



On the Cultural Legacy of Political Institutions: Evidence from the Spanish Regions*

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Received: December, 2015
Accepted: June, 2016

Abstract

In the last decades, numerous studies have argued that political institutions are able to leave a persistent cultural legacy. Spain today presents a geographically concentrated distribution of societal traits that are related to social and political participation. This paper examines the possible historical origin of these regional patterns and concludes a) that those regions that historically experienced more inclusive political systems exhibit currently higher levels of this culture of participation and b) that inclusive institutions are able to leave a more intense cultural legacy when they are more proximate to the bulk of the population. This thesis is robust to controlling for other possible determinants.

Keywords: Political culture, social capital, institutional economics, political economy, institutional performance.

JEL Classification: Z13, D70, N93, P16

1. Introduction

Over the last decades, the study of the cultural aspects of a society has gained increased interest within political economy. This increasing interest is due to the (re)discovery of culture (beliefs, values, traditions, customs, etc.) as a fundamental element in the explanation of the functioning and evolution of formal institutions (Roland, 2004; North, 2005; Caballero and Soto-Oñate, 2015) and economic performance through time (North, 1990; Putnam,

* The author gratefully acknowledges extremely valuable scientific discussions with Mary M. Shirley, Lee Benham, Alexandra Benham, John V. Nye, Philip Keefer, Gonzalo Caballero and Marcos Álvarez-Díaz. Earlier versions of this paper greatly benefited from very useful feedback from participants in the 2014 *Ronald Coase Institute's Workshop on Institutional Analysis* (Manila, 2014), the 19th *Annual Conference of the International Society for New Institutional Economics* (Harvard University, 2015) and the XXIII *Encuentro de Economía Pública* (University of Vigo, 2016). The author wishes also to thank the editors and two anonymous referees for careful reading and helpful comments that substantially improved the manuscript.

