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### The Memory of a Nation: How Spanish Political Parties and Their Electoral Manifestos Address Historical Memory

Aidan G. Coohill  
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**THE MEMORY OF A NATION**

**How Spanish Political Parties &  
Their Electoral Manifestos Address Historical Memory**

Aidan G. Coohill

School Of International Training

Spain: Policy, Law and Regional Autonomy in Europe

Fall 2021

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**ABSTRACT**

After years of silence, the last two decades have seen Spain begin to seriously confront its own historical memory for the first time since its transition to democracy. This text aims to deconstruct the ways that Spanish political parties address historical memory and what memories they choose to address. This is accomplished by using data gathered from all major national parties' political manifestos from 2000 to present. Manifestos, as demonstrations of political rhetoric and popular opinion, give us a valuable insight to the ways that parties and Spanish society as a whole approach historical memory. The data gathered shows foremost the amount of content within a manifesto a party dedicates to historical memory over time, as well as what specific issues parties and ideological groups tend to focus on. Ultimately, analysis shows that virtually all parties and ideological groups have enormously increased the content they dedicate to the topic. However, this comes in the forms of very differing viewpoints and addressing entirely different histories and past events.

*Keywords:* Historical memory, manifesto, Spain political parties

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## INTRODUCTION

All peoples, identities, and nations hold unique historical memories, from which they build narratives about their pasts. From these memories and their narratives are often constructed the underpinnings of identity and place. Ever retold and revisited, they are “often reshaped in relation to the present historical-political moment”.<sup>1</sup> Historical memory is by nature, collective, and thus a form of the collective memory that bridges the present back to the events of the past. Perhaps Hugo von Hofmannsthal said it best, that such collective memory was “the dammed-up force of our mysterious ancestors within us”, their histories ever creeping back into the present.<sup>2</sup> For the nation-state, historical memory is a foundational substance on which the seamless narratives of past, present, and the future are constructed. Thus, historical memory can be used to divide or unify a nation, or to challenge or support existing narratives. Historical memory is constructed not only by the recollection of historical events, but also by ideas, places, people, and objects of both present and past. Pierre Nora wrote of the historical memory of his native France as not only infused by the actual memory of history, but by ideologies, symbols, and objects, like the Marianne and the tricolor. These are *lieu de mémoire*, places of memory, forming a social codification of the past into a larger, national narrative.<sup>3</sup> In such senses, historical memory is a contriver of a unified, singular story. The reverse can also be true. Via the correction, exploration, or reframing of historical memory, the single story is formed anew, and narratives are reborn. It must also be acknowledged, that much of the credit for the examination and study of issues of memory belongs to those who have challenged pervading narratives, especially those who have revisited historical memory from feminist and decolonial perspectives. It is likewise impossible to ignore the connections between issues of historical memory and the implications they hold for transitional and historical justice. The foremost example of this lives in the struggles that have been made in Latin America in the last decades and present, in ongoing efforts to revisit and correct the historical memory of the dark years of authoritarianism during the Cold War. The remarkable work of researchers, civil organizations, and private citizens has proved critical in these efforts and helped to recover some of the

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<sup>1</sup> Badie, B., Berg-Schlosser, D., & Morlino, L. (2011). *International encyclopedia of political science*. Sage Publications.

<sup>2</sup> Kimber, R., & Kimber, R. (1978). *Historical consciousness and political action*. Wesleyan University Press.

<sup>3</sup> Nora, P. (2006). *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire, Vol. 2* (D. Jordan, Trans.). University of Chicago Press.

memory and bring justice in the context of that era.

### MEMORY IN SPAIN

For Spain, historical memory represents an issue of extreme contention and a prominent political topic. Perhaps more than any other Western European nation, it struggles with narratives of memory in a historical context that is underexplored, polarized, and especially painful. Though Spanish history offers many periods whose historical memory is worthy of, even in need of evaluation, no historical landscape is more deserving than that of the country's bloody 20th century. Above all, the memory of the country's 1936-1939 civil war, the following dictatorship of Francisco Franco, and transition back to democracy. In July 1936, following elections that put leftists in power in the country, much of the Spanish military turned on the fragile Second Republic. Composed of the traditional elements of Spanish society; Carlists, Catholic hardliners, landowners, nobility, industrialists, conservatives, and the army, their coup d'état led to a nearly three-year civil war marred with extreme partisan violence and butchery.<sup>4</sup> Especially early in the war, Republican forces committed killings in what would become known as the "Red Terror", the sporadic targeting of perceived enemies of the state that would claim some 70,000 lives. The most frequent target was the Catholic church and clergy, which suffered enormous material and human loss. However, as tensions between different Republican factions accelerated, the terror soon progressed to killing other leftists. On the right, political violence reached an even further extreme in the "White Terror". In what was termed *limpieza social*, social cleansing, death squads perpetrated the mass killings of Republicans, Jews, Romanis, Freemasons, intellectuals, homosexuals, atheists, and Basque, Galician, and Catalan nationalists. As seen at Monte de Estépar, Badajoz, and most famously Guernica, the Nationalists and their allies showed an insatiable bloodlust. Continuing well into the 1940s, this politicide claimed the lives of some 200,000 people<sup>5</sup>. Aiding these killings and the Nationalist cause, was Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, eager to have a fellow fascist in power in Spain. The civil war, in its totality, likely claimed the lives of roughly 600,000 Spaniards<sup>6</sup>, and forced some 470,000 into

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<sup>4</sup> Howson, G. (1999). *Arms for Spain: the untold story of the Spanish Civil War*. St. Martin's Press.

<sup>5</sup> Jackson, G. (1966). *The Spanish Republic and the Civil War 1931-1939*. (1965). Princeton, N.J.

<sup>6</sup> Romero, F. J. (2013). *Historical dictionary of the Spanish Civil War*. Scarecrow Press.

exile.<sup>7</sup> In 1939, Franco entered Madrid, the final bastion of Republican resistance. His path to power cleared by the convenient deaths of Mola, Goded, and Sanjurjo, leaving him the only significant high-ranking Nationalist general, Franco began a 39-year rule. Not since the days of Philip II had one man ruled Spain in such totality and absolutism. Victorious in war, Franco ruled in a dichotomous age, one which saw ultra-traditionalist government at the same time as massive demographic, economic, and social changes swept across Spain.

By the time he died in 1975, Franco must have known the challenges his Falangist state faced. The old general, ever the pariah, lived to see himself become Western Europe's last dictator. In 1974, racked by war and protest, Greece's Junta of the Colonels surrendered the reins of power to democratic government.<sup>8</sup> In Portugal, the seemingly eternal Novo Estado was overthrown in the Carnation Revolution.<sup>9</sup> However, Spain's transition to democracy would not be marked by the speed and stability that was seen in Greece and Portugal. Franco was succeeded by Juan Carlos I, the grandson of Alfonso XIII. The young king quickly made clear his desire to return Spain to the parliamentary monarchy, turning the clock back to the Bourbon restoration. With significant support for the Francoist still alive in the armed forces, the Suárez-led transition had to carefully remove and quiet anti-reform forces. In 1977, the first free elections were held for the Cortes General, a year later, a new constitution was adopted. But while progress continued, the nation was convulsed by a new wave of sectarian violence. In the Basque Country, the secessionist terrorist group ETA would unleash a wave of violence that would claim the lives of prominent politicians, police, and ordinary citizens. In 1980 alone, the height of the terror, the organization would claim almost 100 lives.<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, the anti-fascist GRAPO targeted government officials and conducted several failed and eventual successful bombings. Similarly, neofascist cells began sporadic terrorism and assassination campaigns, most prominently in the 1977 Atocha Massacre, which left 5 prominent labor lawyers dead at the hands of Triple A (Alianza Apostólica Anticomunista).<sup>11</sup> In February 1981, as the new

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<sup>7</sup> Santos, Juliá Díaz, Casanova, Julián, & Al, E. (2006). *Víctimas de la guerra civil*. Temas De Hoy.

<sup>8</sup> Koliopoulos, Giannēs, & Veremēs, Thanos. (2007). *Greece: the modern sequel: from 1831 to the present*. Hurst & Company.

<sup>9</sup> Osuna, J. J. O. (2014). The deep roots of the Carnation Revolution: 150 years of military interventionism in Portugal. *Portuguese Journal of Social Science*, 13(2), 215–231. [https://doi.org/10.1386/pjss.13.2.215\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/pjss.13.2.215_1)

<sup>10</sup> Woodworth, P. (2001). Why Do They Kill? *World Policy Journal*, 18(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1215/07402775-2001-2002>

<sup>11</sup> Pedahzur, A., & Weinberg, L. (2016). *Political parties and terrorist groups*. Routledge.

government struggled under the pressure of conflicts in the Basque country and the resignation of Suárez, Francoist junior military officers took one last desperate gamble. Antonio Tejero led a group of mutineers who took the Congress of Deputies hostage in a bid to convince the king or military to retake power. The coup came to a humiliating end, denounced by the king and armed forces, lasting just 18 hours before its leaders were forced to surrender.<sup>12</sup> With this humiliation, it became increasingly clear that those wishing to return to the days of Franco had lost.

This fragility of the fledgling Spanish democracy gave rise to the so-called “pact of forgetting”. This largely informal agreement saw both right and left-wing parties in the decades following democratization commit to the effective non-addressal of the history of the civil war and dictatorship, as well as the repression, abuses, and experience of such histories. Designed to attempt to focus the nation to the future and allow reconciliation, it left no room for actual justice. The pact would serve as the basis for a 1977 Amnesty Law that to this day prevents the prosecution of those who committed horrific abuses and crimes against humanity during the civil war and dictatorship<sup>13</sup>. With this unfortunate legislation, the chance for actual accountability and transitional justice was left by the wayside. The “pact of forgetting” also made conversations about historical memory at a governmental level effectively impossible, for obvious reasons. The early administrations of Spanish democracy wanted nothing more than to forget, for time to heal old wounds, for democratic institutions and society to be allowed to grow. Historical memory, and with it the refocusing, retelling, and questioning of narratives and history, presented a dangerous Pandora’s box of divisiveness. The pact remained unquestioned until 2004 when the PSOE, led by Zapatero began work on what would become the 2007 Historical Memory Law.

## FRAMEWORK

As the veil on Spain’s historical memory has lifted in recent years, political parties have shown themselves to be critical actors. Parties both reflect the feelings of society, but also the institutional influences on historical memory, and are thus an interesting perspective into a state’s understanding of its own past. From an institutionalist perspective, accepting political parties as

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<sup>12</sup> Blanco, J. (1996). *23-F : crónica fiel de un golpe anunciado*. Fuerza Nueva Editorial.

<sup>13</sup> de Greiff, P. (2014). *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, mission to Spain*.

institutions of the state that influence and represent the expression of memory at a national level, this project attempts to analyze their various approaches to historical memory. By using the electoral manifestos issued by major political parties, it tries to understand how these parties have built and rebuilt the memory of a nation. In the ways that parties represent themselves as having distinct ideological or historical cleavages, they can also represent the differing memories and understandings of the past within a society. When the telling of a nation's past becomes a partisan issue, as in Spain, historical memory becomes a political powderkeg. Historical memory is only one of many issues parties address, but its continued relevance shows public interest. However, the issue is often more connected to left-wing parties, who have anti-Francoist heritage. Increased focus on historical memory was expected of these parties. Accordingly, it was expected the issue would receive less attention by right-wing and centrist parties, as these parties often display a habit of avoiding historical memory issues in their rhetoric. It was also expected that historical memory would increase in prominence in electoral manifestos from 2000 to present, as Spain's understanding of its own history has become a hot topic domestically and abroad.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research was carried out primarily by using and analyzing the political party manifestos issued by major Spanish parties before national elections. These works serve as formalized declarations of party intent and focus and are thus an interesting window into the issues and stances of relevant parties. Manifestos are often fine-tuned to voter bases and current issues, while also reflecting the interests of the government and its actors. In total, this analysis used a crop of 32 documents, which ranged from hundreds to only several pages of text. This represented a total 34 issued manifestos. This is the result of two cases where parties (Podemos in December 2015/June 2016 and IU in April/November 2019) issued the exact same manifestos as they had during a previous election. To narrow the scope of research to only major party manifestos several requisites were applied. First, only larger parties were considered. For this, the benchmark was set at any party that achieved more than 2% of the national vote during any election within the time frame. Second, only national parties were considered. Any regionalist party or party whose electorate was confined to one autonomous community was not considered.

This eliminated parties such as PNV (Basque National Party) or CiU (Convergence & Union) who in some elections reached the 2% margin nationally,<sup>14</sup> but who frame issues of historical memory from a more regional perspective. This viewpoint on historical memory is just as valid as that of parties that approach it from a national perspective but deserves its own lengthy exploration. Lastly, for the sake of the continuation of accurate data and to demonstrate continuity, some electoral alliances were treated as continuous with original political parties. This was applied to the 2015 period when the IU (Izquierda Unida) issued a manifesto under the larger catch-all UP (Unidad Popular) alliance and from 2016 to present with the Unidas Podemos alliance in which both IU and Podemos issued separate manifestos.

To analyze the occurrence of issues of historical memory in manifestos, the work of the Manifesto Project Database served as the foundation of analysis. The project breaks down manifestos from various political parties into more precise datasets and was thus invaluable. More specifically, it separates each complete argument or proposition made into a bit or segment, hundreds, or thousands of which make up a larger manifesto. By categorizing these segments into those that deal with historical memory and those that do not, an understanding of the addressing of this issue can be formed. For the sake of uniformity, a segment had to fit into one of three guidelines to qualify as taking a position on historical memory. One, the segment in question came directly from a section or subsection that was labeled as focusing on historical memory. This applied almost exclusively to recent PSOE manifestos. Two, a segment that directly mentioned the memory of history occurring 1936 and the present. This could be manifested as discussions of historical events, victims of violence, monuments, people, or ideologies. Taking the 2019 PSOE manifestos as an example, this means that while they discuss the memory of victims of femicide, this was too vague and timeless to qualify. Discussions about the victims of Francoist repression in the same document do count, however. Lastly, any segments in which a party states their positions on the way historical memory is addressed in the society at large, the government, or by another party are also valid. This covers, for example, Vox's critiques of the Historical Memory Law.

Data from this project used to build several calculations. By taking the number of

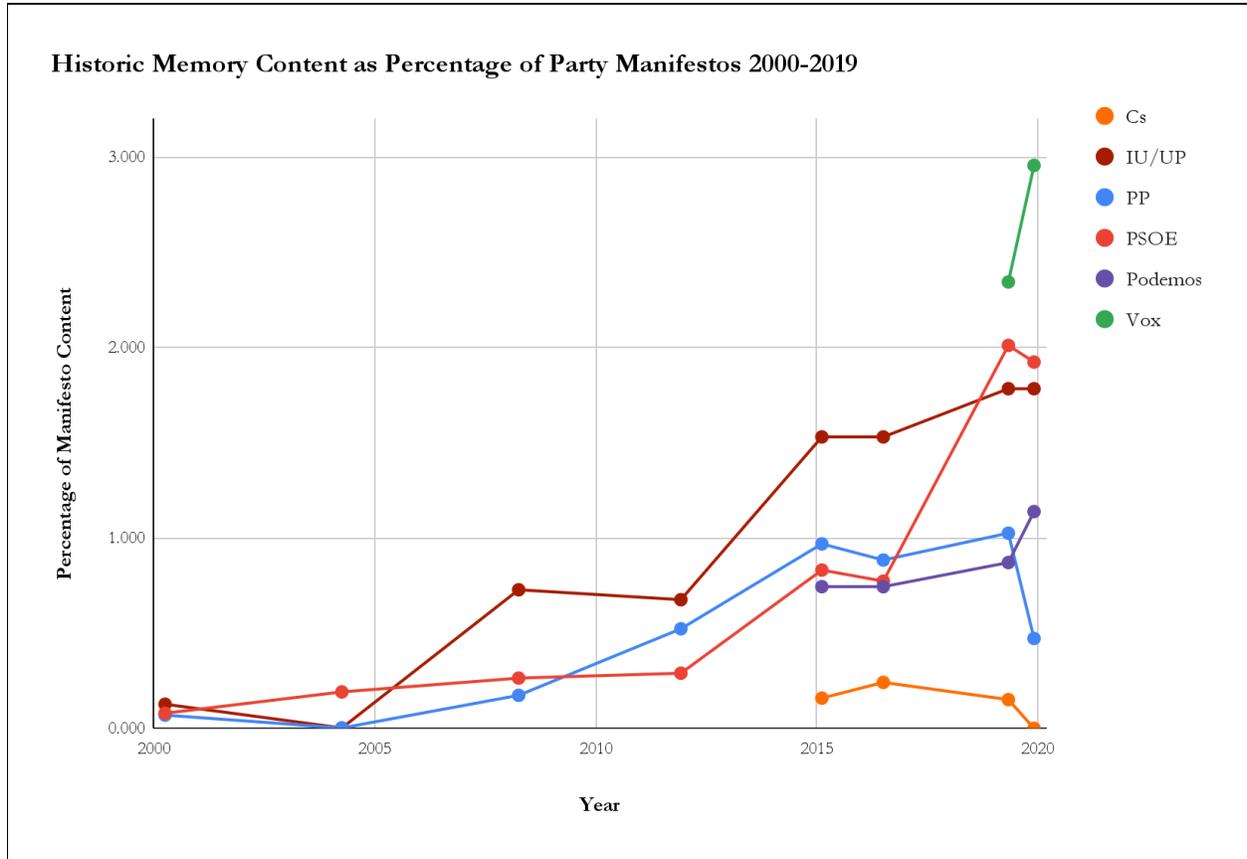
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<sup>14</sup> *Consulta de resultados electorales. Ministerio del Interior.* (2011). Infoelectoral.mir.es  
<http://www.infoelectoral.mir.es/infoelectoral/min/ayuda.html?lan=en>

segments related to historical memory and dividing it by the total number of segments in the manifesto it was possible to see the frequency of the topic in manifestos, as seen below. Though many statements that make up this content are often nonspecific and broad, several more specific and noteworthy topics also appear within discourse on historical memory. Four of these ‘keynotes’ are further expanded on in this work. They are stated as a percentage, the number of segments with content from that keynote as divided by the total number of segments dedicated to historical memory. In most cases, because these are niche themes which represent only some prominent subtopics, only a number of total segments in a manifesto address them, resulting in percentages that do not equal 100. However, they do help to give some idea as to the keynotes that parties choose to emphasize and the larger connotations that they hold. The first keynote explores the laws of memory, the attempts by various parties to codify and revisit history via law-making, one of the most direct ways to address memory. The second discusses the victims of war and more specifically mass graves, a sobering issue for Spain that has unfortunately become a political battleground. The third covers Francoist symbols and Valle de los Caídos, and the struggle with the most visible memory of dictatorship. Finally, the fourth keynote explores the memory of terrorism, the most prevalent yet ambiguous topic within Spanish historical memory.

## **RESULTS & EVALUATION**

The data gathered in this research shows first and foremost that historical memory has become a more prominent issue in party manifestos since the election of 2000. This is unsurprising, the result of the shattering of the Pact of Forgetting and reassessment of the past. However, the transformation is still remarkable. In the election of 2000, only .09% of content from an average manifesto discussed historical memory. In the most recent 2019 election, that number reached 1.34%, nearly 15 times more than in 2000. It is also clear that there exists a strong ideological basis for whether or how much space a party dedicated to historical memory. Parties that lie on the peripheries of the political spectrum such as Vox and IU tend to dedicate more space to historical memory than more centrist parties. Meanwhile, the centrist Cs barely dare touch the issue. In what is likely a move to steer clear of deep partisan division, for them the



**Figure 1.** *The evolution of quantities of historical memory content in manifestos.*

Pact of Forgetting lives on. The Cs in particular, who appealed to various voters disaffected by traditional parties, certainly obeyed this for strategic purposes. In fact, the data collected shows their virtual abandonment of the issue, culminating in the party releasing a manifesto in November of 2019 with no mention of historical memory altogether. The opposite may be true for parties that operate closer to the extremes, where using or discussing historical memory may be a valuable electoral strategy. IU and Vox, two of the most consistently vocal parties on this issue, seem to suggest this is the case. The center left and right, in the forms of the eternal PSOE and PP, sit between these polarities. Until the last three elections, they mirrored each other in terms of manifesto content on historical memory. However, the last two elections in 2019 have broken this pattern, with the PP deemphasizing the issue and the PSOE emphasizing it further. The following pages will unpack this chronological data, framing it in four periods based on the results gathered and the trends demonstrated.

Party	Election							
	2000.25	2004.25	2008.25	2011.92	2015.11	2016.5	2019.33	2019.91
Cs (Ciudadanos)					0.158	0.241	0.151	0.000
IU (Izquierda Unida) / UP (Unidad Popular)	0.126	0.002	0.727	0.675	1.530	1.530	1.783	1.783
PP (Partido Popular)	0.069	0.002	0.173	0.522	0.968	0.883	1.025	0.472
PSOE (Partido Socialista Obrero Español)	0.079	0.191	0.264	0.289	0.831	0.773	2.011	1.923
UP (Podemos Unidas/Podemos)					0.744	0.744	0.870	1.138
Vox							2.344	2.956

*Figure 2. Percentage of content related to historical memory, as seen in Figure 1.*

### 2000-2004: THE PACT ENDURES

The Spanish national election of 2000 ended with an unprecedented sweep for Prime Minister Aznar and the PP, who received an absolute majority in the congress<sup>15</sup>. Party manifestos from the election left little mention of historical memory, the then more than two-decade old Pact of Forgetting very much in force. The manifestos of PP and PSOE only speak of the memory of terrorism. The late 1990's had been an unusually quiet period for the ETA, 1999 marked the first year since the transition where the group had not killed a single person<sup>16</sup>. But in the first days of the new millennia took a disturbing turn for Spanish authorities. Several days before Christmas 1999, Spanish authorities stopped an active plot by the group to blow up Torre Picasso, a massive Madrid skyscraper<sup>17</sup>. On January 21st, ETA set off twin car bombs in Madrid, killing a police officer and leading to widescale demonstrations<sup>18</sup>. This climate appears in the party

<sup>15</sup> Joaquín Prieto. (2000, March 13). *Aznar consigue una histórica mayoría absoluta*. El País. [https://elpais.com/diario/2000/03/13/espana/952902014\\_850215.html](https://elpais.com/diario/2000/03/13/espana/952902014_850215.html)

<sup>16</sup> Muñoz, J., & Porta, F. (2006). *Depolarization in the 2005 Autonomous Elections in the Basque Country: Towards A New Scenario For Peace?* Taylor & Francis (Routledge).

<sup>17</sup> Rodríguez, J. A. (2001, November 8). *ETA planeó romper la tregua explotando dos furgones bomba en el centro financiero de Madrid*. El País. [https://elpais.com/diario/2001/11/09/espana/1005260408\\_850215.html](https://elpais.com/diario/2001/11/09/espana/1005260408_850215.html)

<sup>18</sup> Tran, M. (2000, January 21). *Car bombs rock Madrid*. The Guardian; The Guardian.

manifestos in the form of sections on terrorism and the memory of the history of terrorism and its victims. However, these points make up only .079% of manifesto content for the PSOE, and .069% for the PP, virtual footnotes in hundreds of pages of text. Only the IU mentions historical memory not relating to terrorism. This comes in the form of brief demands for the end of immunity from prosecution for war crimes committed during Franco's reign. Specifically mentioned is the work of the UN Committee on Human Rights and international organization investigating crimes against humanity and forced disappearances<sup>19</sup>. This rhetoric may also draw from the current events of the day. In Guatemala, the first trials of perpetrators of genocide in the country's long civil war opened. In Spain itself, 1998 had seen Judge Balthasar Garzón request the extradition of Chilean ex-dictator Augusto Pinochet under universal jurisdiction<sup>20</sup>. Manifestos in 2004 brought even more focus to terrorism. In the aftermath of 9/11 and Spanish involvement in the Iraq War, conversations on historical memory disappeared amongst a sea of rhetoric about happenings in Iraq and Afghanistan. No party made any specific mention of memory except as related to terrorism. The PP and IU's rhetoric on the topic reached an all-time low of only .002% of total content and the PSOE only reached 0.191%.

### 2004 - 2011: THE MEMORY OF THE LEFT

The election of 2004 proved one of the most dramatic and turbulent since the transition. Three days before polls opened, terrorists from Al-Qaeda in Iraq bombed Madrid commuter rail lines in Madrid during rush hour, killing 193 and injuring some 2,000 people<sup>21</sup>. This event, hostility to continued involvement in Iraq, and alleged abuse of their absolute majority led to the PP's fall from power<sup>22</sup>. The age of Aznar over, the PSOE returned to power under Zapatero in the form of a minority government. The next year, discussions began amongst left-wing parties on crafting legislation on historical memory. The final product would be the 2007 Ley de Memoria

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<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2000/jan/21/spain.marktran1>

<sup>19</sup> *Programa Electoral 2000*. Madrid, ES: Izquierda Unida, 2000

<sup>20</sup> Landman, T. (2013). A Most Unlikely Case: Chile, Pinochet and the Advance of Human Rights. *Revista Política*, 51(2). <https://doi.org/10.5354/0716-1077.2013.30155>

<sup>21</sup> *Atentados Terroristas del Día 11 de Marzo de 2004 en Madrid*. (2006). Juzgado Central de Instrucción Número 5.

<sup>22</sup> Díez, A. (2004, March 16). *Zapatero atribuye su victoria a las "ganas de cambio en España" y no al atentado del 11-M*. El País. [https://elpais.com/diario/2004/03/16/espana/1079391601\\_850215.html](https://elpais.com/diario/2004/03/16/espana/1079391601_850215.html)

Histórica (Historical Memory Law), crafted under the watchful eyes of María Teresa Fernández de la Vega<sup>23</sup>, further discussed in the following pages. The PP decried the bill as dangerous and claimed the PSOE was “obsessed with the past”<sup>24</sup>. However, a year later their electoral manifesto would be silent on the issue and once again raise the specter of remembering terrorism. The PSOE was likewise mute in their 2008 manifesto to the very themes of their own law such as mass graves, victims of fascism or the Civil War in general. Perhaps to them the issue was settled. Together, the PSOE and the PP delegated only .173% and .264% of content to historical memory. But for IU and other left-wing parties the conversation was far from over. For many parties on the left, the Historical Memory Law had not gone far enough. One party, the Catalan nationalist ERC even voted against it in protest of it being supposedly insufficient<sup>25</sup>. These calls for further legislation were strong in the 2008 electoral manifesto of the IU. The party dedicated .727% of this document to historical memory, still small, but far more than had ever been seen in Spain’s electoral history. Fascinatingly, for the first time ever, the words “memoria histórica” (historical memory) were mentioned in a manifesto. Even more remarkable was the content itself which called for among many things the reversal of all sentences passed down by Francoist kangaroo courts, the exhumation of those buried at Valle de los Caídos including Franco and José Primo de Rivera, and even further government support for exhumations<sup>26</sup>. These ideas were a decade ahead of their time, but the Pact of Forgetting had at least been broken. Conversations on historical memory would soon fall to the wayside, however. Not long after the 2008 election returned a Zapatero minority government to power, the Great Recession began. When, in 2011 this government buckled under cascading economic pressure, a snap election was called for November<sup>27</sup>. That year, parties dedicated similar amounts of space to historical memory as in 2008, IU with .675%, PP with .522%, and PSOE with .289%. Once again, the PP dedicated themselves to the memory of terrorism. The IU and PSOE largely followed their arguments they had made in the previous election. It is most likely that, beyond everything, party focuses were

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<sup>23</sup> Cué, C. E. (2007, October 31). *La ley de memoria se aprueba entre aplausos de invitados antifranquistas*. El País. [https://elpais.com/diario/2007/11/01/espana/1193871618\\_850215.html](https://elpais.com/diario/2007/11/01/espana/1193871618_850215.html)

<sup>24</sup> Herrera, E. (2018, October 31). *Ángel Acebes: “En el PP en sobras no ha cobrado nadie.”* ElDiario.es. [https://www.eldiario.es/politica/acebes-investigacion-financiacion-irregular-pp\\_1\\_1865946.html](https://www.eldiario.es/politica/acebes-investigacion-financiacion-irregular-pp_1_1865946.html)

<sup>25</sup> Keene, J. (2007). Review Article: Turning Memories into History in the Spanish Year of Historical Memory. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 42(4), 661–671. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022009407082153>

<sup>26</sup> *Programa Electoral 2008*. Madrid, ES: Izquierda Unida, 2008

<sup>27</sup> EFE. (2011, July 29). *Siete años de Gobierno de Zapatero*. Cadena SER. [https://cadenaser.com/ser/2011/07/29/espana/1311897015\\_850215.html](https://cadenaser.com/ser/2011/07/29/espana/1311897015_850215.html)

elsewhere, on not historical memory but the pressing economic issues of the day.

### **2011 - 2016: REINTEREST & NEW PARTIES**

The elections of 2011 were the last in which the PSOE and PP enjoyed the old bipolar system and solitude of power. Elections in 2015 would be dominated by backlash against the traditional standard bearers on both the left and right. The Rajoy administration had presided over continued waves of economic issues. Bank failures, general strikes, bailouts, fiscal austerity, and tax rates proved a political minefield<sup>28</sup>. Public anger likewise turned on the PSOE, IU, and most of all the PP over perceived corruption. The Bárcenas Affair, tales of public contract kickback schemes, and dark money slush funds dominated the headlines<sup>29</sup>. The results were dramatic losses for the PSOE and PP, while the IU lost almost all its seats. Meanwhile, Podemos and the Ciudadanos appeared as major parties. Though anti-corruption rhetoric was the major focus of much of their manifestos, these parties likewise addressed historical memory. The Cs stated that “Spain has encountered a critical moment in its history” regarding its past. Though dedicating only .158% of the manifesto to historical memory, it addressed many issues including the refunding of government assisted exhumations, the universal removal of Francoist symbols, and official condemnations of the dictatorship<sup>30</sup>. Podemos wrote that “memory is a civil right”, committing .744% of their manifesto to the issue, they expanded even further than Cs. Their proposed policies included promises of non-repetition, tribunals to try surviving Francoist officials, the annulment of all sentences passed down by Francoist courts, and public access to war archives<sup>31</sup>. The most comprehensive manifesto came from the IU, now under the Popular Unity umbrella. Dedicating 1.53% of manifesto content to historical memory, it reached far beyond previous manifestos. It demanded the introduction of a UN resolution to condemn Francoism and those that had supported Franco, the end to privatization of exhumation efforts, mandatory units on historical memory in all schools, and compared Spain under Francoism to

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<sup>28</sup> Castro, I. (2013, November 19). *Diez incumplimientos electorales de Mariano Rajoy*. ElDiario.es. [https://www.eldiario.es/politica/incumplimientos-electorales-mariano-rajoy\\_1\\_5160763.html](https://www.eldiario.es/politica/incumplimientos-electorales-mariano-rajoy_1_5160763.html)

<sup>29</sup> Ares, M., & Hernández, E. (2017). The corrosive effect of corruption on trust in politicians: Evidence from a natural experiment. *Research & Politics*, 4(2), 205316801771418. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168017714185>

<sup>30</sup> *Programa Electoral 2015*. Madrid, ES: Ciudadanos, 2015

<sup>31</sup> *Programa Electoral 2015*. Madrid, ES: Podemos, 2015

Germany under Nazism. Perhaps most radically, it demanded the removal of bodies from Valle de los Caídos, that it be renamed its pre-war name, Valle de Cuelgamuros, and that its massive cross and other symbols be dismantled<sup>32</sup>. Months after the election of one of Spain's most fractured parliaments ever, it became clear that neither the PSOE nor PP could form a government<sup>33</sup>. Elections the next year in 2016 largely maintained the status quo, while giving a boost to Rajoy's PP, allowing them to form a minority government<sup>34</sup>. Due to the short period between elections, parties largely copied the manifestos they issued in 2015. Neither percentage of content dedicated to historical memory, or their points of view changed much. IU and Podemos, for their part, did not even issue new manifestos.

### 2016 - PRESENT: ACTION & POLARIZATION

The 2nd Rajoy government continued its non-confrontational approach to historical memory. However, this did not stop the PSOE, Podemos, and regional parties from becoming increasingly vocal on the issue. Most of all, left-leaning parties began to demand the exhumation of Franco from Valle de los Caídos, a call that the PP was not going to listen to. In 2018, the ruling in the Gürtel case exposed an enormous kickbacks-for-contracts scheme implicating high-level PP officials. A vote of no confidence, the second in a year, ousted Rajoy from power and swept in Pedro Sánchez and the PSOE<sup>35</sup>. This new government quickly made clear its desire to revisit issues the PP had avoided. Two weeks after coming to power the Sánchez government made clear its desire to exhume Franco's body from Valle de los Caídos<sup>36</sup>. After court battles and

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<sup>32</sup> *Programa Electoral 2015*. Madrid, ES: Unidad Popular, 2015

<sup>33</sup> Burgen, S. (2016, April 26). *Spain faces new elections in June after parties fail to form a government*. The Guardian.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/26/spain-faces-new-elections-june-parties-fail-to-form-government>

<sup>34</sup> Castillo-Manzano, J. I., López-Valpuesta, L., & Pozo-Barajas, R. (2017). Six months and two parliamentary elections in Spain: December, 2015 and June, 2016. The end of the two-party system? *Electoral Studies*, 45, 157–160. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2016.12.001>

<sup>35</sup> Spain's Prime Minister, Mariano Rajoy, Is Ousted in No-Confidence Vote (Published 2018). (2021). *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/01/world/europe/spain-mariano-rajoy-no-confidence.html>

<sup>36</sup> Junquera, N. (2018, June 18). *Removal of Franco's remains from Valley of the Fallen one step closer*. El País.

spats with the Catholic church, Franco was finally exhumed on October 24th of 2019<sup>37</sup>. Perhaps more than any event since the transition, this catapulted the memory of the nation to center stage. In the elections held in April 2019, parties dedicated more space in their manifestos to historical memory than ever before. The PSOE used 2.011% of their manifesto to speak on the issue, outlining the exhumation of not only Franco but all those still in mass graves and the necropolis of Valle de los Caídos. The IU and Podemos dedicated 1.783% and .87% respectively, along the same lines as PSOE and also drawing target fire at the Francisco Franco Foundation<sup>38,39</sup>. The PP and Cs, the only parties that had abstained from voting on the exhumation, were content to ignore the issue<sup>40</sup>. The PP gave 1.025% of content to historical memory, the Cs a mere .151%, the least of any party since 2004. Not all the right dismissed these issues however, a populist right newcomer, Vox, gave 2.34% of their brief manifesto to the topic. Most brazen of all, the party demanded the total repeal of the Historical Memory Law and the “protection” of the “deeds and feats of national heroes”, a reference to Franco<sup>41</sup>. For Vox, Valle de los Caídos became a favorite flashpoint. When April’s elections resulted in a hung parliament, new ones called for November saw parties draw heavily from previous manifestos. Only Podemos and Vox seriously altered their percent content, to 1.138% and 2.956% respectively. The Podemos-PSOE coalition that formed after this most recent election has promised to address issues of historical memory, most of all in new legislation on the issue in the vein of that which was passed in 2007. What comes of this is yet to be seen and will be further explored in the following pages. Perhaps most critically, the elections of 2019 which brought Vox into national government, polarized historical memory in a new way. Though always a polarizing subject, Vox brought historical memory to the forefront, becoming the first party on the Spanish right to unrepentantly speak on, politicize, and campaign on the issue. Vox themselves, despite however much they might like to return to those golden days, had broken the Pact of Forgetting. In doing so, historical memory has been

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<sup>37</sup> Rengel, C. (2019, October 21). *La exhumación de Franco del Valle de los Caídos será el jueves 24 de octubre*. El HuffPost; El HuffPost.

[https://www.huffingtonpost.es/entry/la-exhumacion-de-franco-del-valle-de-los-caidos-sera-el-jueves-24-de-octubre\\_e\\_s\\_5dad6197e4b0422422c7c49e](https://www.huffingtonpost.es/entry/la-exhumacion-de-franco-del-valle-de-los-caidos-sera-el-jueves-24-de-octubre_e_s_5dad6197e4b0422422c7c49e)

<sup>38</sup> *Programa Electoral 28A 2019*. Madrid, ES: Izquierda Unida, 2019

<sup>39</sup> *Programa Electoral 28A 2019*. Madrid, ES: Podemos, 2019

<sup>40</sup> Ortega, L. (2018, September 13). El Congreso aprueba exhumar a Franco del Valle de los Caídos. *La Vanguardia*. <https://www.lavanguardia.com/politica/20180913/451785931186/congreso-aprueba-exhumar-franco-valle-de-los-caidos.html>

<sup>41</sup> *Programa Electoral 28A 2019*. Madrid, ES: Vox, 2019

transformed from a sporadic political battle into a partisan battlefield.

## KEYNOTES OF MEMORY

The data presented below further breaks down the content of party manifestos into the four “keynotes” as previously detailed. Each aims to explore the occurrence of common themes within the ever-evolving conversations on historical memory in Spain. The keynotes all vary in the frequency and time periods in which they occur. For example, of unique party manifestos 65.6% mention the memory of terrorism but only 37.5% discuss Francoist symbols and/or Valle de los Caídos. Partisan tendencies to emphasize certain issues or ignore others also present themselves in these data sets. The presence of other keynotes is additionally tied to their time period and events. The following pages will work to discuss the dataset (see *Fig. 3*) and provide context for the rhetorical choices and arguments presented by various parties in their manifestos.

### I. LAWS OF MEMORY

In 2007 the Zapatero government, with the support of IU and most smaller regionalist parties, passed the Historical Memory Law. The law was sweeping and covered a multitude of topics. It officially condemned Franco’s state, prohibited political events at Valle de los Caídos, allowed for the removal of objects celebrating the civil war and following dictatorship, funded the exhumation of mass graves, granted *de origen* citizenship to exiles and their descendants, and more<sup>42</sup>. This decision to legislate on historical memory was generally condemned by the right-wing establishment and PP as harmful to national unity<sup>43</sup>. Despite this, the PP has never tried to repeal the law, even when it had an absolute majority to quickly do so<sup>44</sup>. The party has

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<sup>42</sup> Ley 52/2007, de 26 de diciembre, por la que se reconocen y amplían derechos y se establecen medidas en favor de quienes padecieron persecución o violencia durante la guerra civil y la dictadura., no. BOE-A-2007-22296 (2007). <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2007-22296>

<sup>43</sup> El País. (2008, September 2). *Rajoy: “Abrir heridas del pasado no conduce a nada.”* El País. [https://elpais.com/elpais/2008/09/02/actualidad/1220343425\\_850215.html](https://elpais.com/elpais/2008/09/02/actualidad/1220343425_850215.html)

<sup>44</sup> Junquera, N., & El País. (2020, July 30). *Spain to release funds for mass grave exhumations.* EL PAÍS English Edition.

[https://english.elpais.com/historical\\_memory/2020-07-30/spain-to-release-funds-for-mass-grave-exhumations.html](https://english.elpais.com/historical_memory/2020-07-30/spain-to-release-funds-for-mass-grave-exhumations.html)

<b>Cs</b>				
Year	K1	K2	K3	K4
Dec. 2015	x	28.6	28.6	14.3
Jun. 2016	x	x	x	100.0
Apr. 2019	x	x	x	100.0
Nov. 2019	x	x	x	x

<b>IU / UP</b>				
Year	K1	K2	K3	K4
Mar. 2000	12.5	x	x	x
Mar. 2004	x	x	x	50.0
Mar. 2008	26.7	20.0	6.7	13.3
Nov. 2011	18.2	54.5	9.1	x
Dec. 2015	10.7	28.6	28.6	x
Jun. 2016*	10.7	28.6	28.6	x
Apr. 2019	4.6	44.6	7.7	x
Nov. 2019*	4.6	44.6	7.7	x

<b>PP</b>				
Year	K1	K2	K3	K4
Mar. 2000	x	x	x	50.0
Mar. 2004	x	x	x	66.6
Mar. 2008	x	x	x	100.0
Nov. 2011	x	x	x	50.0
Dec. 2015	x	x	x	69.7
Jun. 2016	x	x	x	100.0
Apr. 2019	x	x	x	50.0
Nov. 2019	x	x	x	50.0

<b>PSOE</b>				
Year	K1	K2	K3	K4
Mar. 2000	x	x	x	x
Mar. 2004	x	x	x	33.3
Mar. 2008	x	x	x	83.3
Nov. 2011	50.0	33.3	x	16.7
Dec. 2015	13.5	40.5	x	10.8
Jun. 2016	13.5	40.5	x	10.8
Apr. 2019	28.9	26.7	15.6	x
Nov. 2019	10.0	40.0	20.0	30.0

<b>Podemos</b>				
Year	K1	K2	K3	K4
Dec. 2015	x	38.5	15.4	x
Jun. 2016*	x	38.5	15.4	x
Apr. 2019	x	80.0	x	x
Nov. 2019	x	73.3	6.7	x

<b>Vox</b>				
Year	K1	K2	K3	K4
Apr. 2019	50.0	x	x	50.0
Nov. 2019	50.0	x	x	50.0

**Figure 3.** Percentage of content related to the selected “keynotes” in party manifestos from 2000 to Nov. 2019 (K1: Laws of memory, K2: Mass graves & victims of war, K3: Francoist symbols & Valle de los Caídos, K4: The memory of terrorism). As the segments that make up manifestos (per the Manifesto Project Database) are often idealistic and nonspecific, percentage results do not always add up to 100. \*Denotes an election in which that party issued an identical manifesto as in the previous cycle.

likewise never mentioned the law ever in one of its electoral manifestos. For that matter, neither has Podemos or Cs since their formations. PSOE's 2008 manifesto made no mention of the legislation, as it was little more than a year old, and it would be odd for them to immediately call for the modification or extension of a bill largely written by themselves. However, in all manifestos since 2011 they have. That year the party wrote that "The law [of Historical Memory] has enjoyed a high degree of compliance. However, it is a work in progress". What exactly this meant was vague at best, though they did go onto briefly mention access to historical archives and the further condemnation of Francoist violence<sup>45</sup>. Yet, this still represented 50% of historical memory content in the document. Manifestoes in 2015 and 2016 repeated this idea and declared that the law must be "carried out effectively and not depending on the will of the government in power", a dig at the PP for effectively making the law obsolete under their government<sup>46,47</sup>. Manifestoes in the elections of 2019 made the same promise, one that at the time of writing, PSOE and Podemos appear to be attempting to fulfill<sup>48</sup>. For their part, IU had issued similar statements from the elections of 2008 until 2016. In 2011, they wrote that "we demand the profound modification of the law"<sup>49</sup>. These included judicial involvement in exhumations, the nullification of the rulings of Francoist courts, and an array of further government support for the victims of Franco and their descendants, demands they made even earlier in 2008, the ink on the original law barely dry<sup>50</sup>. Proposals in 2019 further expanded these proposed modifications. Vox, the only right-wing party to ever write on the issue, has included the blunt statement "immediately repeal the Law of Historical Memory", in both its manifestos issued so far<sup>51,52</sup>. Vox has also gone on the label the law and its possible successor, the Democratic Memory Law, as "totalitarian"<sup>53</sup>. The PP has also been more vocal about this latest law than it was in 2007. Several prominent current and former deputies, including former Prime Minister Aznar, have called for the immediate repeal of the law if the bill becomes law, whenever the right is returned

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<sup>45</sup> *Programa Electoral 2011*. Madrid, ES: Partido Socialista Obrero Español, 2011

<sup>46</sup> *Programa Electoral 2015*. Madrid, ES: Partido Socialista Obrero Español, 2015

<sup>47</sup> *Programa Electoral 2016*. Madrid, ES: Partido Socialista Obrero Español, 2016

<sup>48</sup> *Programa Electoral 28A 2019*. Madrid, ES: Partido Socialista Obrero Español, 2019

<sup>49</sup> *Programa Electoral 2011*. Madrid, ES: Izquierda Unida, 2011

<sup>50</sup> *Programa Electoral 2008*. Madrid, ES: Izquierda Unida, 2008

<sup>51</sup> *Programa Electoral 28A 2019*. Madrid, ES: Vox, 2019

<sup>52</sup> *Programa Electoral 10N 2019*. Madrid, ES: Vox, 2019

<sup>53</sup> Xidias, J. (2021). *From Franco to Vox: Historical Memory and the Far Right in Spain*. Centre for Analysis of the Radical Right.

to power<sup>54</sup>. How adamant all parties are to commit to and fight out the details of this second large memory law remains to be seen.

## II. MASS GRAVES & VICTIMS OF WAR

The immense human toll of the civil war remains extremely underexplored. The years of silence on the grim realities of Spain's bloody civil war and dictatorship remained well past the death of Franco. Perhaps most provocative and ever-present are the many mass graves scattered across the country. Data available currently puts the known quantity of mass graves at some 2,000 at the absolute least<sup>55</sup>. Some estimates put the total number of victims in mass graves in excess of 100,000. These statistics do not even include the individuals buried at Franco's great necropolis at Valle de los Caídos, which may number some additional 33,000<sup>56</sup>. This issue, combined with others relating to victims of war are a frequent topic in party manifestos, at least on the left. For the right, the issue is not discussed. Neither Vox nor the PP have yet addressed it. The Cs did once, in their first electoral manifesto in the 2015 elections, where they called for the return to government funded exhumations but have since dropped the issue in their manifestos<sup>57</sup>. This may have to do with what many believe has been an ongoing rightward shift in party since its original formation as a more center-left party in 2006<sup>58</sup>. That same year, the first general elections manifesto discussing the issue was released by the IU. They demanded "that the actions of locating, exhuming, and identifying the graves or burials of the victims of Francoism be done by the AAPP (Administraciones Públicas)"<sup>59</sup>. This statement was a reaction to state bankrolled

<sup>54</sup> García, E. (2021, November 18). *El PP cree que juzgar los crímenes de la dictadura "dinamita los acuerdos de la Transición."* El País.

<https://elpais.com/espana/2021-11-18/el-pp-cree-que-juzgar-los-crimenes-de-la-dictadura-dinamita-los-acuerdos-de-la-transicion.html>

<sup>55</sup> Fernández-Álvarez, J.-P., Rubio-Melendi, D., Martínez-Velasco, A., Pringle, J. K., & Aguilera, H.-D. (2016). Discovery of a mass grave from the Spanish Civil War using Ground Penetrating Radar and forensic archaeology. *Forensic Science International*, 267, e10–e17. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.forsciint.2016.05.040>

<sup>56</sup> AFP/The Local. (2021, March 31). *Spain to exhume bodies of civil war victims at Valley of the Fallen*. The Local Spain; The Local.

<https://www.thelocal.es/20210331/spain-to-exhume-bodies-of-civil-war-victims-at-valley-of-the-fallen/>

<sup>57</sup> *Programa Electoral 2015*. Madrid, ES: Ciudadanos, 2015

<sup>58</sup> Zulet, Í. (2016, February 5). *Ciudadanos: del centro a la derecha según el CIS*. El Español.

[https://www.elespanol.com/espana/20160204/99740323\\_0.html](https://www.elespanol.com/espana/20160204/99740323_0.html)

<sup>59</sup> *Programa Electoral 2008*. Madrid, ES: Izquierda Unida, 2008

exhumations that the government itself was not directly conducting, a point that was deeply controversial within left-leaning parties. IU has without fail brought this point up and similar points calling for the reburial or repatriation of the fallen in manifestos since. This constant advocacy makes sense historically, as many of those who died during the Civil War and White Terror were members of the same political parties that make up the IU today, especially the Communist Party<sup>60</sup>. The same may be also true for Podemos, who have dedicated up to 80% of their historical memory content to this issue in some cases<sup>61</sup>. The PSOE has pursued similar rhetorical lines in all manifestos since 2011. In their most recent manifesto, they declared “In accordance with the associations of Historical Memory, the Government will establish a program for the exhumation of victims of the Franco regime, advancing the principle of recognition and reparation”<sup>62</sup>. This promise, which they will attempt to address in the pending Democratic Memory Law, is effectively trying to reinvigorate the 2007 legislation nullified by PP rule. This issue above all others, appears only in the discourse of one side, the left. For the time being, right-wing parties appear to have a tendency for public non-addressal. Perhaps the strongest evidence comes in the Cs championing of the issue and its subsequent abandonment, as well as that of Valle de los Caídos in favor of silence.

### III. FRANCOIST SYMBOLS & THE VALLE DE LOS CAÍDOS

Perhaps the most emblematic issue with historical memory in Spain is also the most visible; the monuments, streets, and places that retain the symbolism and propaganda of Francoist rule. The most prominent and important example of this is Valle de los Caídos. If Saddam Hussein had Babylon, if Caligula had the Nemi ships, Franco had Valle de los Caídos. A massive subterranean basilica complex, it serves as the resting places for thousands of dead on both sides, many of the forced laborers who built it, and formerly the dictator himself. Among the issues that have come to head at the site are the role of Catholicism and the Catholic church at the site, events held in the area, the presence of Franco and Rivera’s bodies, and what to do

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<sup>60</sup> Preston, P. (1976). The Dilemma of Credibility: The Spanish Communist Party, the Franco Regime and After. *Government and Opposition*, 11(1), 65–83. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1477-7053.1976.tb00196.x>

<sup>61</sup> *Programa Electoral 28A 2019*. Madrid, ES: Podemos, 2019

<sup>62</sup> *Programa Electoral 10N 2019*. Madrid, ES: Partido Socialista Obrero Español, 2019

with the thousands buried in the basilica. IU's 2008 manifesto represents the first instance of this keynote in a political manifesto, in which they demand the "transfer of the mortal remains of Franco and Primo de Rivera to the place where their relatives propose"<sup>63</sup>. Though the 2007 law allowed for the removal of Francoist symbols, it did not address the bodies of these infamous fascist figures, the fact was that the dictator's body had itself become one of the most prominent symbols of Francoism, a physical relic, object of pilgrimage, and attraction that served as a premier symbol for the validity and memory for his regime. No other parties spoke of such issues until 2015 when both Podemos and Cs mentioned symbols of the dictatorship in their debut manifestos. Cs wrote that they were "in favor of the withdrawal of shields, insignia, plaques and other objects or commemorative mentions of the exaltation of the Civil War and the repression of the Dictatorship"<sup>64</sup>. This would prove to be a statement not kept, and it would be the last time the party mentioned the issue in a manifesto. Podemos' arguments followed the same as the IU and Cs, reoccurring in all documents except in April 2019. PSOE addressed the issue for the first time in a manifesto that election, saying that they would continue the "administrative procedure to exhume the dictator Franco from Valle de los Caídos"<sup>65</sup>. A year before, the Sánchez administration had narrowly passed an amendment to the 2007 Historical Memory Law that allowed for Franco's removal from the site<sup>66</sup>. On October 19th, 2019, the Franco family attended the exhumation they had tried so hard to prevent. In a final act of defiance, they appointed priest Ramón Tejero to oversee the reinterment, the son of the mastermind of the failed 1981 coup<sup>67</sup>. These events predictably generated extensive controversy at both home and abroad. PSOE's electoral manifesto that November stated, "after completing the exhumation process of Francisco Franco, we will remove all the Francoist symbols that still remain in public places"<sup>68</sup>. Despite the successful removal of Franco, this issue is likely only to increase in prominence. The left is now seeking the exhumation of José Primo de Rivera, founder of the Spanish Falange, a move that will undoubtedly lead to further controversy. Meanwhile, the right, especially in the form of Vox,

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<sup>63</sup> *Programa Electoral 2008*. Madrid, ES: Izquierda Unida, 2008

<sup>64</sup> *Programa Electoral 2015*. Madrid, ES: Ciudadanos, 2015

<sup>65</sup> *Programa Electoral 28A 2019*. Madrid, ES: Partido Socialista Obrero Español, 2019

<sup>66</sup> Ortega, L. (2018, September 13). El Congreso aprueba exhumar a Franco del Valle de los Caídos. *La Vanguardia*. <https://www.lavanguardia.com/politica/20180913/451785931186/congreso-aprueba-exhumar-franco-valle-de-los-caidos.html>

<sup>67</sup> Jones, S. (2019, October 24). "Spain is fulfilling its duty to itself": Franco's remains exhumed. *The Guardian*; *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/oct/24/franco-exhumation-spain-dictator-madrid>

<sup>68</sup> *Programa Electoral 10N 2019*. Madrid, ES: Partido Socialista Obrero Español, 2019

has shown increasing hostility towards such actions.

#### IV. THE MEMORY OF TERRORISM

The data discussed above shows a clear and prevalent neglect of issues of historical memory by right-wing parties in electoral manifestos. This trend is seen in the patterns of both the PP, Vox, and the Cs. Only one subject within historical memory appears to be defy their silence, the memory of terrorism. Of manifestos issued since 2000, 65.6% of unique documents have mentioned the historical memory of terrorism or the victims of terrorism. Much of this content concerns the impact of ETA and the dirty war waged in the twilight of Franco and first decades of democracy. However post-9/11 and following 11M, focus also shifted to the memory of fundamentalist Islamic terror. Though some of this history does not relate to larger issues of memory related to Francoism or Civil War, it is also historical memory and its treatment in manifestos as collective memory is just as polarizing and critical. The PP has mentioned the memory of terrorism in every of their last 8 manifestos but has never mentioned another keynote in any manifesto. In 2008, an election where terrorism loomed large, they wrote, “terrorism has produced serious damage, harm and suffering for all Spanish society, inside and outside the Basque country, especially for the victims”<sup>69</sup>. Here involving both ETA, hence the mention of the Basque country, and “outside” terrorism such as 11M and Islamist attacks. Vox has gone even further, saying that they would “prevent homages to murderers, banishing any memory of criminals and honoring the memory of all victims of separatist and Islamist terrorism, from schools to the last official body”<sup>70</sup>. Statements like this make it clear that the right-wing is by no means disinterested by historical memory, but simply wants to legislate on different memories. Left-wing parties have periodically offered statements on terrorism, especially following major terrorist events, but they do not take center stage in the manner seen in manifestos from right-wing parties. They also tend to condemn the Spanish state’s bloody counter-terrorism

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<sup>69</sup> *Programa Electoral 2008*. Madrid, ES: Partido Socialista Obrero Español, 2008

<sup>70</sup> *Programa Electoral 28A 2019*. Madrid, ES: Vox, 2019

methods, namely under Aznar, which also left countless victims<sup>71</sup>. PSOE and IU have both promised justice for these victims in their manifestos. All parties have varying solutions or ideas including government compensation, memorials, museums, and official recognition for victims of terrorism. However, unlike with the keynotes, they are not very comprehensive, and leave more questions than answers. Condemning terrorism and saying your party sympathizes with its victims is easy, forming concrete policy from this vague rhetoric is more difficult.

## CONCLUSION

Spain's political parties, as decision-making entities, and reflections of popular sentiment, provide a valuable view into how collective historical memory exists and is retold in Spanish society at-large. Ideologically and historically different political parties hold or present differing views and memories of a shared past. Influential in the ways parties grapple with memory are both the perceptions of the public, as well the deep-rooted legacies and leftovers of Francoist rule. Political parties serve as vehicles of memory, and their manifestos the roadmaps of how and what they will remember. Spain's violent and tumultuous 20th century leaves an immense array of topics, stories, and truths to still be discovered, told, and understood. The Pact of Forgetting naively failed to make a nation forget its past. Instead, it transferred the duty of memory to further generations, creating a modern, deeply political crisis of memory. Historical memory is now, undoubtedly and for the foreseeable future, a preeminent political issue which political parties will not be easily able to ignore. Manifestos from almost all parties now show a significant increase in not only the quantity of space dedicated to memory but also to the diversity of topics within historical memory that are discussed. In the coming years, Spain will continue to explore historical memory, so much is certain. However, it remains to be seen which memories it will explore. In legislating and retelling national memories and narratives, there are inherent selectivities, as seen in the many positions of political parties. For the left, in the form of the PSOE, Podemos, and IU, their fight will be to address historical memory in the legislative system. Mass graves, Francist symbols, victims of war, educational approaches, and

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<sup>71</sup> Heath-Kelly, C., & Fernández de Mosteyrín, L. (2020). The political use of victimhood: Spanish collective memory of ETA through the war on terror paradigm. *Review of International Studies*, 1–18.  
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compensation will dominate their rhetoric and actions. Their anti-Francoist backgrounds and history ensure that the Franco dictatorship will receive the lion's share of their attention. For centrist parties such as the Cs, the fight will be ignored. The data shows that historical memory is often an issue popular at the peripheries, with the more stalwart left and right. Here, as with many other issues in an increasingly polarized political landscape, the remaining centrist party is at a crossroads. For the right, such as PP and Vox, historical memory threatens and disrespects the existing narratives and political norms. Vox and more conservative wings of the PP have shown it in their more open hostility towards the left's ideas on memory than seen under Zapatero. However, by invoking the memory of terrorism, the right plays the exact same political games the left plays with Francoism. Whether for genuine concern, diversion, or to garner support, this has become their flagship issue of memory. For all parties across the ideological spectrum, historical memory has become a polarizing and unavoidable issue. It will now be up to Spanish voters and their chosen parties to do justice to memory. At stake is the mythos of Spain's past, how both current and future generations interact with and tell it, but most of all, which very histories are told.

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