: 21). Palme's actions coincided with the Swedish debate on the implementation of the Meidner Plan and the introduction of economic and industrial democracy in Sweden, which allegedly would lead the country to socialism. This allowed the Spanish conservative media to connect the deteriorating image of Palme to an emerging hostility towards the Swedish model.

When the social democrats lost control of government in the Swedish elections of 1976, *ABC*, echoing the arguments of Anglo-Saxon critics of Sweden,[23] only highlighted the dark sides of the Swedish model.

Figure 6.1 Olof Palme did not hesitate to take the streets to show his solidarity for 'Spain's freedom'. The public is urged to support the solidarity action of the Swedish labour movement. © Keystone Press/Alamy Stock Photo

> Suddenly, the Swedes realized that they were dominated by an implacable bureaucracy obsessed with the equalitarian ideal. [They] have arrived at the hypertrophy of civility; children are educated in the excellence of being normal, conformism has become the State religion, any kind of initiative is discouraged … To summarize, Sweden instead of resembling a happy Arcadia, reminds one of the slightly inhuman images of an Orwellian universe: a record of criminality and suicides, auto-exile of artists and ambitious youngsters; the kingdom of boredom.
>
> (Alferez, 1976: 44)

This change of the image and values attached to the Swedish model rendered it interesting to the Spanish left, who also found a friend in Palme, now a persona non-grata for official Spain. The bilateral relations established between PSOE and SAP were also relevant for the Spanish socialists' change of attitude towards the Swedish model, as we will see below.

At the same time as *ABC* criticized Palme, the progressive journal for Spanish emigrants in Europe, *Exprés español*, published a graphic report on the demonstrations in different European cities against the executions carried out by the Spanish regime. On the front page of the journal was a large

photograph of Palme holding a cash box. The accompanying text presented Palme as '… a man who, for sympathy with the Spanish people, repudiates Franco's regime'.[24]

The Spanish progressives continued to be interested in the Swedish Prime Minister in the following months. In May 1976, after the death of Franco, the left-leaning journal *Cambio16* published an interview with Palme, the first that he ever gave a Spanish newspaper or journal. In the introduction, he was described as the opposite of the Spanish regime leaders. 'He drives his own car, goes to the supermarket, pays his traffic fines … and, where necessary, he demonstrates in the streets against issues such as … the Spanish executions of last September'. This reinforced the positive image of Palme and of Sweden for the Spanish progressives. He was presented as the leader of an equalitarian country, where the Prime Minister was just like everyone else, in dramatic contrast with Spain.

One of the issues that the interview touched upon was Palme's understanding of the Swedish model. He explained:

> there is not a Swedish model to be exported. However, it is notable that there is international interest in our politics. … In the last decades [this interest] has been especially centered on our social policy. That same policy that has put us in the top line when it comes to welfare and standard of living.

Furthermore, Palme subtly directed the attention of the interviewer to a new, exemplary aspect of their policy. 'In the last year, we have noticed a new interest abroad in our economic policy'. He went on to say, 'the OECD presents us as a model' of how to deal successfully with the international crisis through the regulation of demand. He finished his reflection on the Swedish model with a summary that sounds like a prescription; 'to summarize, our experience demonstrates the tight relation existing between social improvements and economic development. Actually, they condition each other mutually'.

This model not only provided the highest living standards in the world and equality thanks to the management of the capitalist economy but also resonated positively with PSOE's ideology. Implying that the Swedish model was the model of SAP, Palme said:

> As a party, we believe in democratic socialism as an alternative to the two dominant systems … Neither capitalism nor communism represents today the dream of freedom of the European peoples … For us, democratic socialism is the [ideology] that develops that dream of freedom. It is a movement that emerges from the will of freedom and the commitment of the people.
>
> (Cambio16, 1976: 42–45)

At a moment when PSOE was dreaming of freedom and defining its own identity, the use of words such as freedom, and democratic socialism instead of social democracy, was probably not innocent. As pointed out above, Palme may have decided to avoid the term social democracy to sound more appealing to the Spanish leftist audience.

While the Spanish perception of the Swedish model was being transformed, Palme visited Spain in December 1976 for PSOE's 27th Congress, the first that the socialists had held in Spain since 1932. At this Congress, PSOE approved a clearly anti-capitalist line, committing itself to a socialism characterized by the combination of economic planning and *autogestión* (worker self-management) and officially defined itself as Marxist. In terms of foreign policy, the party confirmed its opposition to Spain joining NATO. Moreover, PSOE's previous executive committee was re-elected.

PSOE radicalized its ideological line precisely when the party was introduced to Spanish public opinion and when the clarification of the situation of the Spanish left – the union of the different socialist groups and the balance of forces between socialists and communists – was at stake. This radicalization unsettled its international partners. The main study of the relations between PSOE and SPD argues that the German social democrats felt uneasy with the rhetoric employed by PSOE. However, they were satisfied with the re-election of the executive committee because it was considered a guarantee that the party would become more moderate in the future (Muñoz, 2012: 354–355).

PSOE's leaders were under pressure from two fronts. On the one hand, a radical rank and file and a tough competition with PCE and other socialist parties pushed them towards the left. On the other hand, the Spanish regime, and the persuasion of the European social democrats, pressed them to accelerate the process of ideological moderation. Other factors, national as well as international, made PSOE's ideological clarification complicated. Nationally, an important part of the Spanish electorate was favourable to voting socialist or social democrat. However, in Spain, these trends were considered different from each other, and PSOE needed to overcome the disorientation of the electorate.[25] Internationally, the US government was supervising the Spanish transition. They supported the political reform of the regime, which implicitly set limits to the left (Lemus, 2011). Thus, PSOE needed to be firmly placed on the left but not be excessively radical, while attracting voters who identified with socialism and social democracy, seen as different concepts in Spain.

At the Congress, Palme delivered a speech in which he reconceptualised his understanding of social democracy for the Spanish audience and tried to reconcile the two trends of socialism coexisting within the SI – southern European socialism and social democracy. According to him, social democracy was '… a bit more than some formal liberties. We have considered it as a way to fulfil the will of men, to carry out social improvements, to transform society, to impregnate with democracy all the spheres of social life'.[26]

After the Congress, members of PSOE asked Palme about his opinion on the different tendencies coexisting within the SI. He answered,

> regarding the issue of the so-called 'socialism of the north' and 'socialism of the south' that would be represented [on the one hand] by the line of Olof Palme and Willy Brandt, by the Nordic parties, and [on the other hand] by François Mitterrand and the southern parties, … that exact difference does not exist … The fundamental ideas of socialism are the same, the methods of social change are also the same…. There are distinctive features, it is true, … but there are no essential differences between the Nordic socialist parties and the French or Spanish socialist parties.[27]

Thus, Palme eased the task of the leaders of PSOE in overcoming the dichotomy between socialism and social democracy within the party and in Spain. Overall, his definition of social democracy was compatible with democratic socialism and *autogestión* as it was understood by the Spanish party. The leaders of PSOE took on Palme's idea, and in the months before and after the democratic elections in Spain (held in June 1977), they attempted to minimize the differences between socialism and social democracy, specifically connecting the latter with Sweden. Swedish social democracy was a good example to blur the difference between these ideological tendencies without giving up socialism because, according to González, '[The Swedish social democrats] want to make radical transformations of the social and economic structure'.[28]

The internal debate on the identity of PSOE did not end after the Congress. Although the party declared itself Marxist, the social democratic tendency within its leadership started to claim PSOE's right to use the social democrat label (Múgica, 1977: 3; Turrión, 1977: 3). This provoked internal criticism (Andrade, 2012). The leadership of PSOE tried to contain the critics by blurring the very conceptual difference between socialism and social democracy that they had emphasized in the past. This became evident in González's first appearance on Spanish TV in April 1977. He stated that the differences between these ideologies were not that great because 'neither socialists nor true social democrats renounce the final aim of socialism: the disappearance of social classes' (El socialista, 1977a: 1). Bernt Carlsson, the general secretary of the SI and a member of SAP, intervened in the debate as well. In an interview with *El socialista*, he contributed to blurring the difference between the terms socialist and social democrat: 'I am socialist and social democrat. You cannot forget that the first person who used the term "social democrat" was Karl Marx … The name is not important, [what is important is] the programme'. (1977b: 9)

In this context of internal discussion on the identity of the party, an article appeared in PSOE's official newspaper that analysed Palme's vision of social democracy and the Swedish model. The article was based on a

recent Spanish translation of Serge Richard's book *Le rendez-vous suedois*. According to Palme, the Swedish model was the deepening of democracy in its political, economic, and social dimensions. In the article, the Swedish model looked very similar to the idea of *autogestión* that PSOE advocated. The Swedish experience was called 'socialism with a human face' and summarized as a 'non-violent way towards socialism through responsible reform'. (Rico Lara, 1977: 17)

Five days after the publication of the article, June 15, 1977, democratic elections were held in Spain. In the set of arguments that PSOE circulated among its members before the elections, the party recognized that it wanted to capitalize on the goodwill enjoyed by the European socialists, specifically that of the Swedes and Germans.[29] Scholars have shown that the European social democrats, especially the SPD, supported PSOE during the electoral campaign. However, according to the memoirs of Alfonso Guerra, PSOE's then secretary of propaganda, SAP made the greatest contribution. The graphic designers who worked for the Swedish party helped create the image used by PSOE in the campaign (Guerra, 1984: 104).

The increase in PSOE–SAP bilateral relations after 1977

PSOE's positive electoral results – it became the leading opposition party with 29.3% of the votes – utterly altered its position in the political system. After this, other socialist parties started to integrate into the more successful PSOE, which contributed to changing the internal structure and the ideological underpinning of the party (Mateos, 2013). From this moment on, PSOE's ambitions grew, and it sought to appear more attractive to the voters of the centre (Juliá, 1990). In this new context, bilateral relations between SAP and PSOE increased. The Spaniards were still interested in capitalizing on the goodwill attached to the Swedes, but now their focus became learning how the Swedes were organized, exchanging ideas on foreign policy and gaining SAP's political and financial support for the upcoming municipal and trade union elections.

In Sweden, SAP was now an opposition party. However, their international engagement increased, especially that of Palme, who was elected vice-secretary of the SI in 1976. The Swedes wanted to maintain their solidarity with and to increase their ideological ascendancy over the Spanish party, which now existed in a new democratic and legal context. PSOE could be an important partner within the SI for SAP's development of a neutral and active foreign policy not only because the Spanish supported this line but also because they could be a bridge between Europe, Latin America, and the Maghreb.

At the same time, PSOE needed to appear as a responsible opposition party in Spain as well as internationally. One way to do this was to connect the party to the image of the Swedish social democrats. Thus, when González visited the United States for the first time in November 1977, he

had to convince the American leaders of his reliability, especially as PSOE was officially a Marxist, anti-capitalist party that opposed Spain's potential NATO membership. According to the American newspaper *The Baltimore Sun*, González tried to do this by showing '… that he is like the social democrats of northern Europe with whom the United States feels comfortable …' (La Voz de Galicia, 1977).

When it comes to the increase in bilateral party relations, in November 1977, representatives of SAP spent a week visiting several Spanish cities. They wanted to get to know PSOE and the socialist trade union UGT better. At the end of the visits, Gunnar Stenarv, the spokesperson of the Swedish delegation, gave *El socialista* an interview. He said that, besides studying different opportunities for future cooperation, both parties wanted to compare their international policies, a field in which they had many ideas in common (1978a: 20).

In January 1978, another delegation from SAP visited Galicia, in northern Spain, on the invitation of the local federation of PSOE. Around the same time, several members of PSOE visited Sweden as guests of SAP, with the aim of initiating 'the exchange of experiences on the internal functioning of each party'.[30] These visits happened just before the trade union elections in Spain, and the Swedes also used these trips to offer economic support to the UGT.[31] On February 28, SAP transferred 100,000 SEK to PSOE's bank account.[32]

In November 1978, a delegation of PSOE and UGT visited the city of Norrköping in Sweden, where they received training. 'Each of the Spanish representatives [was] informed about how the political and trade unionist fields in which they will have to work in Spain function in Sweden'. The conclusion of PSOE's representatives was that although their party and SAP were very different, 'we have to start considering many of their forms of organization [for implementation] in our country [Spain]' (El Socialista, 1978b: 2). Moreover, both parties agreed on developing cooperation even further in the following months.[33] Thus, 'two Swedish experts on municipal and electoral issues [would] visit the [Spanish] province [Ciudad Real] at the moment of the campaign for the municipal elections … Such contacts will be extended to the realm of the trade unions (UGT-LO)'. Furthermore, after the Spanish municipal elections, the Swedes planned to invite 'an important number of socialist mayors to visit Sweden in order to acquire municipal experience' (El Socialista, 1978c: 25).

The numerous visits of PSOE's delegations to Sweden and vice versa suggest that the Spanish socialists learned a great deal about the daily functioning of the Swedish party, the trade unions, and the municipalities in which the social democrats governed. These experiences, which included exchanges of ideas and political practices, probably influenced the middle cadres of PSOE. However, the relevance of these exchanges to the party is difficult to measure, among other things because PSOE was also collaborating with other parties of the SI, such as the PSF and the SPD, in the field of cadre formation (Muñoz, 2012; Granadino, 2016).

At the leadership level, González visited Sweden in September 1978, where he attended the Congress of SAP. This was part of a tour that included visits to Malta and Yugoslavia. One of his aims was to gain international support for PSOE's policy of neutrality.[34] For the Spanish media, González's trip implied that PSOE wanted to adopt a generic Swedish model. A Spanish journalist asked González in Stockholm about the applicability of this model in Spain and his answer was: 'Of course. There is a common ideological standpoint. Even some practical realizations of Swedish socialism are very interesting in terms of application in Spain, such as the cooperative effort … and the regularization of the market'. González also provided information about SAP's interest in supporting PSOE. According to him, the Swedes had great hopes that PSOE would represent a new model of socialism for the south of Europe.[35]

PSOE's temporary abandonment of the Swedish model

Despite the intensification of the relations between the two parties and the support provided by SAP, the Swedish model – and social democracy in general – still encountered resistance in PSOE. In an interview with the political scientist Richard Gunther in July 1978, González was asked if there was any society that he regarded as a model. The leader of PSOE answered ambiguously:

> I don't like to speak of models. If we are talking about certain characteristics that we would like to have existing in Spain, I could certainly refer to Sweden, in which there is both liberty and equality. But socialism in Sweden is not the same as socialism in Spain.… Sweden … does not serve as a model in my view.[36]

In May 1978, the recently elected honorary president of PSOE, Enrique Tierno Galván, reflected on socialism as an alternative system in Western Europe. He considered there to be two kinds of socialism, *socialismo agórico, socialismo de plaza* (outward socialism), existing in southern Europe, and *socialismo de hogar* (domestic socialism/inward socialism), existing in northern Europe. For him, 'the messianism of the Nordic countries was finished'. Probably due to the existence of welfare in the north, the tension between social classes had diminished. Thus, the Nordics '… lack a collective utopian motor, as it exists in the Mediterranean countries, that acts as a catalyst for the revolution'. According to him, models imported from the north were not valid for PSOE. The problems in the south of Europe had to be resolved taking into consideration 'the peculiar personality, the messianism, the enthusiasm, of the Mediterranean people' (El Socialista, 1978d: 14–15).

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, PSOE would not display as much public interest in the Swedish model as they had in the previous years. Several

factors explain this. In 1979, after the general, trade union, and municipal elections, PSOE was the main party of Spain. Thus, from this moment on, the main rival of the socialists was not on the left. It was the coalition of parties that governed Spain, the UCD. Moreover, the success of the party in the municipal elections of 1979 created an enormous demand for qualified middle cadres to occupy governmental responsibilities at the local and regional levels. This provoked a massive arrival of new members who were ideologically more heterogeneous than the previous members (Tezanos, Cotarelo, and de Blas, 1989). Furthermore, the newborn Spanish democracy provided funds to the political parties according to their electoral results, which – together with bank credits – made international economic support less relevant for PSOE (Mateos, 2016). Additionally, the leaders of the party consolidated and strengthened their control over the party after the extraordinary Congress of 1979, in which PSOE abandoned Marxism. All these factors made it easier for PSOE to moderate its ideological line in order to compete for the voters of the centre, which made it unnecessary to look for substitute terms or bridges to adopt a moderate ideological stance.

In 1979 and 1980, the Swedish model lost its relevance to PSOE as a rhetorical device for adopting a moderate ideological line. Notwithstanding this fact, the exchange of ideas and experiences between the Spanish and the Swedish had a strong impact for a long time. The concept of the Swedish/Nordic model was mobilized by PSOE again in the 1980s when the Spanish welfare state was being constructed, and some of its elements – health care, education, and to some extent social care services – were universalized in the 1980s following the Nordic social democrat model (Guillén and Luque, 2014). On the other hand, in the same decade, PSOE lost interest in the Swedish policy of active neutrality as, once in power, the party advocated the permanence of Spain in NATO.

Conclusion

During the transition to democracy in Spain, several meanings were attached to the Swedish model, and this concept was used for various political purposes by the conservatives as well as by the progressives. For PSOE, this model became interesting after the death of Franco in November 1975 and initiated a process of policy transfer connected to the rupture of the political system. The Swedish model and SAP practically merged in the discourse of the Spanish party. PSOE used it as a best practice to follow, while at the same time disguising its social democratic content through rhetorical re-conceptualizations. This typical feature of cultural and policy transfer, the re-formulation and adaption of content, is clear in the way PSOE used the image of the Swedish social democrats in different ways depending on its immediate political interests. The original ideas and their function in Swedish society were not important; their adaption to Spanish conditions was.

When PSOE had to compete for the hegemony of the left before the elections, it tried to project a radical but at the same time reliable image, for which the party sought to associate itself with the Swedish social democracy. In this context, the Swedish model was understood as a system of political, social, and economic democracy. Once the political system in Spain changed and PSOE became the main party of the left, its interests changed and so did the use that the Spanish Socialists made of the Swedish model, and image they attached to it. PSOE connected this model to the Swedish international policy of neutrality, and at the end of the 1970s, it diminished public reference to Sweden, SAP, and the Swedish model. With regard to PSOE–SAP relations, the argument here is that the Swedes actively tried to help the radicalized PSOE of the early 1970s onto a social democratic path. SAP was an active actor in providing PSOE with financial support, ideas, experiences, and knowledge. In order to be persuasive, the Swedes had to adapt to the Spanish context, and they made an effort to re-conceptualize and re-brand as part of effective policy transfer.

Notes

1 Especially Monarchists, Liberal technocrats and Catholics.
2 'Informe Especial. El Socialismo en España (I)', Cambio 16, 139 (15/07/1974): 26; 'Los españoles se mantienen a favor del socialismo', El socialista (first half of February 1975): 13.
3 On the case of France, see Chapter 5 by Andreas Hellenes. La Vanguardia Española, 22/04/1971, p. 54.; La Vanguardia Española, 27/09/1972, p. 19.; La Vanguardia Española, 15/01/1970, p. 22.; 'El gobierno laborista quiere inspirarse en las formulas del socialismo sueco', ABC, 14/01/1965, p. 31.
4 The original interview was published in the French magazine Preuves.
5 To better understand the rhetorical use of Swedish, and in general Nordic, democracy as an exemplary model by international actors that pursued specific, domestic, political purposes see: Kurunmäki, J. and J. Strang (eds.) (2016), Rhetorics of Nordic Democracy (Helsinki: Studia Fennica).
6 See also, 'Profesor Lausén: el porvenir económico español ha de basarse en un desarrollo políticamente congruente', La Vanguardia Española, 14/09/1972, p. 27.
7 Promemoria 03/07/1975 (Herrström), p. 10. Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti. Volym: F 02 D: 24. Arbetarrörelsens Arkiv och Bibliotek (AAB).
8 Promemoria 03/07/1975 (Herrström), p. 21. Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti. Volym: F 02 D: 24. AAB.
9 Letter from Pierre Schori to Felipe González, 27/03/1975. Caja 71-E, carpeta 2, documento 1. Fundación Pablo Iglesias (FPI).
10 SAP-delegationens besök, 16/04/1975 (Bernström), Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti. Volym: F 02 D: 24. AAB.
11 Bausch from Madrid 04/03/1975, Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti. Volym: F 02 D: 24. AAB.
12 Letter from Bernt Carlsson to Francisco López Real, 27/12/1974. Caja 71-E, carpeta 2, documento 1. FPI.
13 Ibid.
14 Rolf Theorin. Partistyrelsen, 19/04/1975, Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti. Volym: F 02 D: 24. AAB.
15 Comisión Ejecutiva del PSOE. Informe al Comité Nacional. Enero 1976. 004058.002, Fundación Largo Caballero (FLC).

16 Éxito de la recaudación a favor del PSOE, 09/11/1975. Caja 71-E, carpeta 2, documento 1. FPI.
17 Letter from Bernt Carlsson to Rodney Balcomb, 24/11/1975. IISH, Socialist International Archives, 812.
18 Till Klubbarna, 03/03/1976, p. 3, Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti. Volym: F 02 D: 24. AAB.
19 Anförande på PSOE:s kongress den 5 December 1976 (Olof Palme), Olof Palmes arkiv. Volym: 2.4.2: 042. AAB.
20 Promemoria 03/07/1975 (Herrström), p. 9. Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti. Volym: F 02 D: 24. AAB.
21 It must be noted that although Norway and Denmark, unlike Sweden and Finland, were NATO members, PSOE's newspaper used the concept Scandinavians. This was probably an unintentional mistake, but it reflects the extent to which Sweden was the main representative of the Nordic/Scandinavian countries for the Spanish socialists.
22 'Speech by Chairman Olof Palme on the draft proposal for a party programme', p. 12, available at http://www.olofpalme.org/1975/09/28/programkommissionensforslag-till-nytt-partiprogram [accessed February 15, 2018]
23 Without attempting to establish any direct connection, it is notable that the arguments used by the Spanish conservative media are in line with the arguments that circulated internationally criticising the Swedish model in the 1970s. See: Huntford, R. (1971), The New Totalitarians. For more on this see: Marklund, C. (2015), 'American Mirrors, and Swedish self-portraits. US Images of Sweden and Swedish Public Diplomacy in the USA in the 1970s and 80s', in Clerc L., N. Glover and P. Jordan (eds.), Histories of Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding in the Nordic and Baltic Countries Representing the Periphery (Brill/Nijhoff), 172–194.
24 Exprés español (1975), n. 62, available at http://agfitel.es/hemeroteca/admin/pdf2/AGFITEL_Expres_Espanol_1975_197511.pdf. [accessed February 18, 2018]
25 Memorandum sobre perspectivas de trabajo ITE. Fundación Largo Caballero (FLC), 004056-001. See also: Guía Electoral PSOE. Elecciones 1977. FLC, 0040057-004.
26 Olof Palme. Discruso pronunciado el 5 de diciembre en el congreso del PSOE, Olof Palme Arkiv. Volym 2.4.0: 076. Arbetarrorelsens Arkiv och Bibliotek
27 Olof Palme, 'No hay socialismo del norte y del sur. Es el mismo', El Socialista (especial XXVII congreso, 3): 6.
28 Contestaciones a las preguntas hechas a Felipe González por Algemeen Dagblad, Rotterdam. 23/09/1976. 66-G 5, Archivo Histórico del PSOE, FPI.
29 Guía electoral. PSOE. Elecciones 1977, p. 39 and p. 41. 004057-004, FLC.
30 Letter from Carlos de la Cruz to Marianne Stockhaus, 26/01/1978, Sveriges socialdemokratiska abetareparti. Volym: F 02 D:24. AAB.
31 Letter from Carmen García Bloise to Nils Gosta Damberg, 23.02.1978. Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti. Volym: F 02 D:24. AAB.
32 Letter from Nils Gösta Damberg and Eva Olofsson to Carmen Rodriguez, 08/03/1978. Caja 71-E, Carpeta 2, doc. 3. FPI.
33 Informe de la visita de una delegación del PSOE al Partido Socialdemócrata sueco (SAP), 9-15/01/1978. Caja 71-E, carpeta 2, doc. 5. FPI.
34 Intervención de Felipe González; primer secretario del Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) al 27 Congreso del Partido Socialdemócrata Sueco (SAP), 23/09/1978, Caja 71-E, carpeta 2, doc. 3. FPI.
35 'Felipe González en Estocolmo', Diario 16, 24/09/1978. Caja 67-G, Carpeta 1, doc. 6, FPI.
36 Interview 74, An interview with Felipe Gonzalez, 20 July 1978, Archivo Gunther de la transición española, Fundación Juan March.

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