

**POLITICAL TRANSITION AND
HISTORICAL MEMORY IN
SPAIN: DISCOURSES AND
PRACTICES**

Universiteit Leiden

MA History
(Political Culture and National Identities) – Thesis

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INTRODUCTION

The Transition to democracy in Spain, which took place from the mid-seventies following the death of the dictator Francisco Franco, falls within a wide wave of democratization which took place in the last decades of the 20th Century. This tendency, coined in historiography as the *Democracy's Third Wave*, refers to the biggest ever process of extension of democratic systems, initiated in 1974 with the fall of Salazar in Portugal, and followed by the Spanish experience. It also embraces the experiences in Latin America in the 1980's, Asia Pacific countries from 1986 to 1988, and Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The case of Spain was a point of reference somehow exemplary of successful transitions, especially viewed from Eastern Europe and the experiences in Latin America. Notwithstanding, this thesis focuses on the shadows, rather than in the highlights of the Spanish process.

Although the period of the Spanish Transition to democracy will be outlined for proper contextualization in order to explain the conditions of the 70's and the 80's after the dictatorship, this thesis is not meant to analyse the Transition itself. Rather, it focuses on the current state of historical memory regarding the forgotten victims of the war and the dictatorship, and its connection with the period of the Transition. In historiographical terms, it is typified as a history of collective memories.

The historical memory is allocated in the field of a latent political conflict, which finds its axial reference in the years of the Transition. The Civil War entailed a deep shock; the Dictatorship repression; the Transition, somehow, added a new layer of soil over the memory of those Spaniards who had been forgotten and repressed for almost 40 years of regime. The necessary reforms to make the change from one regime to another were built on the forgetting of despotism and the murdered. The victims of the dictatorship, through a tacit pact made by the majoritarian political forces at the time of the Transition, both the reformist sectors of the regime, and the opposing forces progressively incorporated in the body of the new order, were side-lined in order to create a favourable context which sought to dismantle the political structures of the dictatorship, and build a democracy.

According to the British historian Paul Preston: *after Franco's death, the will of contributing to the reestablishment and the consolidation of the democracy had serious effects on both historians and the population in*

*general. The renunciation of revenge came as a tacit agreement of the entire political spectrum, with the exception of some lunatics*¹

The Amnesty Law (Ley de Amnistía) of October of 1977, presented by Unión de Centro Democrático (UCD),² the party in power at that moment, and supported by the vast majority of the political forces except for the Alianza Popular (AP)³, who refrained, legally ratified this tacit decision. Although this norm was theoretically intended to release all political opponents of the dictatorship who were still in jail, the ordinance also gave amnesty to all acts of political intentionality committed before the 15th of December of 1975. In this sense, it had the paradoxical effect of benefitting all those who were responsible for the crimes of the dictatorship through considering, among all the amnestied crimes, those of rebellion and sedition.⁴ This decision had the effect of blocking any kind of legal action being brought against the political and military leaders of the old regime. Quite the opposite, many who had held high-levels of responsibility simply adapted into the reality of the new democracy. The official memory instituted in the new system avoided the past in order to keep away from the conflict of facing a process of recognition of all those largely excluded by the Francoist Regime. Silence was, thus, an official strategy to overcome the difficult challenge of building a democracy.

The core of the thesis gravitates towards two particular issues: the memory and the forgetfulness of the Civil War -how these conditioned the process of the Transition-, but especially important is the generational perception of the consequences of that pact as seen from today. Can we find a generational gap about the historical memory of the Spanish Civil War and the Francoism between those who directly lived and experienced the Transition, and those who did not? If this question is found affirmative, which are the main discursive differences and how are they articulated? In this way, this thesis tries to assess if the memory-or the lack of memory- is a fundamental reality which can condition a process of change, and if it has a generational basis.

¹ Preston P. (1990), 'Venganza y reconciliación: la Guerra Civil española y la Memoria histórica', in *La voluntad del humanismo. Homenaje a Juan Marichal*, Ciplijauskaité, B. y Maurer, Ch. (eds.), Barcelona: Anthropos, p. 74.

² UCD was a political coalition of centrist political parties led by Adolfo Suárez, the first Prime Minister of the new democracy in Spain.

³ AP was a conservative political party founded in the Transition (1976), mainly by former francoist politicians and elites. In 1989 it suffered a process of refounding, becoming the current *Partido Popular (PP)*.

⁴ Law 46/1977, Boletín Oficial del Estado, Madrid, 15th October 1977.

1.1. Historiography

In December 1980, an article published in the left-wing newspaper *El País* by the philosopher and sociologist José Vidal Beneyto warned of the hazards of building the consensus of the new democratic system on the forgetfulness of the war and the dictatorship: *the 'political miracle' of reconciliation requires a total cancellation of the collective memory (...) there is no action without identity, and no identity without history. The origins should be recovered, that is each individual recovering its own [he was referring to the existence of different memories and narratives] (...) because a democracy is a starting point rather than a point of arrival. Not a denial of the conflict, but the possibility of a political explanation of it.*⁵

This quote is an exception to the general discourse of the time. Voices that disagreed with the general trend towards forgetfulness of the war and the dictatorship tacitly established during the Transition were a rarity during the eighties and nineties in historiographical terms. The last chapter of *La cruzada de 1936. Mito y memoria*, published in 2006 by the historian Alberto Reig Tapia, and which deals with the memory of the Civil War and the dictatorship, introduces an interesting anecdote in this respect. In September of 1997, a German student showed her interest in studying the political memory of Francoism. During the interview they had, the student showed bewilderment at the sparse bibliography about the issue of memory in Spain, at a time when in the rest of Europe memory studies was an emergent genre in vogue.⁶

The pioneer in making a systematic study of the memories of the dictatorship and the Transition was the historian and sociologist Paloma Fernández Aguilar. In 1996 she published the monograph *Memoria y olvido de la Guerra Civil española*.⁷ Her viewpoint on the memory of the Civil War was that it decisively influenced the development of the Transition through the fear for a new confrontation among Spaniards. In this sense, memory and learning are related categories, which somehow affected Spaniards when they had to confront the change of regime. This fear, paradoxically, helped to overcome the process of the Transition in a relatively peaceful way. The 'collective amnesia', thus, was the tactic chosen to conduct such a complicated process. Those defeated in the Civil War -the 'other Spain'-, re-joined the body of the

⁵ Vidal Beneyto, J. (1980), 'La victoria que no cesa', *El País* [Online], 14 December.

⁶ This anecdote can be found in: Reig Tapia, A. (2006), *La cruzada de 1936. Mito y memoria*, Madrid: Alianza, pp. 376-377.

⁷ Fernández Aguilar, P. (1996), *Memoria y olvido de la Guerra Civil española*, Madrid: Alianza. For an english translation: Fernández Aguilar, P. (2002), *Memory and amnesia: the role of the Spanish Civil War in the Transition to democracy*, New York: Berghahn books

new democratic system gradually and in silence, but without ever being rehabilitated.

From the year 2000 onwards, the publication of studies and articles about political memory exploded. In 2003, the Spanish historian Santos Juliá published a polemical article called 'Echar al olvido. Memoria y amnistía en la Transición', in which he made a clear distinction between the concepts of 'amnesia' and 'echar al olvido'.⁸ The first term, in his opinion, implies an involuntary loss of the memory, while the second -translatable approximately as 'to leave aside'- refers to a conscious will to forget. In this second case, he clearly attributes to the term the will of turning the page of the history. Juliá, thus, made a tough defence of the tacit agreements of the Transition about the memory: *in recent years the denunciation of the Transition has proliferated because of its artificial basis in silence (...) the capacity for forgetting is not a synonym of amnesia. Someone who suffers amnesia does not remember anything. In this sense, forgetting is the lack of a capacity for remembering (...) but when someone wants to forget something consciously, it is because the memory is still alive (...) a society cannot provide an amnesty, or 'leave aside' a past if it is not remembered transparently (...) when a memory is avoided in order to prevent pain or fear, then the past keeps hidden and censored. In such a case, it is impossible to put things right with the past and to dissociate from it; it is impossible to make an amnesty.*⁹

The main point made by Juliá in his article was to criticize the contemporary use of the memory of the war and the dictatorship as a political weapon. From a functionalist viewpoint, then, he considered the agreements regarding forgetfulness of the past made during the Transition as completely positive, rejecting the views of those who argued the scarce development of democracy in Spain was a consequence of this tacit pact.

Julio Pérez Serrano also investigated in the problematic of the historical memory in Spain in an article in 2004.¹⁰ In his opinion, the Transition was constructed as the founding myth of the new democratic system. A symbolic

⁸ Juliá, S. (2003), 'Echar al olvido. Memoria y amnistía en la Transición', *Claves de razón práctica*, vol. 129, pp. 14-24.

⁹ Juliá, S. *op. cit.* pp. 14-16-17

¹⁰ Pérez Serrano, J. (2004), 'Experiencia histórica y construcción social de las memorias. La Transición española a la democracia', *Pasado y memoria. Revista de historia contemporánea*, vol. 3, pp. 5-78.

re-founding of the State, which needed a new national identity after Francoism. Within this reality there was no room for all the polemics associated with historical memory: *it is not strange that the commemorative policies developed by the different governments of the democracy, have been focused on keeping the Transition alive, sweetening the problems, magnifying successes, and condemning to forgetfulness those people and episodes which could challenge the official memory.*¹¹

He concluded that the contemporary process of recuperation of the historical memory from the Civil War and the dictatorship had two different sources. On the one hand, the frustration generated by the renunciations linked to the use of the silence of the past, and on the other, the emergence of a new generation that was not traumatized by the war, and which had not known Franco.

Also in 2004, the Valencian historian Ismael Saz published a book in which he uses a play of words and wonders what causes 'the inability of the past to happen' in Spain.¹² Throughout the book, he focuses on the origin of the sudden contemporary denunciation of the forgetfulness of the Transition after so many years of democracy. In his opinion, the existence of a consolidated democracy, together with a change in social demands about the memory in the different contexts of the Transition on one hand, and the current Spain on the other, helps to explain this development.

This second point is particularly interesting because he contemplates, in turn, four different motifs to understand this change in the social demands. The first has to do with the new generation's curiosity about a past that they do not conceive of clearly at all. The second is based on a recently widespread idea about the necessity for dealing directly with the past, in order to achieve a firm democratic culture. The third is the requirement for justice and moral reparations for the forgotten victims. And finally, he places this change within a larger international trend for reinterpreting national pasts which, despite arriving later in Spain, finally gained force in public opinion and the historiography –memory studies-.¹³

In 2006, in the above-mentioned monograph by A. Reig Tapia about the Civil War, a chapter is dedicated to those defeated during the Civil War in Spain and their memories. The historian staked out a position that is deeply critical of

¹¹ Pérez Serrano, J. *op. cit.* p. 54

¹² Saz, I. (2004), *Fascismo y Franquismo*, Valencia: PUV

¹³ Saz, I. (2004), *op. cit.* pp. 285-286-287

the 'forgetting policies'. In his opinion, the issues of memory related to the War and the dictatorship have always centred on a neutral and equidistant position, which consisted in trying to narrate facts without engaging in polemics -an attempt to unproblematize-. In this sense, he maintains that this ambivalent attitude is complicit with a decision -the silence-, which did not allow Spain to democratize itself profoundly: *the understandable will of consensus did not allow us to solve numerous problems inherited from Francoism adequately which, as with improperly buried corpses, ends up finally on the surface (...) the current democratic system suffers from the lack of a solid democratic political culture. An essential basis, as political scientists and historians know, for the sustainability, defence and durability of a democracy itself.*¹⁴

Two years later, in 2008, Paloma Fernández Aguilar published a new work in which she picks up from her thesis of 1996, enriching it through adding little nuances.¹⁵ If in the first book she considered the memories of the Civil War as an unquestionable catalyst for the final agreements reached in the Transition, in this new volume, Fernández Aguilar downplayed this position by proposing that the trauma from the memory was the principal cause for the final agreement, without considering it as essential. By doing so, she basically relativized the central place of the memory as an explanatory factor. She opened the door, then, to a rich range of explanatory possibilities for the Transition beyond memory.

Josefina Cuesta, in a monograph of 2008 on the history of memory in Spain in the 20th Century, was very critical of the uses of memory as a political weapon.¹⁶ She differentiated between 'making policies of memory', and 'making politics with the past'. In this sense, she made a clear differentiation between memory, history, and politics. She defended the necessary task of historians as the guarantors of the justice, in front of those who only seek to profit from the conflictive past: *sometimes, the historiographical production is accompanied by memorial recuperation, with tributes, celebrations and acts of redemption. A dissident or alternative explanation of history is produced in many cases as a form of incorporating silenced topics, when the archives or the oral sources allow it. In any case, it is a necessary nature for historiography*

¹⁴ Reig Tapia, A. (2006), *op. cit.* pp. 374-375

¹⁵ Fernández Aguilar, P. (2008), *Políticas de la memoria y memorias de la política*, Madrid: Alianza

¹⁶ Cuesta, J. (2008), *La odisea de la memoria. Historia de la memoria en España en el Siglo XX*, Madrid: Alianza

*to be inclusive, in order not to repeat the silences or the injustices of memory or some official histories.*¹⁷

In this sense, Cuesta considers historiography as the only tool engaged with historical justice, with its method of gradual incorporation of forgotten topics, either by the political context, or the political interests of certain groups. She shows, then, a markedly positivist viewpoint of the historiography, by considering that those who 'practice' history are beyond the political interests she mentions.

1.2. Methodology & parts

This thesis has three chapters. The first chapter deals with the context of the Transition, through its different controversies, developments, and memories. It will focus especially on the role of memory as a political and social spur at the time of the Transition, mainly using the theory of Fernández Aguilar in this respect. The consideration of this forgetfulness of the conflicting issues of the past –war and dictatorship-, and the non-resolution of conflict after decades of democracy, seeks to link that transitional period with the political and polarized charge of contemporary disputes about memory in Spain, as a topic which tends to reappear cyclically in the public debate.

The second chapter analyses the political debate which took place in the Congress of Deputies in 2006 regarding the proposed Law of Historical Memory. The socialist government led by Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodríguez Zapatero promoted this legislation as an answer to the demands, that had been growing especially since the early 2000s, of many different social and political actors who were asking for a revision of the national collective memory of the immediate past in general; and in particular, calling for the recovery of the bodies of victims of reprisals carried out by the dictatorship that had been buried in mass graves. The different discourses expounded by political groups in this parliamentary debate regarding the necessity of a process of recovering historical memory will be examined. The reason I have chosen to analyse this debate lies in its special condensation in one single document, detailing all the political discourses of the main political parties on the subject of the contemporary conflict of historical memory. In this sense, the second and third chapter of this thesis complement each other, since this last part is based on the analysis of first hand interviews around the historical memory conducted expressly for this thesis.

¹⁷ Cuesta, J. (2008), *op. cit.* p. 442

Thus, the parliamentary debate is, somehow, the official representative voices of the politics in Spain, whilst the interviews are the voices of individual citizens, even if they necessarily cannot be representative of the whole society –topic that will be exposed later-. Using the distinction made by Fernández Aguilar, it is an attempt to confront the *politics of memory* with the *memories of politics*.

The methodology used for this thesis is diverse. An extensive bibliography has been used in order to portray and to create a framework with references to other authors. Moreover, several references to the press, especially of recent articles, will be made, since the topic comprises notions closely connected with the present day. The second chapter is based on the analysis of the minutes of a debate which took place in the Congress of Deputies the 14th of December of 2006, when the Law of Historical Memory was discussed between the representatives of the different political parties with lawful presence in the House of sovereign. Finally, the last chapter is built through primary sources of oral nature. In November of 2014, 8 people were interviewed in the city of Valencia, on the topic of their memories about the Transition, the nature of their socialization about this period, and their opinions about the issue of historical memory. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, then examined for evidence of possible generational patterns in the discourses on the Transition and the historical memory.

1. THE TRANSITION

On the 17th and 18th of July of 1936, a failed military coup d'état against the democratic government of Spain led to a bloody civil war, which would extend for almost 3 years. An alliance of different right-wing sectors of the army, commanded by a group of generals, with the support of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, rose up in arms against the democratic regime of the Second Republic, ruled at that time by the Popular Front, which was a coalition of different left wing parties.

The victims of the Civil War have always been an issue of debate. Taking the numbers from the work of the historian Julian Casanova, the totality exceeded 600,000 deaths. Apart from the victims of the direct confrontation, more than 100,000 people were murdered in the rear-guard by the rebel forces, and 55,000 in the rear-guard of the republican sector. There are estimates of that more than 270,000 war prisoners were held in jails and concentration camps after the war. According to the current data, between 50,000 and 60,000 people were executed in the post-war period by the Francoist forces. These figures do not include those who died by starvation, disease, or unaccounted arbitrary murders.¹⁸ Moreover, certain investigations suggest that a huge number of the disappeared are not included in any register.¹⁹ Thus, determining an approximate number of the victims is impossible. Nowadays, Spain is the country with the second largest number of victims of enforced disappearance in the world, surpassed only by Cambodia.²⁰

A nuance should be underlined between the victims affected during the course of the war on the one hand, and the victims of the subsequent period to the end of the conflict on the other hand. While the former are casualties produced by an armed conflict, the latter were persecuted by the actions of an established government. In this specific case the Francoist dictatorship that ruled Spain with iron hand for 36 years -1939 to 1975-. In this sense, the victims of each moment are completely different, and can never be equivalent.

The victims of the war in Francoist camp were fully recognized and memorialized during the years when Franco ruled. The most relevant and significant display of this is *El Valle de los Caídos (Valley of the Fallen)*, a large

¹⁸ For all this data see: Juliá, S. Casanova, J. (1999) *Víctimas de la Guerra civil*, Madrid: Temas de hoy.

¹⁹ J. Casanova, F. Espinosa, C. Mir, F. Moreno Gómez, (2004), *Morir, matar, sobrevivir: la violencia en la dictadura de Franco*, Madrid: Crítica, p. 108.

²⁰ Taken from: Junquera, N. (2013) 'Jueces para la democracia acusa al Gobierno de incumplir la ley de memoria', El País [Online], 9 Oct.

monument built between 1940 and 1958 outside of Madrid, constructed by thousands of republicans who had lost the war and were employed as forced labourers. There, thousands of the dead from the Nationalist front are buried. Franco himself was also interred there. Beyond the archetypical example of this huge monument, the country is full of monuments revering those *caídos por España -fallen for Spain-*.

On the 20th of November 1975, Franco died in the Madrid palace of El Pardo. From that moment onwards, the period known as the Transition started. It constituted the period in which Spain conducted a political process to become a democracy, after 36 years of an autocratic dictatorship. Although some historians have tended to consider this period chronologically from the death of the dictator in 1975 until 1986, when Spain joined the European Union, the most widely accepted period in historiographical terms spans from November of 1975 to October of 1982, when the *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE, or Socialist Party)²¹ won the third democratic elections.

As the result of the whole process of the Transition, the shape of the Spanish state as it currently exists was constituted. Before dying, Franco named Juan Carlos I as his successor as head of state, with the title of King. The King, in turn, appointed Adolfo Suárez, a young politician from the previous regime's apparatus, as Prime minister in July of 1976. In November of 1976 the Francoist parliament approved with 81% of the votes the Ley para la reforma política (Law for the political reformation). This text, which formally laid down the last of the fundamental laws of the dictatorship, created a framework for a gradual democratization of the country, using ambiguous language in order to maintain the expectations of both the hard sectors of the regime opposed to the democratization and the democratic opposition. The idea was to develop the process 'from the law to the law', without rupture. A month later, this legal text was approved in a national referendum, with a 94,17% of votes in favour.

The political parties were gradually incorporated into this system, and in June of 1977 Spain held its first democratic elections after 40 years of dictatorship. Union de Centro Democrático (*UCD*), a coalition of centrist parties in favour of a legal, gradual and pacific resolution in the Transition –'from the law to the law-', which was headed by the same Adolfo Suárez, won power with

²¹ The *PSOE* is the historical Spanish Social Democrat political party, founded in 1879. It is the party which has ruled Spain for the longest periods since the return of democracy. The first period lasted fourteen years (1982-1996), and the second one almost eight years (2004-December of 2011).

simple majority. He became, then, the first Prime Minister of the new democratic system chosen by free elections.

The whole Transition was full of tension, both social and political. One of the main turning points of the whole process in this respect was the legalization of the Communist Party (PCE) in April of 1977, just a few months before the first elections. This party had played an essential role in the articulation of the resistance within Spain during the years of the dictatorship, and its legalization implied a critical point in the process of integration of political forces opposed to the dictatorship within the new system.

In December of 1978, during the first tenure of Suárez, the democratic Constitution was approved by general referendum, with the support of a huge majority of the electorate. The new system, thus, took officially, and through democratic means, the form of a parliamentary monarchy. The Constitution has been during all the years of democracy the reference point around which the system rotates.

Another decisive turning point of the Transition process took place on the 23rd of February 1981, when an ultra right military group tried to conduct a coup d'état to overturn the democracy by holding the Congress of Deputies hostage and occupying the city of Valencia. These military men were part of *El Bunker*, a political movement which was completely opposed to any kind of democratic opening, and which was made up by many personalities coming from the regime. After hours of tension the coup failed due to the faction's isolation. From that moment onwards, the doubts about the consolidation of the new democracy seemed to dissipate gradually. In October of 1982, finally, the PSOE, led by Felipe González, won the third democratic election with an absolute majority, giving rise to a shift in the balance of power, and contributing to a normalization of the alternation of power.

The years of the Transition were conflict ridden. The main debate in that period was whether the Transition had to be conducted through a rupture with the previous regime, or through reform; eventually the second option won. Society passed suddenly from a state of profound indifference and apathy towards politics, promoted by the regime of Franco for almost 40 years, to a state of constant social and political upheaval. The magnitude of the challenge was enormous. In this panorama, the memory of the Civil War played a decisive role. In words of the historian Javier Tusell: *the paradox is that in the Spanish case the war was not a mere historic milestone, but the political justification par excellence for the maintenance of the regime that had emerged from it. Actually, society had always been divided between winners and losers* [of the

Civil War] *until the death of Franco*.²² In this way, the great challenge was to build a new system on the basis of the reconciliation of both sides.

The decisions regarding the memory -or the absence of memory- taken during those years full of uncertainty, were like notes played on a flute which extended through time and have constantly qualified, even today, the debates and discourses in the contemporary Spanish political panorama.

Nonetheless, demands for the recovery of what has been called historical memory have been constant during the democratic period. However, it was from the decade of the 2000's when, seemingly, these demands started to be more powerful and gained prominence on the political agenda. The seeds for this problematic issue, as will be developed through this thesis, were planted during the Transition.

²² Tussel, J. (2007), *La Transición a la democracia. [España 1975-1982]*, Madrid: Espasa, p. 40.

1.1. Memory as a crucial political factor in the Transition

The dictatorship of Francisco Franco, who ruled Spain for nearly 40 years, rested on a number of different legitimizing discourses, which constructed a narrative in order to provide the regime with a *soul* towards society. The population was socialized and educated under a strict ideological educational system, conceived to transmit these discourses which, over time, changed in response to several internal, but also external developments. In this sense, the coercion of dissent was applied to the body –due to the strong military and police oppression- and also upon the consciousness.

The official legitimating discourse applied by the Regime during the 40's and the 50's was based on the victory in the Spanish Civil War. In the collective imaginary of those who had lived the war, and those who did grow up during the dictatorship, the Second Republic came to be perceived in perversely negative terms. During the 60's, due to the will of the regime to end its international isolation, it tried to change its legitimizing discourse towards citizenship. From that moment onwards, the approach abandoned the terms of the victory in the war, and changed into a positive discourse based on the peace. Thus, in 1964 the regime commemorated the *25 years of peace*. The new narrative was focused on the capacity of the regime for ensuring social calm in a country which, according to this line of argument, had been traditionally confrontational.

In a propaganda documentary on Franco of 1964, one of the most important audio-visual documents bequeathed by the regime, this new argumentation for the legitimation of the regime can be found:

The sun is rising in the city (...) as many other cities in the fatherland, tragic sunrises used to take place here (...) cries of lamentation, rifle shots (...) but happily all these disgraces have already been forgotten, because all this happened a long time ago. 25 years ago (...) today is a special day because is going to be commemorated 25 years of peace [we can see then a military parade passing through the centre of Madrid]. This time the parade does not mean the same as always. It talks about peace and victory. But a really different victory, and much more complicated than the victory by the weapons. A total victory, where the defeated cannot be found (...) it is the victory of peace [Franco can be seen presiding over the parade], the man who won the

*war, has also won the peace. A peace which had been denied to Spaniards for centuries.*²³

From a legitimacy based on the origin of the dictatorship, the discourse changed into a legitimacy based on the exercise of power. The way in which the film language is being used in this fragment, builds an identification between peace on one hand, and Franco on the other.

Following the theory by Fernández Aguilar, the memories of the Second Republic and the Civil War predetermined the final direction the process of the Transition took. Objectively both these historical moments, the Second Republic and the 70's –the Transition- were completely dissimilar.²⁴ However, a generalized perception of instability was felt by a huge part of society during the last years of the dictatorial regime, and the founding years of the current democracy. Spaniards, after nearly 40 years of dictatorship had been educated in the idea of chaos under the republican regime; or what is the same, democracy. An association between both periods was unconsciously built. Thus, the desire to avoid a repetition of the drama which the Francoist discourse had constructed, vehemently pushed the will of Spaniards.

An obsessive idea went through the period of the Transition, influencing the construction of the new democratic regime that was erected: never again should there be a civil confrontation. This conception of the reconciliation of the two Spains was so powerful, that even the Franco Regime had tried to appropriate it during the 60's, through the abovementioned discourse of 25 years of peace.

Ismael Saz draws a chronological line for the idea of *never again* since 1939, just after the war was over. Different actors appear to have been persuaded by this idea, starting with the working classes, and spreading gradually upwards, among political parties and opposition groups. When Franco died, the idea of never again was nested in the heart of all the political forces.²⁵

But, what exactly was the situation of Spain when Franco died? What were the factors that led a stunned society to make an unconscious connection of continuity between the Spain of the decade of the 30's, and the 70's? Four points should be considered here: the economic crisis of the seventies, and

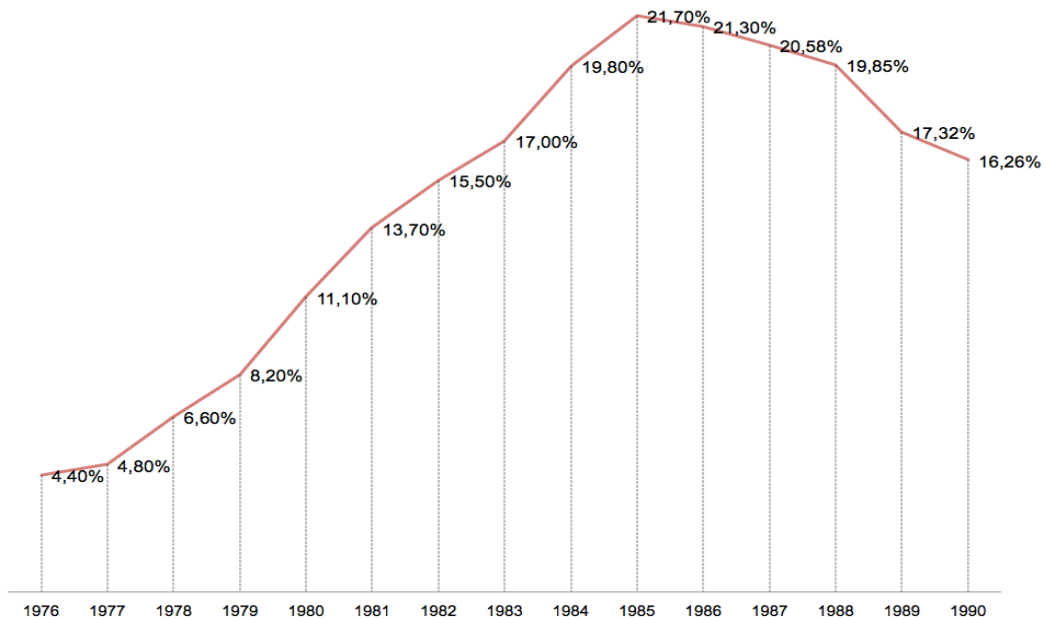
²³ This text is a literal transcription of a piece belonging to: Franco, ese hombre [film], Sáenz de Heredia, J.L. 1964, (103 min.).

²⁴ For a detailed comparison of both periods: Fernández Aguilar, P. (2008), *op. cit.* pp. 238-250.

²⁵ In: Saz, I. (2004), *op. cit.* p. 283

the dramatic social effects derived from it, the struggles of relevant social sectors against the dictatorship, terrorism, and the position of important sectors of the army on the national situation at that time.

The economy should be understood in an international perspective. During the seventies, the Western world suffered a critical economic impasse, started with the Oil crisis of 1973. Spain also experienced the devastating economic effects of this international crisis. The following graph shows the change in the unemployment rate in Spain between 1976 and 1990, in which a sharp increase can be observed, with a peak in 1985:



Together with this huge unemployment rate, arguably as a direct result of it, social conflict increased dramatically. Especially since the beginning of the decade, the labour organizations were very active, which contributed to create huge tensions. Spain was increasingly plagued by a growing wave of demonstrations and strikes. The evolution can be observed in this chart:

Years	Total strikes	Workers involved	Lost of working hours	Working days lost per worker
1966	205	93.429	1.785.462	2,3
1970	817	366.146	6.750.900	2,3
1975	855	556.371	10.355.120	2,3
1976	1.568	3.638.957	110.016.240	3,7
1979	1.789	5.752.304	171.067.049	3,7
1980	1.669	2.461.061	108.625.662	5,5

Source: López Pintor, R. (1986), Sociología industrial, Madrid: Alianza, p. 329

Curiously, in spite of strikes not being recognized as a right by the government of Franco, in 1973 Spain became the third country in Europe to experience serious labour conflict and lost working hours, after the United Kingdom and Italy.²⁶

Moreover, after decades of grassroots political organization within the national borders, the Communist Party of Spain (*PCE*) appeared as the main party, in terms of their organization and capacity to act. Its penetration in the bases of society was deep, through different mechanisms such as illegal trade unions, or illegal student organizations. This point is important to comprehend it as an important source of social tensions, since in the political discourse and the collective imaginary of francoism, communism was conceived as the source of all evil. In 1975 its affiliation was of barely 15.000 members. In 1977, in the moment of its legalization -9th of April-, members numbered around the 150.000. Hardly two months later, for the first democratic elections, more than 200.000 people were affiliated to the party.²⁷ The political motivations against the Regime overlapped with the labour conflicts derived from the economic crisis.

At the universities, conflict also increased exponentially in the last years of the Dictatorship and during the Transition. The clashes between the police and students occurred frequently during the last years of the Dictatorship. The pictures of these disputes are one of the most recurrent features of the collective imagination Spaniards have of the time of the regime's breakdown. Universities somehow became factories of dissent. Countless leftist political groups were acting within their domains. The establishment of alternative unions to the official and vertically structured students union controlled by the regime was an important trend.²⁸ The echoes of '68, even in the context of a dictatorship, were also loud in the Spanish universities.²⁹

²⁶ In: Navarrete Lorenzo, M. Puyal Español, E. 'Conflictividad laboral: la huelga', *Acciones e investigaciones sociales*, 1995, vol. 3, pp. 137-164.

²⁷ In: Erice Sebares, F. (2013) *Evolución histórica del PCE (II)*, Madrid: PCE, p. 25

²⁸ The sole nationwide union legally accepted by the regime in the university realm, was the *Sindicato Español universitario (SEU)*, which was controlled by the single party. At the end of the 60's, when the student's struggles against the dictatorship started to intensify, an widespread pattern was the creation of the *Sindicatos democráticos (SDEU)*. They were conceived as counterforces against the hegemony of the official union, and in spite of being completely illegal, they reached high levels of popularity within universities. Of course, they were not the only opposition forces within the academic world. But they were the most popular in numerical terms and also in terms of social prestige.

²⁹ To get further in this topic: Fernández Buey, F. (2000) *Por una universidad democrática*, Barcelona: Intervención cultural.

Terrorist actions by different armed groups also played a crucial role in the creation of social tension. Probably the most renowned terrorist organization, mainly due to the murder the 20th of December of 1973 of Luis Carrero Blanco, Prime minister of the dictatorship, was the Basque separatist and ultra-leftist organization *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA)*.



Appearance of the street where Carrero Blanco was killed with a bomb placed under the asphalt. The car he was travelling in was found inside the cloister of a contiguous convent.

Throughout the 7 years of the Transition, this organization killed 348 people through different terrorist actions, while it had previously only murdered 45 people throughout the entire duration of the dictatorship. But *ETA* was not the only terrorist organization. There were also the Maoist group *Grupos de Resistencia Antifascista Primero de Octubre (GRAPO)*, responsible for 84 murders, the Catalan independentist and ultra-leftist group *Terra Lliure*, responsible for 5 murders, and other small leftists grouping which were active in that period.

On the right there were also terrorists groups, such as *Alianza Apostólica Anticomunista (A,A,A)*, responsible for 26 murders, and many other extreme right small groupings, which were operative at that moment. The most famed action which these extreme-right groups conducted was the so-called *Matanza de Atocha*, in 1977. Five labour lawyers, in the sphere of the Communist party, were murdered by fascists in the centre of Madrid. The

pictures of the burial of the murdered, surrounded by thousands of raised fists, is one of the most well known images of the Transition.³⁰



Thousands of people escorted the coffins of the labour lawyers murdered the 24th of January of 1977 in Madrid. A bleak silence, and multitude of clenched fists surrounded the burial of the killed by right-wing extremists. The behaviour of the crowd was absolutely exemplary, and served as a demonstration of force for the Communist Party, which was still illegal. Less than three months later, by surprise, it was legalised.

Finally, the opinion of important sectors of the army regarding the democratic transition was completely negative. It is important to remember that the dictatorship, since its foundation, had an unquestionable military character. A change could imply a substantial loss of power for this crucial pillar of the regime. Within *el bunker*, the most extreme faction coming from the dictatorship against the democratization, an important section was formed by the military.

In conclusion, the growing political opposition to the regime, the economic crisis and its consequent labour conflict, the presence of terrorism, and the position of some hardline sectors of the regime played a crucial role in creating an widespread sensation of fright on one hand, and caution on the other. The country was used to the total absence of political disagreement performed in the public sphere, so most Spaniards lived through the challenge of the end of the dictatorial regime full of anxiety and bewilderment. Everyone was

³⁰ All the data and numbers given in: Benegas, J.M. (2004), *Diccionario de terrorismo*, Madrid: Espasa.

approaching democracy with inexperience; it was something to be learned through practice. The reminiscences of previous times as well as plenty of suffering and distress guided a huge part of Spaniards toward paths of caution and soberness.

The events and factual problems of the period of Transition, along with memory, created the sensation that the divisions of the '30s could be reproduced, and this lead many Spaniards to act under the guideline of trying, at all costs, to avoid it.

1.2. Memories and counter-memories

Critiques of the pacts reached in the Transition are not new at all. They have an historical background in certain sectors, especially those from the left and peripheral nationalist positions. Traditionally, there have been two objections to the memory of the Transition.

One element that was often criticized was the prominent role played by the political elites from the dictatorship in the process of democratization. The most widespread discourse about the Transition suggests that there was scarcely any citizenship mobilization included in the establishment of democracy. That it was a construction made possible thanks to a condescending assignment of the ruling class which was coming from the dictatorial regime. On the other hand, and more relevant to this thesis, are the objections to the 'gag rules'³¹ about memory, or what has been called the *Pact of Silence* about the memory of the Civil War and the dictatorship.

In historiographical terms, the reinterpretations of the Transition with regard to these points have progressed in the last years. The role played by grassroots movements of civil society is being investigated deeply.³² In the same way, the 'gag rules' and the silence are being also reinterpreted and put into question.

The awakening in the political realm of massive demands for the recuperation of repressed memory started in the beginning of the 2000's, when many associations began pushing their critiques of the Pact of Silence. The best-known is the *Asociación para la recuperación de la memoria histórica* (Association for the recuperation of historical memory - *ARMH*). It was the first to be founded, in the year 2000, and hereafter tens of regional associations with the same purpose were created during the 2000's all over the country. Their main goal, as it is defined on their statutes, is to recover the bodies of the thousands of people of the republican band executed during the war, and also

³¹ 'Gag rule' is a term taken from an article by the American political scientist Stephen Holmes. He ponders about the positive effects of constraining certain topics in the public political debate, in order to avoid unnecessary disputes. In spite of being an abstract concept, I decided to use it here due to its similarities with the topic of this thesis. In: Holmes, S. (1988), 'Gag rules or the politics of omission'. In: Elster, J. Slagstad, R. (eds.), *Constitutionalism and democracy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University press, pp. 19-58.

³² For this specific topic see: Rodríguez López, E. (2015), *Por qué fracasó la democracia en España. La Transición y el Régimen del 78*, Madrid: Traficantes de sueños. Or: Roca, J.M. (2013), *La oxidada Transición*, Madrid: La linterna sorda

the repressed of the genocide of the post-war which are still buried in mass graves.³³

Although other political parties, such as the Communist –later adhered within Izquierda Unida (IU), or peripheral nationalists- had traditionally supported these critiques, the demands were finally picked up officially in the mid-2000's by a majoritarian political force (PSOE) which, until that moment, had been ambivalent regarding the matter of memory.

The argument to do so, mainly expressed by younger members of the progressive parties, was that even if in the Transition certain rules of coexistence were accepted regarding the memory of the war and the dictatorship, the special context of the 70's, and the fear of being accused of looking back with anger and with the purpose of revenge had not allowed the progressive political forces to act under conditions of freedom to denounce the silence. Additionally, these younger politicians considered the recovery of the repressed memory absolutely necessary in order to recover a democratic tradition, which was erased by the dictatorship and the Transition. And finally, they also considered memory as something necessary to indemnify the victims, and relatives of the victims of the dictatorship.

The *Partido Popular (PP)*, which is the main political party of the right wing in Spain, and which embodies the liberal and conservative tendencies³⁴, was, on the other hand, the staunch defender of the status quo of the 'gag rules' from the Transition. This defence was based on the sacrosanct memory of the great achievements of the Transition, understood as an absolute democratic victory, which constitutes the core of the foundational myth of the current democratic system. Supposedly, this triumph was based on an almost total consensus among political forces and society during the years when the pillars of the democracy were instituted; an idyllic achievement, which has been expressed by its apologists as a 'rupture with consensus', and a tremendous example of how to move from a dictatorship to a democracy.³⁵ The will for recovering historical memory of the Civil War and the dictatorship is understood by the *PP* as desires for vengefulness.

³³ In their web page (memoriahistorica.org.es), they estimate a total of 2.246 mass graves all along the national territory.

³⁴ Together with the PSOE, both have been the main parties of the bipartisan political model which have prevailed in Spain during the almost 40 years of democracy.

³⁵ The *PSOE* has also traditionally participated, although with less intensity, in this narrative. However, the socialists were finally responsible of launching the Law of Historical Memory approved in 2007. Despite this fact, they still defend the Pact of Silence as a democratic duty. This matter will be analysed deeply in the coming chapter.

It is completely undisputed that one of the main accomplishments of the Transition times was the great consensus between the main political and social forces. However, in the political debates around historical memory, the discourses by those defenders of the Pact of Silence have tended to consider 'consensus' and 'historical memory' as if they were opposite terms, conceiving them as antithetical in order to express the idea that talking about the conflictive past would imply the rupture of the most valuable gain reached during the institution of the current democracy.

During the Transition the political actors involved decided to renounce to use the memory of the dictatorship as a legitimizing factor for democracy. The social and political conditions, as was shown in the previous chapter, were exceptional when the new regime had to be assembled. In words of Ismael Saz: *the Spanish democracy was born cured of memory [of the war], but sick of forgetfulness [of Francoism]*³⁶, because the war itself conditioned the pathway the Transition took, and the memory of Francoism remained out of the memory of the democratic system. This agreement about the silence worked successfully for many years, but a democracy is a space for different narratives and memories. The limits to the freedom of expression in a democracy are not a matter of the laws, but of the culture itself.

In 2011, a massive protesting movement which covered the whole Spanish geography took place. It was the so-called *15M* or *Movimiento de los indignados* (*Indignados movement*). That episode entailed the establishment of a new political subject, even if it was not concretely defined through a program, a clear and defined objective, or legal corporeality. This groan in the wind against the political establishment has crystallized into several political and social collectives and organizations, which have helped to channel this outburst of indignation that comes from the economic crisis, but also from a crisis of politics in a wider sense. A new political party, *Podemos*, has arisen from these protests, embodying them with a tangible body in order to interact in the playing field of official politics. It represents, somehow, the establishment of a new politics. Its general secretary, Pablo Iglesias, when elected for this position, made this statement on his discourse: *our aim is to open a constituent process, in order to open the 'padlock of 1978', and thus be able to talk about anything*.³⁷ When he referred to 'padlock', he meant the Pact of Silence, and

³⁶ In: Saz, I. (2004), *op. cit.* p.284.

³⁷ Europa Press, (2014, November 15), 'Discurso de Pablo Iglesias como secretario general de Podemos', [Video file].

through '1978', he meant the Transition, embodied in the figure of the Constitution.

In this way, the will among the new young political forces for recovering the debates about the historical memory seems to be alive and it is not only circumscribed to the political forces which, traditionally, have defended its necessity.

At this point, it might be questioned whether a new interest in memory debates about the problematic issue seemingly dragged on from the Transition times – embodied in the Pact of Silence and its 'gag rules'- is possible in the current times in Spain, and if this interest depends on the younger generation and its particular sensitivities about the past.

The core of this thesis will attempt to answer these questions through interviews. However, before reaching this point, an analysis on the parliamentary debate that took place in 2006 in the Law of Historical Memory will be conducted. In this way, the positions of the political parties can be understood. The idea is to try to understand these institutional discourses as inheritors of a political tradition born during the Transition.

2. MEMORY DEBATES

During the first legislature of the PSOE government of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, that lasted from April 2004, to March 2008, two different legislative resolutions concerning historical memory were promoted. Throughout 2006 and part of 2007, historical memory stayed in the core of legislative activity in Spain. This constituted a source of a huge political, social and media controversy.

First, on occasion of the 75th anniversary of the proclamation of the Second Republic, in April of 2006, the Spanish Congress of Deputies passed a law which declared that year the 'Year of historical memory'. The bill was proposed by *Izquierda Unida (IU)* and *Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds (ICV)*³⁸, partners of the government during the legislature, and was approved on July of that year with two amendments, one by PSOE, and the other by the Catalan group *Covergència i Unió (CIU)*³⁹. All political parties eventually voted in favour of the bill, except for Partido Popular (PP), which voted against, and *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC)*⁴⁰, which abstained because it considered the proposal very lenient.

Second, as a consequence of the rule which considered 2006 the 'Year of the historical memory', the Council of Ministers, in July of that year, approved the first draft of the text which later would be called the Law of Historical Memory. It faced opposition even from governmental partners who presented two alternative texts. It was debated in the Congress of Deputies in December of 2006, to address these discrepancies. The Law of Historical Memory finally entered into force on the 10th of December of 2007.⁴¹ With the purpose of understanding the analysis undertaken in this chapter, it will begin with a brief overview of the final content of the law.

However, the subject of analysis in this chapter is the parliamentary debate which took place on the 14th of December 2006. During this parliamentary session, the different political parties expressed their point of view about the

³⁸ *ICV* is a left-wing Catalan nationalist party. Launched in 1987, as well as nationalist it is ecologist.

³⁹ *CIU* is a right-wing nationalist party from Cataluña. Technically, it is a federation of two parties, which got associated in 1980, and have ruled Cataluña for long periods since the advent of the democracy.

⁴⁰ *ERC* is a catalan nationalist party founded in 1931. Its main aim is the Independence of the territories of catalan language.

⁴¹ The complete name of the law is Ley 52/2007, de 26 de Diciembre, por la que se reconocen y amplían derechos y se establecen medidas a favor de quienes padecieron persecución o violencia durante la Guerra civil y la dictadura. However, the most socially recognised term is Ley de memoria histórica. For the complete chronology of all the steps undertaken until the approval of the law: Ruiz Torres, P. (2010), Los discursos de la memoria histórica en España. In Arostegui, J. (coord.) *Generaciones y memoria de la represión franquista*, Valencia: PUV pp. 39-41.

law. Thus, in the course of this chapter, the different discourses and viewpoints about the historical memory displayed from official representative voices of the political parties will be analysed.

The positions will be summed up into four different groups of affinity: the position of the government, led by Rodríguez Zapatero, the position of the right-wing party PP, which was the largest opposition party, the opinion of the leftist group, formed at that time by different parties, including peripheral nationalists, and finally, the position of the right-wing peripheral nationalists groups.

2.1. The Law of Historical Memory

The Law of Historical Memory consists of 22 articles and 11 additional provisions. In the preamble, the text condemns the Francoist dictatorship, and says that the aim of the law is to strengthen the spirit of reconciliation and concord that arose from the Transition. It also emphasizes the demands of the associations of victims as legitimate, which the State could not ignore longer.

The articles can be divided thematically. The general recognitions can be found in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th articles. They declare the unfair nature of the court rulings, and any form of violence derived from political or ideological reasons, during the Civil War and the dictatorship. It also declares as illegitimate the courts and juries of the war and the dictatorship, and also the court rulings of political or ideological motivations. Finally, the individual right to ask the State for a declaration of reparation and recognition of the victims is approved, for those directly affected, and also their relatives.

In the articles 5 to 10 the law talks about the right to economic compensation. This part, as it is specified in the text, is an extension of the Law 5/1979⁴², which recognised the right to economic compensation for the relatives of victims of the Civil War. In this part, it also recognises the right to an economic compensation for all those imprisoned under the circumstances that were later amnestied in the 'Law of amnesty' of 1979.

From the 11th article to the 14th, the law recognises the duty of public administrations of the State to facilitate the search efforts for mass graves, and the right of relatives to exhume the remains of their loved ones. For this purpose, the law provides subsidies to the victims' organizations.

The 15th, 16th, and 17th articles contemplate different measures for removing symbols of the dictatorship which still exist in public places all over Spain. They also ban political gatherings in the Valley of the Fallen, and contemplate a creation of a census of all monuments built by forced labour during the dictatorship.

The rest of the points, less controversial in the political and social debate, grant Spanish citizenship to all those who participated during the war in the International Brigades, which were military units which fought in the Republican

⁴² The complete name of this previous law from 1979 is: Ley 5/1979, de 18 de septiembre, sobre reconocimiento de pensiones, asistencia médico-farmacéutica y asistencia social a favor de las viudas, y demás familiares de los españoles fallecidos como consecuencia o con ocasión de la pasada Guerra Civil.

side during the Civil War, and which was formed by volunteers of 54 different countries, recognises victims' associations, contemplates the construction of a general archive of the memory of the war in Salamanca, and provides an annual dedication of public resources for the acquisition of documentation about the Civil War and the Dictatorship which remains in private hands.

2.2. Discourses during the parliamentary debate

1) The position of the Socialist party (PSOE)⁴³: Objective history - subjective memory

Since March of 2004, PSOE had been the governing party in Spain, and it was led by José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero. It won the elections after eight years of government by the Popular Party (PP), led by Jose María Aznar. In its electoral programme it did not mention the issue of developing a law about historical memory but it only achieved a narrow majority in the lower house⁴⁴, and needed the backing of other groups so they made agreements with the leftist group IU-ICV, and the peripheral nationalist group ERC. In spite of having created a commission for the study of the situation of victims of the Civil War in 2004, the government's partners became impatient because of the limited results of this study committee. Due to the apparent lack of political commitment by the government, these allied parties pressed it to launch a debate through the presentation of a bill in November 2005. The newspaper *El Mundo* thus reported:

*Both parliamentary groups (ERC and IU-ICV), have registered a bill this morning in the lower house (for the recuperation of the historical memory) (...) as they have explained, they have decided to take this action, due to the delay and lack of results from the governmental commission in charge of this matter.*⁴⁵

After the previous bill passed declaring 2006 the 'Year of the historical memory', the government finally presented a bill for a general law around the historical memory in July of that year. The law was debated the following December in the Congress of Deputies, with two alternative projects by IU-ICV and ERC.

During the debate, the Socialists' approach was to defend the cause of free individual memories above the power of a single and unitary memory, embodied by the State. Its belief was that history and memory are completely different. The first is the discipline which only historians must address, whilst the second lies exclusively in the hands of individuals. Politicians should not interfere in any of them, on the one hand because they lack scientific knowledge that apparently history deserves, and on the other hand, they have

⁴³ During the first government of Zapatero, leader of the *PSOE* and president of the Spaniards for nearly 8 years, the law of Historical memory was promoted.

⁴⁴ A total amount of 176 deputies were necessary to reach the absolute majority. It only obtained 164.

⁴⁵ Sanz Ezquerro, D. (2005), 'En busca de la memoria histórica', *El Mundo* [Online], 18 Nov.

no right to interfere in the individual's process for overcoming historical traumas. In the parliamentary debate of December 2006, María Teresa Fernández de la Vega, vice prime minister of the government and spokesperson in charge of defending the law, opened the floor raising the government's point of view:

*...neither government nor parliaments have the duty of replacing the historians, who are solely responsible for the task of writing history. Nor is the duty of the legislator to construct or reconstruct, determine or implement a collective memory, because memory is the relation which the people set up with their past and, therefore, it requires solely a personal reprocessing.*⁴⁶

Therefore, the government just intended to set up a set of legal conditions, what they called a 'right', that would allow everybody to have their own memory. Thus, Fernández de la Vega continued to stress in the debate:

*To learn about the past and to remember, ladies and gentlemen, are two different things. Memory and history are not the same, and do not have the same objectives, and that is why the Government has never intended with this law to reconstruct history, or to institute a memory (...) but it is a duty and an obligation for a government, to protect and to enable the right of every citizen to their own individual memory (...) thus, this bill addresses with the maximum effect the right to personal and family memory, as an expression of full democratic citizenship.*⁴⁷

In spite of this right to possess memory, the socialist government did not mention anything about the right to express it. Their viewpoint in order to maintain the democratic collective good still lies in the silence; to be democratic means to be tolerant by keeping the memories in the realm of the private sphere. In the second intervention by the governmental spokesperson, when she answered other speakers, she mentioned this issue:

*It is not the duty of the legislator to reopen the wounds stitched by the Transition (...) to the contrary, it is to recognize the right to the individual and familiar memory (...) this is a law which allows, for those whom so desire, to rediscover in their intimacy their personal history, and which helps them to feel safe under the ethics of the democracy*⁴⁸

However, far from being neutral in its commitment to the victims, the PSOE did not forget part of its historical principles. It displayed a double and, somehow, ambiguous discourse, by leading the initiative for a conciliatory law under the paradigm of the right of an individual freedom of memory, which would imply a

⁴⁶ Words by María Teresa Fernández de la Vega, vice prime minister of the government, in: Spain, Congress of deputies (2006), Diario de sesiones, 14th December, No 222, p. 11257

⁴⁷ María Teresa Fernández de la Vega, *op. cit.* p. 11258

⁴⁸ María Teresa Fernández de la Vega, *op. cit.* p. 11267, 11268

symbolic equalisation for the victims of on both sides in the war, but at the same time, it kept the victims of the Franco's regime as their main political reference. Going back to her first intervention, the vice prime minister said:

*The ruthless dictatorship of Franco prevented the exercise of countless rights. Among them, the right to the identity and the free development of the personality of many people, who disappeared without the possibility of reconstructing their own memory (...) the right to transmit their remembrances to those who came later (...) It denied the right to survive, at least, in the memory.*⁴⁹

In this way, the PSOE put forward the republican victims as an example of civic democratic duty: *as Spaniards and democrats, we owe a huge gratitude to those who defended, despite the adversities, the same values of freedom, justice and political pluralism which are the basis of our cohabitation nowadays.*⁵⁰ And precisely because of this democratic duty, they argued that the best way to honour their memory was through the practice of a tolerant silence in the public sphere, but without denying the subjective right to remember through the enactment of a law to help all those who wanted to recover their subjective past. In spite of its commitment in recognising the republican victims, its intended policies were qualified as moderate by many political sectors and parties of the left who considered the proposal a reformulation of the Pact of Silence of the Transition. Overall, the PP was the most critical opponent to the law, but due to quite different reasons.

2) The position of the Popular Party (PP): no space for the past

The opinion of the largest opposition party was that the opening of a debate on the memory of the war and the dictatorship would lead to a revival of a conflict which was closed thanks to the Transition. The original and foundational act of reconciliation was performed during that process, embodied in the Constitution of 1978. Because of that, the law was completely unnecessary in its opinion, and even dangerous. In the parliamentary debate, the Andalusian deputy Manuel Atencia Robledo had the role of spokesperson for the PP. In his response to the first intervention by the representative of the government, he said:

This is a hypocritical law, because it wants to appear as an initiative towards concord, but in fact it is one more step towards the rupture of the great pact of cohabitation of the Transition and the Constitution (...) the best memory that all Spaniards have is the Transition, which closed a long history of division, and

⁴⁹ María Teresa Fernández de la Vega, *op. cit.* p. 11258

⁵⁰ María Teresa Fernández de la Vega, *op. cit.* p. 11267

*also closed and healed the wounds of the Civil War and Francoism.*⁵¹

It attributed the proposal of the law to a revisionist strategy that sought to rewrite Spanish history from the republican point of view. The republican legacy had been consciously avoided in the earlier construction of the current political regime,⁵² but was a fundamental aspect of the historical vision of Spain for leftists and Catalan and Basque nationalists. The *PP* critics of the bill even compared the demands of recuperation of historical memory to Orwellian attempts to re-write the past. As Atencia said during the debate:

*What is currently in discussion here is a revisionist process for our history. Instead of assuming it as it was done during the Transition, they [the government and the supporters of drafting the law] are trying to rewrite it. They want to impose an official truth. They want to revise the Transition and impose a false thesis which suggests that there were mistakes in the origin of our political and democratic system, and that the time has arrived to update it. They want to impose the Second Republic, as the direct antecedent of our constitutional democracy at the same time that they want to establish a different legitimacy from that which comes from the Transition and the Constitution of 1978 (...) this attempt to establish and impose a single and official truth reminds us of Orwell's work '1984', where the Ministry of Truth used history in the midst of a totalitarian utopia.*⁵³

Moreover, Atencia recriminated the position of the government towards the law, considering the historical positioning of the *PSOE* during all the years of the democratic regime, including when it was in government during the 80's and the 90's:

*After the elections of 2004, Mr. Zapatero has decided to break the pact of the Transition. A pact which his party has maintained during 25 years, even during the 14 years of different socialist governments (...) it [the *PSOE*] is betraying itself. The *PSOE* did not make any mention about the historical memory in its electoral programme, and is now following the desires of its political partners in recovering the memory of republicans.*⁵⁴

The *PP* made a distinction between history and memory. It tried to oppose the official reality built during the Transition, and ratified with the Constitution of 1978 -identified as history-, and the willingness of opening a debate on the repression during Francoism and the victims which are not yet recognised -understood in their view as memory-. The main difference with the main argument of the Socialist Party, which also tried to institute an opposition

⁵¹ Intervention by Manuel Atencia, *PP* deputy in the Congress. In: Spain, Congress of deputies (2006), *Diario de sesiones*, 14th Dec. No 222, p. 11260.

⁵² This topic has already been treated in the subsection of this thesis *The memory as a crucial political factor in the Transition*, based mainly in the work of Paloma Fernández Aguilar.

⁵³ Manuel Atencia, *op. cit.* p.11261

⁵⁴ Manuel Atencia, *op. cit.* p.11260

between history and memory, is the absence of recognition for the possibility of remembering outside the domains of the official discourse from the Transition. So memory could not exist outside what they considered history.

3. The leftist block: inheritors of the discourse of the forgotten.

During the debate, the left-wing political parties shared a consensus on an overview of what the purpose of the law should be. This block was formed of left-wing nationalist parties from Cataluña and the Basque country, *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC)*, *Nafarroa Bai (NaBai)*⁵⁵, *Iniciativa Catalunya-Verds (ICV)* and *Eusko Alkartasuna (EA)*⁵⁶, Galician nationalists, *Bloque Nacionalista Gallego (BNG)*⁵⁷, and the nationwide leftist coalition *Izquierda Unida (IU)*.

They saw themselves as direct inheritors of the republican legacy, and conceived the proposal by the *PSOE* as incomplete, because they somehow still considered it as a defender of the official collective memory that arose from the Transition. Their favourable consideration of the republican past was a central element in their demands, and they directly criticised the narrative of the immediate past of the Spaniards that was established during the Transition. The spokesperson for this grouping in the debate in was Joan Herrera Torres, deputy of the Catalan *ICV*.

*How does the project presented by the government intend to foster the cohesion and solidarity among different Spanish generations, if its historical and ideological basis is, from our point of view, erroneous? For instance, the Civil War is defined as a conflict among Spaniards, but there is not a single mention of the coup d'état on the 18th of July of 1936. Also, the text refers to the Republic as a side during the war, which was not true. In Spain there were not two sides, instead there was a democratic state, elected by direct universal suffrage, which was attacked by a group of factious military.*⁵⁸

Also, during his speech, which was a direct appeal to Fernández de la Vega, Herrera declared the nonconformity of the groups he represented with this proposal put forward by the government, due to the disposition in the text of declaring the condemnations made during the war in equivalent terms for both sides:

⁵⁵ *NaBai* is a Navarrese coalition (from Navarra, region in the north of Spain), created in 2003 for the general elections of the following year. It is part of the basque nationalist movements.

⁵⁶ *EA* is a social democrat Basque nationalist political party, founded in 1986, and operating in Spain and France.

⁵⁷ *BNG* is a Galician nationalist coalition of left-wing political parties. Founded in 1982, it pursues the Independence of Galicia (region in the north-west part of Spain).

⁵⁸ Intervention by Joan Herrera in: Spain, Congress of deputies (2006), *Diario de sesiones*, 14th Dec. No 222, p. 11265.

*The problem of the law is the will for (...) as a consequence, the recognition as unfair for all the sentences of the war, place in the same level as those made by the courts constituted by the judiciary of the Second Republic, and those murders committed by summary trials.*⁵⁹

Their complaint about the equidistant treatment of both sides, proposed in the text presented by the government, was also expressed in the considerations about the *Valley of the fallen*.

*The Valley of the fallen, a site of repression which is a State patrimony (...) the text by the government says that political acts will be not permitted there. This includes, thus, those who fought for democracy.*⁶⁰

Their approach towards the policies of memory was to institute them as a State policy, and provide the victims of the dictatorship with justice and healing through the figure of the State, as an actor which controls the procedures, and also as an expression of the State's commitment to the matter of historical memory along with symbolic and effective reparation.

*The vice prime minister has explained it: 'we defend an individual approach for memory'. The question is, is it an approach to memory, both individual or collective, that a democratic State declares that we suffered a dictatorship, and condemns it? During this legislature, a declaration of 2006 as the 'Year of the historical memory' has been approved. This is, for instance, a good approach to collective memory (...) when the proposed law talks about mass graves, or the removal of Francoist symbolism, it does not establish what organ will be in charge of these policies (...) it only says that the State will collaborate with individuals (...) the problem is that implicitly there is a privatisation of an activity which should be public.*⁶¹

For the spokesman, the comparison with analogous processes was inevitable. He mentioned the movement for the memory of the disappeared of the Chilean dictatorship of General Pinochet, which was relevant and had been visible recently on the news agenda prior to the debate, and the Nuremberg doctrine, as examples of reparation policies. A crucial aspect of the leftist approach was, also, the necessity for a public declaration that Francoism was a genocidal regime. The term genocide became quite a polemical point when talking about the murders committed by the dictatorship in the period immediately after the war. Finally, advocated for a complete removal of all the sentences of the dictatorship, in legal terms, beyond the moral and symbolic reparation of the victims through a juridical statement:

⁵⁹ Joan Herrera, *op.cit.* p. 11265

⁶⁰ Joan Herrera, *op.cit.* p. 11265

⁶¹ Joan Herrera, *op.cit.* p. 11265

*Our public opinion has been shocked when remembering the torture methods of the Chilean dictatorship, but still ignores the genocide which took place in this country (...) what it is proposed here is a moral and symbolic revision, but without juridical effects. The solution is simple; the legal acts should be considered non-existent (...) the debt of the Spanish State with the victims of the Francoism should be solved through what is ordered in the international law (...) recognising them as victims of violations of human rights (...) I am not a person of the Transition. Neither am I someone who fought against the Dictatorship. I am a grandson and my generation as well as the generation which comes after mine, have passed through school without studying what the fight against the dictatorship was (...) we only know it because of our familiar tradition.*⁶²

The final mention Herrera made to the lack of an adequate teaching on this subject under Francoism and after the Transition –he was 35 at that moment- is relevant to the generational approach of this thesis. This dimension will be explored in a detailed manner.

Despite the fact that all these parties were initially against the insipid proposal put forward by the socialist government, eventually, all of them except the *ERC*, supported the law on the 10th of December 2007. It took hard negotiation and concessions to reach the final consensus as it is shown in this article from the newspaper *El País*, reporting on the agreement reached on the 8th of October of 2007:

*After multiple negotiations with the different parliamentary groups, the government announced yesterday that the bill has been unlocked (...) all the groups that have reached the agreement, had to yield in some aspects, in order to not offend anybody, and with the only purpose of repairing the damage that the victims of the war and the dictatorship would have suffered.*⁶³

To sum up, their vision of the conflict initially opposed to the socialist project in the sense that, while the aim of the government was to grant the right of the victims to an individual remembrance, the left wanted to go beyond that, and to rewrite the legitimizing narrative about democracy in Spain, linking the regime born in the Transition with the Second Republic as its antecedent.

While the project of the socialists was designed to provide institutional support to all those interested in recovering the remains of the disappeared, the initial

⁶² Joan Herrera, *op.cit.* p. 11264, 11265, 11266.

⁶³ In: Cué, C.E. Díez, A. (2007), La ley de memoria histórica verá la luz, *El País* [Online], 9 Oct. [Accesed: 07-01-2015]

purpose of the left was more holistic, in the sense of wanting a reformulation of the basis of the consensus reached in the Transition. Thus, from their viewpoint, the oblivion of memory achieved during the Transition was a harmful strategy, which had ignored many Spaniards, while not doing justice to the legitimate government of the Second Republic. The oblivion had had adverse results for the democratic development of the country, and only reparation of that mistake of the Transition could serve as a catharsis for the society as a whole.

4) Peripheral nationalists memories: the third Spain.

Finally, in the debate of the law, a last discourse or reclamation of memory was exposed. If in the case of the left-wing peripheral nationalists the concerns about a recuperation of the forgotten in the Transition was shared with the national left-wing party (IU), the right-wing peripheral nationalist parties added a different perspective to the matter. These discourses are less present in the approach of this thesis, because it belongs to specific territorial and political realities, such as Catalan and Basque. In any case, it does not mean that they did not exist.

Convergència i Unió (CIU) reclaimed what it called the third Spain. During the war, between republicans and Francoists, the peripheral nationalists discourses also sailed the waters of the conflict.⁶⁴ CiU insisted on an equal recognition of victims, both from the Francoist and the republican camp. It emphasized the memory of those victims from Catalunya murdered because of their nationalist convictions. The intervention in the debate was by Jordi Xuclà I Costa, deputy in the congress of CiU, and spokesman of this party:

*...we should remember that there was a third Spain incarnated, for instance, in the figure of Carrasco i Formiguera. A man who was loyal to the Republic, but who was persecuted in Catalunya because of his religious convictions, and murdered in Burgos [a city in the centre of Spain] because of his catalanist ideals.*⁶⁵

⁶⁴ In spite of not being the topic of this work, should be mentioned that one of the main elements of political destabilization during the Second Republic, were the progressive empowerment of peripheral nationalisms. The issue of nationalism has been a source of conflicts all along the 20th century in Spain. For a brief but condensed overview on the topic: Nuñez Seixas, X.M. (1999), *Los nacionalismos en la España contemporánea*, Barcelona: Hipotesi.

⁶⁵ Catalunya was a region mainly loyal to the Republic during the war, while Burgos was loyal to Franco and his troops. That is why in this intervention, the speaker draws this paradox of not belonging to any place because of being religious and catalanist at the same time. These words belongs to Jordi Xuclà Costa, CIU deputy in the congress in: Spain, Congress of deputies (2006), Diario de sesiones, 14th December, No 222, p. 11279.

The *Partido Nacionalista Vasco (PNV)*⁶⁶ shared the approach of emphasizing Basque nationalist victims of the war, but with an important nuance in comparison with CiU. It did not conceive on an equal position the victims from both camps. The following words were spoken by Esteban Bravo, spokesman of the PNV in the congress:

*...atrocities were committed in both camps, but we cannot understand an equidistance when judging those facts, because the winners have had 40 years to rehabilitate their victims, while the others have been 40 years of opprobrium, exile, silence and forgotten. They still have a lot of victims buried in the waysides.*⁶⁷

⁶⁶ The *PNV* is a Christian-democrat nationalist political party. Founded in 1895, it has ruled The Basque country for long periods since the restoration of the democracy.

⁶⁷ Words by Esteban Bravo, speaker of the PNV in the Congress. In: Spain. Congress of deputies (2006), Diario de sesiones, 14th December, No 222, pp. 11276, 11277.

2.3 Conclusions

The parliamentary debate analysed throughout this chapter constitutes a clear sign of the different viewpoints about the role of the historical memory in Spain. Nearly all the political parties which participated in the lower chamber in December 2006, and which voted in favour or against the law in 2007, are still representative of the Spaniards in the hemicycle. The political map, thus, has apparently not changed radically in the nine years which have passed since the moment when the law was discussed. The points of view about the historical memory have not varied virtually in the realm of official politics.

Regarding the final result of the law, the socialist government finally found converging points with some of its partners in the legislature, and the law could be passed with a few amendments. Attending to the final content of the law, the underlying dilemma criticized by the PP, which is the consideration of the Transition to the democracy as the starting point of the current system does not appear. Terms such as 'reconciliation' or 'concord' are still emphasized, avoiding any kind of problematic terminology. The Transition is still considered as an exemplary process, which brought stability and freedom, and the only purpose of the law is to elaborate on these points. In this sense, the fears of the opposition of the PP to a rewriting of the recent past of the Spaniards, placing the Second Republic as the direct antecedent of the democracy were not accomplished. The main reference, and therefore the foundational core of the present democracy, is still considered the transitional process. This was also a point of contention with the leftist forces, but due to a completely opposite reason. However, in the negotiations after the debate, the left-wing government partners imposed their viewpoint regarding the cancellation of the trials of the dictatorship, while the government only pretended to declare them as unfair. A key issue also disputed between the government and its partners was the consideration about the *Valley of the fallen*, the alleged privatisation of the activity of recovering the bones of the mass graves, and the removal of Francoist symbols. In the first case, the criterion of the government prevailed. In the second and the third, the differential nuance was minimal, although the model of the executive also predominated.

In November 2011, the PP won the elections in Spain, causing a change of government. It got the absolute majority, with almost 11 million votes. When it rose to power, one of the first measures it took was to remove the funds for the application of the Law of Historical Memory. Thus, the norm is not derogated, but is inoperative. Its tactic regarding a law it did not agree with has been to

disable it through a legal strategy. The option of changing it again, or simply derogating it, should have implied a debate, which is precisely what it seems to want to avoid, unproblematizing a past which affects the present political field. Without calling into question the method the new government led by Mariano Rajoy has followed in order to disable the law, the fact is that its action bring to light, one more time, the existence of a political conflict. Therefore, this problem refused by the PP, which using a legalist argumentation seemed overcome with the enacting of the rule, is not overcome. It is still latent, and is a dormant source of polemics by the effect of *simply no talking*.

The current national context may not seem to be the most adequate time to raise a debate about historical memory. It does not seem to figure high up on the list of political priorities of Spaniards today, especially with the current economic and political crisis which has led to the emergence of new parties with considerable electoral strength. In fact, in the next chapter based on oral interviews, the opinion that such a debate is not suitable at this moment is expressed repeatedly by some of the interviewees. By comparing the parties' viewpoint analysed in this chapter, and the opinions about the historical memory canvassed in the next, certain questions will emerge. Does the generational factor constitute a key element in a hypothetical change of the framework of the debate about historical memory? Taking the argument expressed by Atencia, the spokesman of the *PP* in the debate of 2006, the law *constituted a torpedo in the waterline of our current political regime, of the legitimization of the democracy, which is the Transition, and the constitutional pact*.⁶⁸ If this argument is accepted, the younger generation's general questioning of the memory established during the Transition must mean a crisis in the myth of the current democracy.

⁶⁸ Manuel Atencia, *op. cit.* p.11259

3. THE INTERVIEWS

The traumatic memory of the Civil War and the dictatorship played an active role in the historical development and the design of the current democratic system in Spain. Although its formal institutionalization took place in the tense political and social climate of the 70's and early stages of the 80's, the controversies about the silence of the Second Republic, the Civil War, and the Dictatorship still have considerable force. The parliamentary debate in 2006 on the Law of Historical Memory, and the recent decision by the current conservative *PP* government to withdraw the law's funding demonstrates that the controversy is far from solved. It is still a latent issue in the Spanish public debate, because the democracy has not been successful in achieving a consensus on a national narrative about the recent collective memory of the Spaniards.

Traditionally, political actors attached to the left wing and peripheral nationalists have been those who have insistently denounced the abandonment of the victims of the Civil War, and especially those of the Dictatorship. Likewise, there are also those who have demanded a re-reading of the foundational basis of the current democracy. The Pact of Silence, instituted in the Transition, has been pointed out by critics of the official memory as the tortfeasor of *a wound which resists healing*.

From an academic point of view, the study of collective memories can be done from two separate angles. On the one hand, it could be studied from the issuers of memories, and on the other hand, from the receiver of these memories. Issuers are those who dispose of means to spread their interpretations of the past, and to shape and reshape them. This category would include figures and groups such as public authorities, opinion leaders, political parties, and organised groups of civil society. This belongs to the realm of the *politics of memory*, actions taken in order to influence, in any direction, the memory/ies of a collectivity/ies.

Conversely, the receivers are those who receive the discourses produced by the issuers. They have the *memories of politics*. Of course, these are not passive audiences, since they have their own individual memory.⁶⁹ Thus, the collective memory is a constant dialogue among many different actors, and is constantly being shaped and reshaped, produced and reproduced.

⁶⁹ This simplified dichotomization is taken from: Fernández Aguilar, P. (2008), *Políticas de la memoria y memorias de la política*, Madrid: Alianza.

The vast majority of the studies about collective memory/ies are focused on the politics of memory.⁷⁰ The previous chapter, for instance, is a case of analysis over a concrete memory policy, applied from a parliamentary level. The aim of this chapter, however, is to analyse the opposite side of the equation, namely the *memories of politics*. The possible ways of performing this could be through polls –quantitative- on the one hand, or personal interviews (qualitative) on the other. The second method is preferred here. On a topic such as memory studies, a quantitative method (polls) will be overly rigid. A qualitative mode –interviews- allows to scrutinize discourses and opinions through a more natural way. Oral history was chosen, then, in order to gain as much depth as possible, while leaving participants ample room to emphasize what they deemed important. The grooves of memory are meandering, and at most times also contradictory. Penetrating them requires a personal dedication, which requires interaction beyond closed questionnaires.

3.1.1. The method

Collective memories are a core element in the legitimation of political regimes, due to their capacity to generate strong feelings of identity among those who share them. Collecting oral testimonies, thus, has interest not because of its possible verisimilitude with the past, but for trying to determine which are the facts that are deeply engraved, or no longer, in the memory of individuals, what are the emotions attached to certain aspects of the past, and how the evocation of these memories evolve with time.

The interviews conducted for this thesis sought to inquire about the current perception of the problematic derived from the Pact of Silence of the Transition, and the issue of the historical memory on a generational key. In this way, two cohorts are established among the interviewees for the elaboration of the research. On the one hand, there are those who actually lived during the time of the political Transition, that is, those born in the 1930's, 1940's, and 1950's -from now on the A's-, and on the other hand, those born in the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's, who fall within the group of those who had not lived during the process itself –defined here as the B's-. In between, there are those born in the 1960's; this group does not fall into either of the two categories that I am focusing on due to their intermediate state –too young during the process-. As a matter of chronological reference, the main political leaders who participated in the Transition were born between 1915 and 1942.⁷¹ Generationally, these

⁷⁰ Fernández Aguilar, P. (2008), *op. cit.* pp. 52-54

⁷¹ The first year of birth belongs to Santiago Carrillo, leader of the Communist Party during the process. The second is from Felipe González, the youngest leader of the PSOE in the

personalities were a mix of people who directly lived, and even participated in the Civil War, and those who were children of the dictatorship.

In total eight interviews were conducted, four in the group of the A's, and four for the group of the B's. This nomenclature is a combination of letters and numbers. The letters express the cohort, and the number the subject. (A1, A2, A3, and A4; and B1, B2, B3, B4, and B5). The interviews were conducted in the month of November of 2014 in the city of Valencia (Spain). All of them were transcribed not verbatim, but correcting orality markings in order to simplify the study of the content of the speeches. They were conducted through a questionnaire with mostly open questions, which sought to guide the conversation towards the points I was interested in, but always giving enough room to the participants to express their ideas. The questions of the A's and the B's were different. In the first case, I focused on the realm of direct memories, feelings, and behaviours in the familiar sphere. For instance, in your family was it easy to talk about the war, or was it a taboo? What do you remember of the period of the Transition? What did it mean to you? Do you remember it as a conflictive period? Do you think the pact of silence was necessary? Why? In your opinion, would it be positive to centre a debate on all the topics that were ignored, or set aside during the Transition? Why? In any case, I did not raise it as a closed questionnaire, but all these questions somehow articulated the conversations. In the case of the B's I focused on the sense they give to the process of the Transition, and what have been, in their opinion, the elements that have contributed to the formation of that viewpoint. For instance, was it in your family easy to talk about the war, or was it a taboo? What does the process of the Transition mean to you? How have you formed that opinion? Do you think there were mistakes? Would you find it problematic that the institutions talk openly about the past of the war and the dictatorship? Why?

During the transcription, all the conversations have been compartmentalized into five different sections: 1) Personal history, 2) The Transition, 3) Pact of oblivion, 4) Historical memory, and 5) Generations and future.

The people I chose were, some of them, regular customers at a bookstore where I used to work, and the rest were people I already knew from my personal circle. The sole criterion which I applied in choosing them was the generational one. The sample, then, was as much as varied as this

Transition. Within this group are included Alfonso Guerra, Adolfo Suárez, Manuel Fraga, and Juan Carlos I; the most important political leaders in this process.

characteristics allowed me. Of course, these features will lead to a partial result. However, the objective pursued is to show through this specific sample a reduced illustration of a contemporary reality in Spain; the tension between the old and the new, the generational gap, and the possible discrepancies in the perception of the past. Direct political participation in the Transition was not a prerequisite; even if someone did not participate actively in the events of a specific period, he or she has life experiences and an opinion about it. Actually, the lack of opinion could be read as an opinion, and could have an explanation as well. This standard is also valid for the B's, that were socialized through different means, in the family or by the education system, about certain notion/s of the past. Their process of socialization about the past, and the possible agreements or disagreements with the narrations about the Transition, are the points to be searched throughout this chapter.

Thus, through anonymous voices, this chapter seeks possible differences between the viewpoints of different generations, about the dilemma of the historical memory in Spain, considering the Transition as the core of this quandary.

3.1.2. Problematic

Beyond the generational approach, other multiple variables can determine the possible perceptions of reality and history in a person. Because of this, before conducting the interviews I asked the subjects to fill in a form where certain complementary questions were posed. For both groups, A's and B's, this part was identical, and they were asked about their date of birth, sex, the place of origin, the level of education, and finally the self-positioning on a political chart, where '0' was the extreme left-wing, and '10' was the extreme right-wing, which is reproduced here:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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This questionnaire was proposed as voluntary, but all the respondents cooperated without any problem. Thus, the profiles of the testimonies are much more defined and complete. Together with these questions, a brief text (in the appendix) was provided to the participants prior to the interview. Besides summing up the content of this questionnaire, the text explained what was going to be the topic of the inquiries, and also that the purpose of the interview was not to evaluate the historical knowledge of the participants, but to search

for the subjective memory, or lack of memory, of the process of the Transition. Literally it said: this is not an exam of history. What is being searched is the personal memories of the process.

The main problem when developing the inquiries was to create an atmosphere of trust and confidence, in order to make the interviewees feel comfortable and relaxed. As a way of producing this environment, we generally always talked off the record for 10 or 15 minutes, about personal issues not related with the topic of this thesis. Except for two of the meetings, the rest were done in quiet public cafés, while drinking coffee. The others were recorded in the house of the participants. In a few cases it happened that the matter of creating an atmosphere of trust appeared to be in conflict with the fact of condensing the testimonies into a certain length of time. My idea was that of each interview would be about twenty-five minutes long. The longest interview covered 1 hour and 3 minutes, while the shortest one took only 14 minutes and 35 seconds. The average time of all the testimonies was 28 minutes.

3.2. Interview A1

The first interview was conducted the 20th of October of 2014. The place chosen was a cozy café in the city centre of Valencia. When I arrived at 17:00h, the participant was already there. I took my seat, ordered an espresso, and we started to talk, off the record, about life in general. I knew him vaguely as a regular customer of the bookstore where I used to work. Our relationship was purely formal, but when I invited him to participate in my project 3 days before the recording of the interview, he showed willingness and even excitement to collaborate.

In the political self-positioning chart I proposed, he placed himself on an 8, so he considers himself to be a right-wing person. The length of the recorded conversation was of 1 hour and 3 minutes, making it the longest interview done for this thesis.

Personal history and family

He was born in 1948 in Madrid, but when he was a child his family moved to Valencia. His education was eminently religious, both in school and in his family environment. He studied engineering at university and obtained a PhD. He was not involved at all in the politicized environment at the university during the sixties and the seventies. When he finished his studies, in 1974, he started to work for a company in the field of hydraulic works. In his words, on a very highly ranked position.⁷²

When I asked him whether or not the topic of the Civil War and the Francoism was a taboo in his family, he seemed to try to avoid the fact that it was, effectively, a delicate issue:

- A1: *Yes, it was a taboo. But it was like this because a child of 12 years during that time was not the same as a child of 12 nowadays. During those days 'we were babies' [at 12 years old] compared to current times.*
- Interviewer: Well, but beyond the age of 12?. Let's say, when you were 20, or during your university days, or your 30's...
- A1: *We could talk if we asked, I guess... Although my parents did not like to talk about it because my brother and I have always been really nosy, so we always needed to tell everything. During that time, when*

⁷² Alberto Sendra (Interviewer) & A1 (Interviewee), (2014), Document A1 [Interview transcription], p. 1

*everything was so controlled by Franco and his police, if someone heard you talking about things like this... you could be in problems.*⁷³

The words of A1 show a clear will to conceal topics of the War and the Dictatorship in his family environment. Of course, this 'concealment' is not necessarily related to a specific family history to be covered or hidden; it is not a matter of a kind of secret to be preserved. What can be observed here, rather, could be interpreted as the legacy of a trauma which is being transferred from the generation of his grandparents and parents to him and his brother. And as a consequence, a disruption in the transmission of memories can be found. In the words of Clara Valverde: *what really hurts the descendants of traumatic situations is the absence of words; the silences full of emotions (...) the family members who survived the Civil War and the Post-war did not want to hurt us. To the contrary: they wanted to protect us.*⁷⁴

The reason described by A1 could be extrapolated to the extensive body of Spanish society, inheriting the fear felt by their direct predecessors. In words of the Turkish Cypriot professor of Psychiatry Vamik Volkan: *parents play a determinant role in the transmission. They deposit aspects of themselves in their children, giving them, unconsciously, skills to perform actions as mourning, revenge, reparation of hurt, humiliation or impotence. Children, on the other hand, feel identified with the behaviour and emotions of their ascendants. But it goes beyond the fact of imitating behaviours; they are also unconscious psychological processes, which integrate the children identity.*⁷⁵ Although this interpretation goes beyond the purpose of this thesis because it delves into psychological mechanisms of Lacanian character, it is helpful for the understanding of the transmission of traumas across generations. Within this general view, the Spanish particular case could be included. The old divisions of the civil confrontation are a submerged political conflict, which intermittently arises from appeals made to the underlying historical memory. It is a trauma located in the subconscious of the social subject.

Returning to the testimony of A1, he expresses his anxiety when he tries to justify the silences and concealment within his family. At the same time, he still expresses a dormant fear when he remembers the possible consequences of talking about the subject of the War during the Dictatorship. The feeling associated to this memory prolongs until the present days when, later, in the

⁷³ Alberto Sendra & A1, *op. cit.* p. 1-2

⁷⁴ In: Valverde Gefaell, C. (2014), *Desenterrar las palabras. Transmisión generacional del trauma de la violencia política en el Siglo XX en el Estado español*, Icaria: Barcelona, pp. 33-34.

⁷⁵ In: Volkan, V. Ast, G. Greer, W.F. (2002), *The Third Reich in the unconscious*, New York: Routledge, p. 76.

development of the interview, I asked him whether it was a necessity for Spanish society to recover the debate about the historical memory. It is expressed through fear. The word 'fear', in fact, appears constantly.

Another interesting point in this first part of our conversation came when A1 directly associated Francoism with apoliticism: *my parents were not into politics: they were Francoists.*⁷⁶ A bit later, nearly 20 minutes into our recorded conversation, he reproduced this idea again: *during that time, those who had no political ideas, and were not getting into problems; who were simply going to work every day, going back home and so on... nothing happened to them. Nobody disturbed them.*⁷⁷

His family background, as he himself recognised, was part of the social support to the dictatorship. The Transition represented a source of huge anxiety for a great part of Spanish society, because it conceived the dictatorship as the realm of the 'no politics', and the Transition as totally the opposite. In this respect A1 continued, 'political parties were like 'nuisance bugs' for me. And do not get me started on the Communists... The way I imagined a communist in those days [referring to the last days of the Dictatorship and the Transition itself], was as a kind of 'devil' walking along the walls. I remember that I used to live with the fear of walking calmly on the street, and then across comes a communist. What was going to happen to me?'⁷⁸

Thus, politics is confrontation, and confrontation, in the collective imagination of a great majority of the Spaniards socialized under Francoism, was a synonym for pain. When A1 refers to the apolitical nature of the dictatorship, he is attaching to this terms of positive connotation. For instance, when he says in the last quotation: those who were not getting into problems (...) nothing happened to them, he is associating the fact of having problems with the fact of being involved into politics.

'Problems' and 'disturbances' are attached to those who were into politics. One of the legacies of the Francoism in the political culture of many Spaniards has been the conception of politics as something 'pernicious and dangerous'. The regime had a demobilizing effect over the general population, through the activation of the memories of the Civil War and the fateful post-war.

⁷⁶ Alberto Sendra & A1, *op. cit.* p. 1

⁷⁷ Alberto Sendra & A1, *op. cit.* p. 2

⁷⁸ Alberto Sendra & A1, *op. cit.* p. 2

It seems that A1 fits within a category, coined for the first time during the eighties by the sociologist Manuel Justel, called 'sociological Francoism'.⁷⁹ In brief, it refers to certain attitudes and values characteristic of the Dictatorship, which have persisted in the political culture of Spanish society after the death of Franco and the arrival of democracy, enduring until the present. Conformity, resignation, passivity, and a patronizing attitude towards politics summarize this posture. In the specific case of A1, his positive perception of political passivity is one of those attributes, because it was an attitude promoted by almost forty years of an authoritarian dictatorship. Citizens, in those times, were treated as passive subjects and minors.

Transition and Pact of Silence

A1 remembers the Transition as a problematic period: *the Transition was a highly conflictive process. Although everything [the conflict] started before the death of Franco, because the regime had already 'ceased the repression.'*⁸⁰ He conceived the Constitution as the touchstone of the current democratic regime: *the Constitution was done with lots of tensions. In the end, it was done with what has been called a 'break with consensus'. In my opinion, it established an order, because until that moment there was no order. Until not long ago, talking about the Constitution was synonymous with saying 'everything has already been solved'. Nowadays, mentioning the Constitution does not provides guarantees of anything.*⁸¹

With this statement, it is interesting how he is establishing, implicitly, a before and an after. He is recognising that a 'change' has taken place when he says that up until a point in time the Constitution was a guarantee of stability, but not anymore. Thus, a good question would be what does this change consist of.

The conversation started to grow in intensity about half way the interview, when we got to the topic of the Pact of Silence in the Transition.

- A1: *The consensus about the silence was, from my point of view, the only way of reaching a successful solution. It was something conscious. They said [the political elites], 'let's stop beating around the bush, because if we want to get ahead, without breaking up Spain, the best*

⁷⁹ The term appeared for the first time in: Justel, M. (1992), 'Edad y cultura política', *Reis*, vol. 58, pp. 57-96. After its wedding, the term became popular quickly in the disciplines of history and sociology.

⁸⁰ Alberto Sendra & A1, *op. cit.* p. 2

⁸¹ Alberto Sendra & A1, *op. cit.* p. 2

way is to do so is to forget the past. Within a time we will see, but at the moment, we should forget the past.

- Interviewer: It is interesting when you say that they said 'within a time we will see'

- A1: *Well, those are my own words.*

- Interviewer: Okay. But if we understand that expression as descriptive of what happened during the Transition, the 'time to come' [of his expression], is now. Or it is in the future, perhaps...

- A1: *No: that time has already been. They have spent years unearthing victims, with international trials...*

- Interviewer: So, you consider that justice has been done already to families and victims of the Francoism? The main criticism of the Pact of silence of the Transition is that it helped to forget all the victims of the Dictatorship.

- A1: *I consider that a process of recognition like that would 'raise a lot of dust' so, it would not be useful and, moreover, it is already too late [he was referring to retake a debate about the historical memory].*

- Interviewer: Why do you consider it is too late?

- A1: *Because that should have been done many years ago.*

- Interviewer: However, there are a lot of associations and families asking for a process of reparation. For them it would not be too late. They want to recover the remains of their loved ones.

- A1: *That is a different topic. For an institutional declaration recognising the victims, it is late. It is too late...*

- Interviewer: Well, lets call it an institutional declaration or, for example, monuments: in the same way that the Francoist victims of the Civil War were already recognised during the Dictatorship, there could be monuments for the victims of the Francoist side, and the Francoist regime. Or both...

- A1: *Yes... but we should understand that what is being discussed here is a Civil War, in which there were victims from both sides (...) In a war, there is always a winner, and it is like a 'takeover' in the corporate world. The biggest company always gobbles the small one.⁸²*

A1 insistently mentioned the fact that it is too late for a memory reparation of the victims of the Dictatorship. His valuation of the Pact of Silence is positive, because he considers that it was the only possible way of performing the

⁸² Alberto Sendra & A1, *op. cit.* p. 2-3

Transition to the democracy in the conditions of the seventies. He used an expression typical of the right-wing Spanish vocabulary, which is 'the rupture of Spain'. This term has been traditionally used in reference to the political intentions of the peripheral nationalist movements, such as Catalan and Basque, and the challenge they supposedly imply for the unity of the Spanish state. However, when he uses it in this context, he is not alluding to this concrete reality. Instead, he is implicitly recognising the huge tension experienced in the process of the Transition. 'Rupture' is a term with a highly dramatic burden. He probably chose it to express this idea as a mere subconscious mark of his political background and education.

His unawareness of the politics of memory which have been taken place during the forty years of democracy is also remarkable. He said, 'we have spent years unearthing victims, with international trials'. The active and more recent policy applied to this issue was the Law of Historical Memory that was analysed in the previous chapter. In the case of Spain, there was no international intervention at all in this regard. And the unearthing of bodies, even after the law was finally approved in 2007, has been undertaken mainly through private means and funds, not through the direct or indirect intervention of the State. Seemingly, the interviewee's knowledge of the topic is superficial, and based on opinions rather than facts. However, he is not unique in this regard: as it will be shown in other interviews, there is a generalized unawareness of the legislative field concerned with historical memory.

Finally, the last paragraph is really interesting due to its explicit load of concrete ideas about struggles with memories. He believes in the inevitability of the imposition of a narrative over another (or others). He naturalizes this discourse, and he uses it as an argument to show the senselessness of processes for the recuperation of defeated memories.

Historical memory

In the course of our conversation, we discussed the historical memory of Spaniards; its meaning, implications, and future:

- A1: *No government has been brave enough to address the problem of the historical memory seriously. Whether it was a government of the left or the right, it was not convenient. And that is because they fear.*
- Interviewer: Fear?

- A1: *Yes. In my opinion, the roots of all the problems in Spain are twofold: fear and resentment. Fear of all those who hold power, because they conceive that it is still a dangerous topic.*⁸³

This point is really interesting, due to the argument that A1 is tracing. The motivations that, in his opinion, have led to the main political forces pushing to avoid the issues of historical memory, or just treat it superficially, is because of fear, on the one hand, and resentment on the other. The first point of his argumentation imputes the political class which insists on hiding the matter of the recovery of the memory of victims of Francoism, because they still conceive it as dangerous for national stability. In short, a discourse that A1 stretches out from the times of the Transition until the present day. On the other hand, he talks about resentment as the fuel of the claims for the recuperation of the historical memory. This point will be traced further as an essentialist argument:

- Interviewer: I insist on something I have already mentioned, which is the relatively recent expression of the desires of associations advocating for the recuperation of historical memory. They are protesting for, among other things, the recovery of the bodies of their loved ones.
- A1: *Yes, and they are doing it.*
- Interviewer: Yes, but in a private way. Don't you think that a way of recognising the victims by the State, would be through funding these excavations?
- A1: *Yes, it would be a manner. But even this will not mute society, because the damage [the murders] has already been done.*
- Interviewer: In your opinion, what is the reason that motivates the families that are demanding recognition?
- A1: *What I have said is that it is too late for a political recognition. But what the families want is to talk about it. That society talks about it... And, what do they want? What are they asking for? Money to pay for the exhumations?*
- Interviewer: Among other things, yes.
- A1: *There is not any money for that. We are in a crisis.*
- Interviewer: And before the crisis?
- A1: *When there is no crisis, there is fear (...) there is not a large social demand for that.*⁸⁴

⁸³ Alberto Sendra & A1, *op. cit.* p. 4

A1 is manifestly against a process for the recuperation of historical memory, in the way the associations of victims, and relatives of victims are demanding it. He is constantly chaining together reasons to deny this possibility. In the first instance, he uses the fact of a lack of money in the national budget in the current context of economic crisis. In this sense, he means that it is not a priority at the moment. This argument is repeated in other interviews, and it refers to the current situation. However, when I reformulated my questions to expose the longer period in which the demand has been on the table, A1 referred to other reasons: the fear of the consequences of undertaking a process like this, and also to the absence of a relevant social demand.

- A1: *The public debate will exist if the citizenship asks for it.*
- Interviewer: But that demand already exists by certain social actors.
- A1: *Yes, but not in a relevant way.*
- Interviewer: Do you think that over the years and with the arrival of new generations who are less influenced by the fears of the past you mentioned, the public debate around the historical memory will arise in a natural way?
- A1: *Is not worth in my opinion. Spaniards are warm-blooded people. Our way of being is really rancorous.*
- Interviewer: But resentment from whom to whom?
- A1: *From those who feel affected; those who still have their grandparents buried.*
- Interviewer: And do you think their only motivation is the revenge?
- A1: *Yes I do (...) and it is resentment because they feel repressed. Because they were repressed by Francoism for more than thirty years. A regime that praised their own victims and forgot, if not smeared, the victims in the other band. Because they were the 'devil'. And they were 'buried face down, just in case they wake up, they will go deeper'.⁸⁵ Thus, now, the population that was victimized by those actions, why do they mobilize? Because of revenge. And if you do not want to call it revenge, call it anger.*
- Interviewer: Summing up: that it is better to keep it as it is. It is better not talking about the past.

⁸⁴ Alberto Sendra & A1, *op. cit.* pp. 4-5

⁸⁵ This is a Spanish expression: 'Estaban enterrados, y bien enterrados boca abajo para que si se despertaban se fueran más para abajo'. In the Catholic belief, the dead will resurrect the doomsday in order to ascend to heaven. Burying someone face down means that that person will not have the opportunity to resuscitate.

- A1: *Yes, because we do not have a crystal ball to see what is going to happen in the future if you take any action in that respect.*
- Interviewer: *And do you think in the future; lets say in 10, 15, or 20 years time, it will be possible without that resentment?*
- A1: *I do not think that is going to happen, because there is a natural law which says that time dilutes everything. Those born from the 2000's onwards, what kind of awareness do they have? Unless they have a family that is quite politicized, the interest in the historical memory will disappear.*⁸⁶

The conception by A1 of a natural way of being Spanish is an essentialist argument, which is denying the possibility of changes in the status quo for memory instituted, de facto, during the Transition. Spaniards are warm-blooded people. Their way of being is really rancorous. This argument denies the convenience of any alteration of the official memory that arose from the settlements reached in the Transition, and that the democratic political system maintained since then. It is a conservative argument, with political implications beyond the focus of this thesis. On the other hand, the constant citation of the 'fear', clearly recalls the argumentations of the period of the Transition, when the fateful memories of the Civil War drove Spaniards to build a new political system that was still widely connected to the Dictatorship and those responsible still in power. A democracy, in short, ailing of amnesia.

The discourse of A1 is closer to the right-wing position, embodied in the previous chapter by the position of the PP in the parliamentary debate. In short, his viewpoint is that the general interest should be put before the personal right of the families to satisfy their desires of recovering the remains, buried along the length and breadth of Spain. By doing so, he is recognizing the question of historical memory as a sharp political topic, with implications beyond the personal drama of the relatives that want to recover the remains of their loved ones. This last consideration is important when comparing other voices analysed below.

⁸⁶ Alberto Sendra & A1, *op. cit.* p. 5-6

3.3. Interview A2

This interview was conducted on the 23rd of October 2014, in a café in the city centre of Valencia. A2 and I met at noon at the front door and we sat on the terrace. Before starting the recording, we picked up, off the record, from a previous conversation. She briefly told me about her activist political past, in trade unions and with the Communist Party. This detail surprised me, because until that moment I only knew her as a regular customer in the bookstore where I used to work.

The length of the interview was of 29 minutes. In the political chart I proposed, she placed herself on a 0, so she considers herself as being an ultra left-wing person.

Personal history and family

A2 comes from a deeply politicized family. During the Civil War, her father was colonel in the republican army, and an active member of the anarchist trade union Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT). When the war was over, her father was imprisoned in a concentration camp near the city of Alicante, whilst her mother and her brother were imprisoned in a women's prison, also in that city. Her father escaped from the camp, while her mother and her brother were eventually released. They met again in the city of Valencia, their city of origin, but the Francoist authorities caught her father again due to the economic support he provided for political prisoners, and he was imprisoned again from 1941 to 1945. In 1947, after her father was released, A2 was born.

When I asked her if talking about the period of the Civil War and the Post-war was a taboo in her family, she was emphatic: *to the contrary! This was part of the 'family myth'. Something to be proud of. Since I was a child, I have heard about all these things I have told you. It was a matter of satisfaction. However, out of the home it was different. I had to keep quiet. Although when I started in high-school I met other children with similar family backgrounds. Some of them were not even baptized.*⁸⁷

The political environment in her family influenced A2 decisively. In 1969, when she was 22 and while she was studying teaching at university, A2 was imprisoned due to illegal political activities, together with 9 other female students. It happened during a state of emergency. She was pregnant with her

⁸⁷ Alberto Sendra (Interviewer) & A2 (Interviewee), (2014), Document A1 [Interview transcription], p. 2

first child at the time.⁸⁸ As with many other students at that time, she was active in different illicit political groups against the Dictatorship. Her arrest was merely political, and cost her the withdrawal of her passport and made it impossible for her to work as a teacher until the arrival of the democracy.

Transition

A2 remembers the period of the Transition in ambivalent terms. On the one hand, the death of Franco was a reason of huge joy for her. The elections and the possibility of voting was also, as she described, a cause of great celebration. On the other hand, the approval of the Constitution in 1978 generated in her an extreme refusal:

- A2: *As my ex-husband told to me, I was an 'irredeemable red', so in the debate around 'reform or rupture', I was tenaciously in favour of the rupture. In the end, they [I interpret that she referred to the general atmosphere, rather than someone in particular] convinced me. Or well... I decided to let it go. They convinced me, but I was not convinced... I do not know how to express it.*
- Interviewer: That you let it go, basically...
- A2: *Yes, but on the other side, I thought that that was not the objective that I was seeking when I decided to get involved in politics. That was not the motivation for my struggle.*
- Interviewer: So, could we say that you valued all the agreements of that period 'coldly'?
- A2: *Yes. On the one hand I was happy because of the elections (...) but on the other side I said, for instance, 'they are going to withdraw the republican flag? How can they do that?' I was angry... But in a general way, I let it go. It was the general atmosphere that dragged me. It was a bit like 'doing good' for the general interest. It was a really contradictory feeling.⁸⁹*

This description of the process is interesting from the perspective of the present moment. She feels disappointed and defeated when remembering the shape of the regime that arose from the process of the Transition. She had

⁸⁸ In 2013, the University of Valencia put on an exhibition about the history of different student struggles against the Dictatorship in Valencia. Among other historical experiences, the imprisonment of these ten women was included in the exhibition. A short documentary, in which these 10 women were brought together after more than 40 years, was made for the occasion. It is available in: *10 mujeres contra el olvido* [Film], Jordan Alba, J. 2013, (29:20 min.).

⁸⁹ Alberto Sendra & A2, *op. cit.* p. 3

certain concrete expectations and desires, but the tone and the way in which the events took place dragged the left-wing to moderate its actions and discourses. A2 is a clear example of this historical process of moderation, seen from the perspective of a militant. The two main left-wing political formations of the Transition, the Communist Party and the PSOE, dropped their revolutionary principles bit by bit in order to fit into a framework conditioned by many different historical forces. The historian Juan Antonio Andrade studied this phenomenon in depth from both perspectives, that of the political organisations, and that of the militants of the parties. He said: 'at the end of 1976 a crucial reality was clear: that the opposition to the Dictatorship had enough strength to neutralize the continuism [of the Dictatorship], but not to force the rupture. In this circumstances, the Communist Party finally decided to jump on the reformist wagon of Adolfo Suárez, in order to avoid being marginalised from the future regime (...) the brief and vertiginous dynamic of the Transition forced these parties [PCE and PSOE] to renounce to their long haul ideological traditions'.⁹⁰

Pact of Silence and historical memory

A2 keeps a constantly critical attitude and is seemingly full of resentment with certain resolutions abided by the left-wing during the Transition. Within these criticisms, the Pact of Silence, because of its implications, is positioned in a special place. In her case in particular, she can refer to very personal grievances:

- A2: *I have never understood the 'silence'*
- Interviewer: Not even in that context of the conflict and the social tension of the Transition?
- A2: *How do you think that I felt when I read that the policeman that arrested me in 1969, was appointed chief of the police in Valencia in the democracy?⁹¹ Maybe it is a personal matter, but... God! I saw him. That man hit my comrades... He was a torturer! How can someone forget something like this? (...) As I have said, I let myself go on certain*

⁹⁰ Andrade Blanco, J.A. (2012), *El PCE y el PSOE en (la) Transición*, Madrid: Siglo XXI, p. 410

⁹¹ She was referring to Manuel Ballesteros, member of the 'Brigada Político-social' in Valencia (the political police of the Francoism), and alleged torturer. The data given by A2 is partially wrong: he was not appointed chief of the police force during the Transition, but he continued doing his job as policeman, reaching the rank of commissioner by the time of his retirement. He died in 2008, and the obituaries in the newspapers described him as 'a hero in the struggle against the terrorism of ETA', and described 1979 as the year his career began, thus erasing his past as officer in the Francoist police. The obituary can be found online in: El País, (2008) 'Necrológica: Manuel Ballesteros, experto antiterrorista', 15 Jan.

*matters, but on this? Never! It is a kind of 'red line'. As is, for instance, the Monarchy.*⁹²

We reached the subject of historical memory halfway our conversation. I asked her about her opinion of the Law of Historical Memory introduced by the PSOE government in 2006. It is interesting how she differentiated strongly the context of the Transition, and the context in which the law was developed:

- Interviewer: Those against the law criticized it because they said it was looking for revenge. They argued that during the Transition we agreed to leave all those topics behind, and that the law could reopen 'wounds already closed'.
- A2: *That we agreed? Oh God... But under what conditions? Spain suffered a coup d'état in 1981! Everybody was terrified! All those who were not right-wing, that is... almost everybody in Spain, were absolutely terrorized. And then, also, ETA was killing people...*
- Interviewer: So you conceive the final agreements of the Transition as a product of the historical context. Do you think we have progressed enough in order to have a 'civilised debate' about historical memory?
- A2: *Of course. And the mass graves... oh my God!*
- Interviewer: So, why do you think it was so polemical?
- A2: *Because the right is enormously powerful. And the left is incapable... well, I mean: the PSOE. They never had the real will to open up a true debate. Since they renounced so many things in the Transition... The Communist Party renounced a lot of things as well, but the PSOE renounced everything! They renounced to everything they had been. The PSOE has been always a party in favour of forgetfulness.*⁹³

She understands the context in which the Transition took place, as a conditioner of the final result of the process. However, she clearly separates it from the years that followed. The problem for a real development of a 'serious' historical memory process, in her opinion, is the lack of will among the political forces of the left, especially the PSOE. Her recollection of Spain during the Transition is of a left-wing country. This is symptomatic of the atmosphere she was surrounded by. The rhetoric of confrontation is really alive in her discourse.

⁹² Alberto Sendra & A2, op. cit. p. 3

⁹³ Alberto Sendra & A2, op. cit. p. 4-5

Generations

In the last part of our conversation, we talked about her viewpoint on the younger generations in the historical memory debates:

- A2: *I am always very hopeful about the future, but I cannot see interest, in general, in these debates among the younger people (...) I remember that during the 15M I went to a demonstration of my trade union [Comisiones Obreras, or CC.OO. The communist trade union], and when we were marching, the people of 15M started to shout bad things at us. I was terribly sad. Do they not understand that the role of the trade unions is important? The trade unions, the right to vote... those are things that we have achieved all together. It was not the King or Suárez: we did it all together. Us fighting in the streets. So, then, I said 'how can they criticize us'?*
- Interviewer: So, do you think that the 'new politics' might be interested in recovering the debate of the Historical memory...
- A2: *I hope so... but I cannot see the interest.*⁹⁴

A2, from her left-wing point of view, looks on with mistrust at the 15M movement, and all the political consequences coming from it. She reads her personal experience on a demonstration where she was jeered in terms directly related to matters of memory. The new movements are conceived by her as amnesic of the legacy of left-wing organizations and their fight against the dictatorship. She feels part of that legacy, so she feels hurt.

On the other hand, her reading of the democratic gains reached in the last period of Francoism and the Transition is interesting. Contrary to the interpretation that the democratic regime came as a result of agreements of the political elites, she reads it as an achievement coming from the grassroots of society; the citizenry and the social movements. The crux of the matter in the discursive confrontation between right and left about the Transition, is this: who are the owners of the legacy of the Transition? Who carried it out? She reproduced the narrative of the left.

The interview finished with a general reflection by A2, which is really interesting, because it absolutely opposed the viewpoint of A1 about the particular nature of Spaniards, and his subsequent recommendation of avoiding the reopening of processes about the gloomy past of Spain:

⁹⁴ Alberto Sendra & A2, *op. cit.* p. 5

- *A2: I think there are a lot of people who say 'it is better not to reopen wounds' because they think that Spain is different to other countries. I consider myself as being from the world, and I do not believe in nationalisms. That is why I do not share that nationalist argument of 'Spain is different'. France, Germany, The Netherlands... they are as we are. What do they have special? If they have faced up their past, why can we not do it? This country is as any other.*

3.4. Interview A3

Among the testimonies of those I interviewed who lived the Transition, A3 is, without doubt, the most exceptional. She comes from a rural area in the periphery of Valencia, and has lived there all her life. She has no history of studies, and she declares herself as being apolitical. Because of this, she refused to position herself in any box of the political chart. These characteristics made her voice completely distinct to others reflected in this thesis.

My relationship with her comes from the childhood, because she is a close friend of my family. The interview was recorded in the afternoon of the 27th of October of 2014 at her home. We sat around the table, drinking coffee and sharing some cookies. The length of the recorded conversation was 17 minutes, although we shared some previous words off the record, in order to create an atmosphere of confidence and comfort.

Personal history and family

She was born in 1948 in a little rural village on the outskirts of Valencia. She remembered that her father told her that he served in the army in a town next to Alicante, which belonged to the republican side, so he returned home regularly due to the relatively proximity. That was before she was born, in 1941. Thus, in the immediate post-war. She mentioned that in the post-war period her family was really fortunate because it had cows so they did not starve. Notwithstanding, she recognises that for many in the village it was not like that, and people suffered hunger and diseases. So it can be said that she comes from a middle class family within the particular microcosm of a small rural community.

She had no relatives who were subjected to reprisals during the war or in the post-war. When I asked her if talking about the times of the war was a taboo in her home, she said that it was not. However, she only mentioned day-to-day issues, such as the famine, how her family achieved food, the neighbourliness among the people of the village, etc. She never mentioned direct political questions related to the conflict or the dictatorship.

Transition

A3 expressed a total rejection of everything considered as 'politics'. However, indirectly she declares herself as francoist:

- Interviewer: What was the reaction in your environment to the death of Franco?

- A3: *It was really bad... I do not care what 'this man' did [referring to Franco]... That is not my business. But, certainly, life was much better when he was alive. At least, my own life was better with him than it is now.*
- Interviewer: And what about the process that came after his death? The Transition.
- A3: *Mmmm... I do not know. Well, the democracy was okay, I suppose. But I was still scared of talking because of the fear to the possible reprimands.*
- Interviewer: Fear to talk about what?
- A3: *About Francoism. Of the things that someone did, or didn't do... Yes, the democracy, the democracy... but, at least in the beginning, everybody was scared of talking, and to express, and to opine...*
- Interviewer: So, you weren't afraid during the dictatorship, but you were later, in the Transition. Did you suffer a great and conflictive change?
- A3: *Exactly.*⁹⁵

The memories of A3 around the issue of the Transition constitute a really different testimony to others collected for this thesis. She declared that she felt fear with the advent of democracy. It should be assumed that all the conflict of the period of the Transition played an essential role in the configuration of this opinion. She made an absolutely depoliticized reading of the process, and only understands the change in purely personal terms. She declared herself Francoist not because of political conviction, but quite the opposite: because her personal life was better during the period.

In this sense, a reason already pointed at in the interview with A1 is relevant to the case of A3: the Transition constituted the return of politics, understood as the realm of conflict, while the Dictatorship was the total absence of confrontation. The apolitical nature proudly declared by A3, is rooted in the pre-democratic political culture of Francoism, which somehow has endured in what has been called 'sociological francoism'.

Pact of Silence and historical memory

A3's understanding of the contemporary political controversy about historical memory was completely non-existent. When I talked to her about the disputes of the matter, all her comprehension revolved around the private sphere, and

⁹⁵ Alberto Sendra (Interviewer) & A3 (Interviewee), (2014), Document A1 [Interview transcription], p. 1-2

her reality close at hand. In this sense, when I asked her about the matter from a general political perspective, she automatically turned her gaze to the realm of what is closer to her, in this case, her village and her community. Also to allow for her unawareness about the recent specific political debates on the issue of historical memory, I asked her questions in abstract rather than concrete terms:

- Interviewer: Do you think it would be necessary for society to launch a debate about everything that happened during the War and the Dictatorship?
- A3: *Well, I base my opinion on what I can see here, in the village... And yes. Why not? Remembering all those who died, even if they are neighbours, or relatives (...) Some people that I know from the village would like to hear about what they have lived indoor. They would like to raise a monument, for instance.*
- Interviewer: And do you think it would raise a lot of dust if the debate were posed nowadays?
- A3: *I do not think so. There are a lot of people in this village with relatives buried in the 'roadsides' and if the chance to say 'let's bring them and let's bury them here' would be proposed, it would not be problematic.⁹⁶*

A3 is a product of the depoliticizing nature of the Francoism. This reality, paradoxically, leads her to consider the necessity for recovering the memory of the people killed during the War and the Dictatorship, on the basis of human rights. Thus, despite declaring openly that she misses the years of the dictatorial regime, she conceives the exhumation and reparation of the bodies of the repressed as a matter of humanity. She feels empathy for those cases closer to her, and also puts herself in the place of others. Of course, she does not consider any political implication that such an action would imply:

- A3: *I do not know what reason can lead someone to put this matter aside. I understand very little. But I think that they should try to stay together and do it [referring to politicians], because there would be a lot of people in favour.*
- Interviewer: So, you conceive it as something necessary.
- A3: *If it was for me, that I had a buried relative, yes.*
- Interviewer: And without a relative murdered?

⁹⁶ Alberto Sendra & A3, *op. cit.* p. 2-3

- A3: *Well... I put myself in the others shoes, the people that I know and... yes. I would be in favour.*
- Interviewer: So you conceive it as a matter of human rights, rather than as something political.
- A3: *Yes. The politics should be laid aside, and they should think about what is important. They should put in the others shoes. That is my opinion.*⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Alberto Sendra & A1, *op. cit.* p. 3-4

3.5. Interview A4

This interview was conducted on the evening of the 28th of October 2014, in the home of the interviewee. As with the other conversations, we established a dialogue off the record before recording, in order to create an atmosphere of confidence. My relationship with this person comes from my childhood, as he is a friend close to my family circle.

In the self-positioning chart I proposed, the participant placed himself on 5, in the middle of the scale. In this sense, he considers himself as being a centrist person. The total length of the recording was 24 minutes.

Personal history and family

A4 was born in 1955. He is originally from a town in the metropolitan area of Valencia, and he has lived there all his life. Among all the participants in the group of 'A' interviewees, A4 is the only one who had immediate family murdered during the war. His grandfather on his father's side was the owner of a huge leather tanning company and an old worker from the family factory killed him due to, as he said, personal grudges. In his words: *during the war, Valencia was a 'red zone'⁹⁸, and my grandfather was a very wealthy man. The worst part is that my family knew the identity, and even the address of the one who killed my grandfather.⁹⁹*

Moreover, he had other relatives who were punished in the immediate aftermath of the war. As he told, one of his uncles was imprisoned and sentenced to death by the Francoist authorities without any trial when the war was over, although finally, through a family contact, the sentence was revoked. And another of his uncles was missing for three years after the war, finally reappearing alive, having been imprisoned in a concentration camp throughout that period.

When I asked him if it was a taboo to talk about the topic in his home, his answer was sententious and devoid of doubt: yes. He said that his father did not talk about it ever, and his mother only talked about it to remember how bad those days were.

Transition, Pact of Silence and historical memory

When I asked A4 what was the first term that came to his mind when I said 'Transition', he said 'excitement, expectation and novelty'. He was studying at a

⁹⁸ In fact, after the fall of Madrid, Valencia became the last capital of the republican government. It was one of the last cities in being conquered by the francoist side.

⁹⁹ Alberto Sendra (Interviewer) & A4 (Interviewee), (2014), Document A4 [Interview transcription], p. 1

business school at that time, but he was not involved at all in the politicized environment of the university. When Franco died, he was 20. He remembers the period as highly conflictive.

He conceived the decisions and agreements finally reached as inevitable:

-A4: *There was not any other way of acting. If not, 'the two Spains' would have continued existing. Well... in fact, they still exist.*

-Interviewer: So, do you think that Spain is still a divided country?

-A4: *Yes. The Francoist parliament voted against itself in the Transition, and all those betrayers to the Regime during that process were not prosecuted later (...) they have continued ruling the country for 39 years. The ruling families are still the same as in the Dictatorship.*¹⁰⁰

A4 uses the discourse of the continuity, not only the continuity of the political apparatus in the Transition from the dictatorship to democracy, but also the continuity of the division of Spain into two big groups or bands. He uses this argument to explain the emergence of controversy when the topic of the national historical memory has been posed. When I asked him about the controversy raised by the Law of Historical Memory of 2006, he said: *the controversy came because the 'two Spains' still exist. There is still a winning side which controls the country. They have the power, and they are not interested in going over all those debates.*¹⁰¹

In accordance with the political discourses analysed in the previous chapter, A4 would be closer to the position of the party in the government when the law was passed (PSOE). While he understands the necessity of a public debate about the historical memory to, in his words, get rid of the 'two Spains', he considers the demands of unearthing and recovering the bodies in mass graves as something unnecessary nowadays.

- A4: *Personally, I think that the demand for searching for the disappeared and unearthing them is nonsense. If I had a relative murdered during the war and the whereabouts of their remains were unknown, I would not be worried. I would not have the desire to recover those remains.*
- Interviewer: What do you think of the associations that make those demands?

¹⁰⁰ Alberto Sendra & A2, *op. cit.* p. 2

¹⁰¹ Alberto Sendra & A2, *op. cit.* p. 2

- A4: *It is a matter of feelings. I find it really complicated that someone of my age, or younger, could have that feeling. The elders? Yes, I believe it.*
- Interviewer: So do you think it is a generational matter, and time will dilute those demands?
- A4: *Yes, I think so. Anyway, I also think that until we do not talk about it naturally, it is never going to be forgotten (...) things, while they remain hidden, are taboo. When we have the chance to talk about something naturally, at the end it is considered as 'something else to talk about, among other topics'. It becomes irrelevant.¹⁰²*

A4 finds the process of recovering the historical memory as something necessary to end with the confrontation of the 'two Spains', but he criticizes the fact that it sometimes seems to be a matter of revenge. In his opinion, this extreme position should be avoided because it is nonsense nowadays. Finally, he makes the argument of the necessity for a proper economic situation, in order to launch such a debate:

- A4: *It is a matter of necessity to talk openly about Francoism. To admit that Franco was a murderer, a son of a bitch... and that is all.*
- Interviewer: Do you imagine a hypothetical scenario, in which the Prime Minister would make an institutional declaration recognising all the victims of the dictatorship, and apologizing in the name of the State?
- A4: *I am sure that that situation will arrive. And I think it is appropriate, in order to end with the 'two Spains'. What is certain is that that will happen when the economy works properly... not now.*
- Interviewer: But you told me earlier that time will lead to a loss of interest in these kinds of debates; and now you say that such a declaration will have to arrive in the future.
- A4: *Yes. Due to the loss of interest by society, such a statement will have the 'fertile ground' to be done. Because it will not be a taboo anymore. To talk about the topic will be conceived as something natural and not conflictive.¹⁰³*

¹⁰² Alberto Sendra & A2, *op. cit.* p. 3

¹⁰³ Alberto Sendra & A2, *op. cit.* p. 3-4

3.6. Interview B1

B1 and I met at noon in the terrace of a popular bar in a village on the outskirts of Valencia. It was the 21st of October of 2014. We asked for something to eat, and we started a conversation off the record.

The total length of the recording was 41 minutes, which made it the second longest interview recording for this thesis. On the political self-positioning chart I proposed, B1 placed himself on a 3 which indicated he considers himself to be a moderate left-wing person. He studied audiovisual media in University. My personal relationship with him comes from meeting him when I was at primary school. When we met for this interview through Facebook, it had not heard from him in a long time.

Personal history and family

B1 was born in 1989. His family comes from 'both sides': his father's family was republican, while his mother's family was on the side of Franco. While one great-grandfather was murdered in the war by Francoist troops, he also remembers listening, when he was a child, to his maternal grandfather saying: 'with Franco life was much better. Before him everything was chaos and he, at least, put the house in order'.¹⁰⁴

When I asked him if it was ever taboo to talk about the war and the dictatorship at home, he told that it was not, but it was an uncomfortable topic. In his words: *my parents always wanted to draw a veil over the question.*¹⁰⁵

Transition

B1 clearly challenges the official memory about the Transition that, in his particular case, identifies as coming from his parents. In his words, his parents have always been monarchists, but he is not. What is interesting from this point is not his political disagreement about the crown, but the way in which he conceives the role of the King during the times of the Transition as a 'narrative': *my parents have always been monarchist, due to the idea that was induced about the King being responsible for the beautiful change we went through. That is why they defend, the role of the monarch.*¹⁰⁶ In this sense, he is directly questioning the official memory about King Juan Carlos I, one of the main figures of the political process of the Transition. Despite his family environment, he said that once he became older he started to be interested in inquiring

¹⁰⁴ Alberto Sendra (Interviewer) & B1 (Interviewee), (2014), Document A1 [Interview transcription], p. 1

¹⁰⁵ Alberto Sendra & B1, *op. cit.* p. 1

¹⁰⁶ Alberto Sendra & B1, *op. cit.* p. 1

these topics by his own means and, thus, arrived at a different conclusion: *we are from a different generation to those who lived through the Transition. All we know about it [the Transition] comes from hearsay. At some point, however, one starts to be interested in these kinds of questions [beyond the family, I presume].*¹⁰⁷

The role of Juan Carlos I as the defender of the democracy during the crucial moments of the failed coup d'état in 1981, constitutes the accepted version of the facts in the historiography. However, among certain sectors of the left-wing, the myth of a kind of conspiracy where the monarch himself was directly involved in the coup has always been alive. These interpretations form part of a certain kind of drawn contemplation with strong interests, but a scarce factual basis. What is interesting in the testimony of B1, are not the motivations or the lack or not of verisimilitude of this 'alternative memory', but the questioning itself. From his perspective, the act of questioning the narrative of the current political system which originated from the Transition is a generational matter.

Another point of interest is his perception of the defeat of the left during the Transition which comes from his mother: *my mother has always been a left-wing person; more than my father. She knows that the left had to renounce to lot of things: hopes, dreams... but, in a certain way that was the correct thing to do in order to further progress. To forget everything that happened in Spain was necessary (...) however, from my point of view, I find it a bit simplistic'. Once again, B1 is challenging the traditionally rooted discourse in his family. He finds a bit simplistic the idea of the inevitability of the final consensus reached in the years of the Transition. When I asked him about his personal view, he simply said: *it does not seem to be as beautiful as it is portrayed (...) we are paying the consequences nowadays.*¹⁰⁸ But he did not specify what alleged consequences are being paid in the present day.*

I asked him to try to 'go back' to the years of the Transition to try to place himself in its context. B1, again, fell somehow into the discourse of conspiracy: *every moment has its problems. I do not doubt that everything was done with the best intentions. Or, at least, by the citizenship (...) the elites are something different. Do I have to believe that from one day to the next everybody was 'good people'? That they changed their mentality and they said 'let's build something new'? (...) there were interests behind making normal people believe that the change was in the name of good will (...) but the*

¹⁰⁷ Alberto Sendra & B1, op. cit. p. 1

¹⁰⁸ Alberto Sendra & B1, op. cit. p. 2

*people who constructed the democracy from the top were looking for personal interests.*¹⁰⁹

B1 is looking to the past with the eyes of the present. The widely broadcasted discourse of anti-politics that is currently in vogue can be traced in his words. He is opposing the citizens, on the one hand, and the elites on the other, as actors with competing interests in the political field. But he is doing it in retrospective with regard to the process of the Transition. In this sense, without analysing the concrete reality of the times of the Transition, his viewpoint of the past is clearly conditioned by the present day political situation. And there is more, when I asked him whether he lumps all the politicians who participated in the pacts of the Transition together: *Of course! They are politicians. Maybe one or two can be put aside because they were credulous and they were also influenced by the positive atmosphere of those times. But, in general, everything that was agreed during those times was done, by their side, in order to take personal profit.*¹¹⁰

Pact of silence and historical memory

In B1's opinion, the pact of silence reached in the Transition was a patch rather than a cure. He expressed this idea with the simile of a love relationship. In his words: *when a couple avoids a problem, it remains latent. In the long run, that couple will end up in constant arguments, whose real reason would be that previously avoided problem. This case is the same... It should be handled with dialogue, control of emotions, but criticising everything without exception. Things do not repair themselves on their own.*¹¹¹ He used very abstract language, without referring to the specific problems. Anyway, his illustration fits perfectly with the topic.

Then I talked about the Historic Memory Law brought in by the socialist government of 2007, and the criticisms against it. I told him that it was attacked due to its alleged spirit of revenge. He answered: *Of course a spirit of revenge moved it. But it is related with my example of the couple: the same pact is the catalyst of that reaction [the will of revenge] (...) I will use another simile. It is like the positive discrimination. Historically, men have always had all the rights. That constitutes a point of imbalance. What solution can be taken? Maybe it is not the most fair way of acting, but we should act like that if we want to settle the previous injustice (...) this law was the same: it was looking to compensate*

¹⁰⁹ Alberto Sendra & B1, *op. cit.* p. 2

¹¹⁰ Alberto Sendra & B1, *op. cit.* p. 3

¹¹¹ Alberto Sendra & B1, *op. cit.* p. 3

the historical injustice towards the victims on the Republican side who were largely forgotten'.¹¹² My counter-argument tried to place on the table the idea that the agreement has worked until now and, therefore, it cannot be so bad for Spanish society. He answered: *'but then, what kind of democratic balance are we expecting? It is not possible without reparations and recognition of the victims of the Francoism (...) It will raise a lot of dust, for sure. But without it, a real democratic balance is not possible.*'¹¹³

B1 is tracing his argument about the necessity of symbolic reparation for victims of Francoism, as a matter of democratic health for the society at large. He does not conceive it as a topic linked to a specific political camp, but as a question relevant to the well-being of the country as a whole. In this sense, he maintains a stance completely out of the traditional dichotomous scheme.

Finally, similar to a previous interview (A4), B1 talked about the necessity to close the open wound of collective memory by talking in a natural way of such a debate. In his words: *the solution lies in naturalising the process as something positive (...) that drive is not going to die in many families, and the way of healing in that respect involves talking in a natural way about that conflict; as something natural.*¹¹⁴

¹¹² Alberto Sendra & B1, *op. cit.* pp. 3-4.

¹¹³ Alberto Sendra & B1, *op. cit.* p. 4.

¹¹⁴ Alberto Sendra & B1, *op. cit.* p. 5.

3.7. Interview B2

This interview was conducted on the 21st of October of 2014 at the workplace of the interviewee. It was done in his office during his break, while we were sharing a coffee. Before starting the recording, we had a relaxed conversation about, mainly, the activities and business of his company. This helped to create an atmosphere of confidence between us, due to the unusual location.

B2 is a childhood friend of mine, but we had been out of touch for years. I contacted him through Facebook to check if he was interested in participating in my project. He did not hesitate in giving a helping hand. When I asked him to tick the box in the self-positioning chart I used for all interviews, he placed himself on a 5, which indicates that he considers himself to be a centrist person. The length of the recording was 21 minutes.

Personal history and family

B2 was born in 1989. He studied business management, and he currently runs his family business. In the first part of our conversation, he told me that he had no relatives that had been subjected to reprisals during the war or in the post-war period. When I asked him about talking about the topic of the war in his home, he said that it was not a taboo at all. In his words: *it was not a taboo. On the contrary, it has been always a kind of 'example' for our education [him and his sister]: a way of illustrating things that happened, and that should not happen ever again*.¹¹⁵ In this sense, he declared himself to have been educated by his parents and grandparents in the 'lessons of the past [he referred to the brutality of the war, and the dismal scenery of the post-war].

Transition, Pact of Silence and historical memory

Regarding this period, I proposed that he tells me what the first terms that came to his mind when I said the word 'Transition'. His response was really positive. He said 'Change, democracy and freedom'. He also recognised that this opinion had been primarily influenced by transmission from his family. I proposed that he might reflect on other forms of socialization such as TV or readings that might have influenced his opinion, but he did not consider them as important in his case.

B2 made a distinction between the fact of leaving to one side the conflict of the historical memory of the victims in the context of the Transition, and forgetting the victims in general. This differentiation implies a gap between a before and an after: *I consider it really smart to start working on something*

¹¹⁵ Alberto Sendra (Interviewer) & B2 (Interviewee), (2014), Document A1 [Interview transcription], p. 1

*new by forgetting... well, not 'forgetting' exactly, but 'leaving on one side' the past in that moment, in order to walk in the same direction: avoiding the conflicts, to solve important matters first of all. However, I consider it a lack of respect that the victims have been forgotten as time has passed and not only the victims of the Francoism but all the victims. Nowadays, everything should be present in order to learn from the past, but in that moment I do not think it was necessary.*¹¹⁶

He thinks that fear of a repetition of the past could have been a determinant factor when the political decisions were taken during the Transition: *there are a lot of factors. A thing like that [fear] is going to condition the political decisions. The formula that is going to be sought, even unintentionally, is trying to avoid that something like that [a war] happens again.*¹¹⁷ B2 is talking in present tense and very abstractly, since he is in the domain of the conjecture. He is not basing his testimony on any kind of memory rather he is speculating. Notwithstanding, what is interesting in this point is that he gives as natural such a discourse, conceiving it as a responsible and logic behaviour in the specific context of the Transition. He does not put into question its memory; he does not challenge the official discourse around the facts which took place in the advent of the democracy in Spain and its construction. The 'big but' comes when talking about the current state of the Pact of Silence or forgetfulness. Even if it was correctly proposed in its context, nowadays it is completely out-dated, in B2's opinion. This point was raised several times throughout our conversation:

- Interviewer: Over the years, do you think it would be necessary to reopen the debate around the memory of the victims forgotten in the Transition?
- B2: *I think it is necessary. I do not know whether it would be good or bad, but I think it is necessary because every society needs to confront its past (...) Maybe it is not a priority now, but it is necessary to consider it.*
- Interviewer: Why do you say it is not a priority now?
- B2: *There are more important things right now, like the unemployment and other aspects [of the economic crisis] (...) but it is a fact of common sense to, in a long run, deal with the past.*¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Alberto Sendra & B2, *op. cit.* p. 2

¹¹⁷ Alberto Sendra & A1, *op. cit.* p. 2

¹¹⁸ Alberto Sendra & B2, *op. cit.* p. 3

The argument for avoiding such a debate right now due to the current economic situation is also used in other interviews. In this sense, the interviewees were taking for granted a political confrontation in case of a debate around the memory. They were all recognising it as a conflictive topic.

Finally, the reasoning behind B2's argument for recovering historical memory is interesting in comparison to the older A set of interviewees. It is opposite to their reasons but, despite little nuances, it is quite similar to the discourse by the younger B1: *I think it should be a right rather than something to be interpreted from a political reading. I think it is a social matter rather than political. The people who want to look for their relatives should have that right: it is a human right. The State should not put up obstacles. It should help them.*¹¹⁹

He is flying the flag of the human rights in order to justify the necessity of recovering the bodies of those murdered and buried at the roadsides. He does not conceive the political connection that a process like that would have with the Transition and the establishment of the current political system. In a way, he is considering that a long time has passed since the times of the necessity of 'hiding' the past to build something new, and that Spanish society is mature enough to confront it without problems. He does not trace any connection: it is only a matter of people and their relatives, not a national topic. Nonetheless, implicitly he understands the debate as conflictive. But from his point of view, this confrontation has no sense anymore. It is something beyond politics.

¹¹⁹ Alberto Sendra & B2, *op. cit.* p. 4

3.8. Interview B3

The interview with B3 was the shortest one. With the total length of the recording it lasted only 14 minutes. It was conducted on the 24th of October of 2014 at a café in a town on the outskirts of Valencia, where B3 resides. In addition to being the shortest interview, B3 was also the youngest interviewee included in this thesis. She was born in 1992, and she is still studying at the university, where she is doing a Master's degree in political science.

B3 is the girlfriend of a close friend. The appeal of this interview, beyond the categorization of B3 within the 'B's', is her profile as someone with a relatively good knowledge of the debates analysed in this thesis, due to her studies. When I showed her the political chart, she placed herself on a 3. In this sense, she considers herself a moderate left-wing person.

Personal history and family

B3 was born in Valencia in 1992. Her knowledge about her family history is, in her words, very limited. The family from her father's side is a mystery to her. The only thing she knew with certainty was that this part of her family has been always well positioned in the economic and social framework. Regarding this side of the family during the period of the dictatorship and the war, she is totally unaware.

Her mother's side of the family was much more humble. As far as she knows, her grandfather was too young to fight during the war, but his brother was killed during a clash. They were both on the Republican side. However, she recognises that whenever she has been told about this period, emphasizes the grinding poverty of those years beyond any political issues, and much less any kind of discourse of resentment. She underlined this fact.

At this point, I asked her about the apparent lack of interest her family has for talking about the past. In her words: *until I started to study political sciences at the university, nobody talked about such topics at home. We have never been prone to talk about these kinds of things of historical and political significance.*¹²⁰

Transition

'Change' was B3's answer when I asked her to tell me about the first term which came to her mind when I mentioned 'Transition'. She was really positive when evaluating this process: *after listening to my professors and having read a lot about it (...) I think that a lot of good things were achieved in a really short*

¹²⁰ Alberto Sendra (Interviewer) & B3 (Interviewee), (2014), Document A1 [Interview transcription], p. 1

*period of time. In other circumstances, such a change could not have been possible. Laws and institutions, both juridical and legislative, were created all at once, as well as a State which is just about democratic more or less, but it exists... And in a record time. Oh my God! Only 40 years ago, we were still under Francoism.*¹²¹

B3 recognised that her main sources of socialization about the Transition are her university and her own interest and curiosity in reading. She did not even mention her family which fits with her earlier allusion to the small, or even non-existent interest in her family for talking about their past. What is remarkable was the tone in which B3 expresses herself. Her language was analytical and descriptive rather than emotional or based on popular opinions. She argued everything, trying to develop her arguments as best as possible and balancing different points of view and appreciations. In this sense, it can be argued that this methodical and restrained form of expression is a mark of her educational background in the field of political science. She showed herself to be diplomatic at all times.

Pact of silence

From her diplomatic posture, B3 recognised the existence of a conflict but at the same time she admitted that she does not like to criticize something without having a proper alternative. From this position, she reiterated her positivity when evaluating the consensus reached in the Transition but, at the same time, she tried to understand the discomfort of all those whose relatives were murdered and whose bodies have not been recovered from the mass graves: *I do not think it is an issue of great importance, as it is in other countries. Anyway, I understand those who feel angry. In my opinion forgetfulness is not the proper way of resolving a conflict. We should be capable of talking and not merely drawing a veil about it.*¹²²

As someone with an academic view, A3 used a type of language that is quite distant and systematic. A year before the interview, she was on an exchange program at a university in the United States. During that experience, she had the chance of studying different processes of transition around the world. The Spanish case was one of them and she talked about it from a viewpoint that was completely foreign and abstract: *last year, when I was studying in the USA, I had a seminar about 'Culture and politics' (...) the professor explained*

¹²¹ Alberto Sendra & B3, *op. cit.* pp. 1-2

¹²² Alberto Sendra & B3, *op. cit.* p. 2

to my class what the 'Pact of Silence' was. He used it as an example or a model of transition to the democracy.¹²³

Historical memory

When I asked B3 about the controversial reactions against the Law of Historical Memory of 2006, enacted by the Socialist government, she downplayed the importance of the underlying problem that the law was trying to solve. To the contrary, she understood the negative positions against the law as a strategy to undermine the government of Zapatero, constituting a mere game in the day-to-day politics:

- B3: *When someone wants to attack a Prime Minister or a government, everything can be used in order to do it.*
- Interviewer: The main argumentation was that it was revanchism.
- B3: *Such a topic should be treated very carefully. It is really complicated (...) One of the main statements of what is called 'Conflict resolution' is that 'stopping a war' is not the same as 'creating a peace'.*
- Interviewer: Do you think the two Spains still exist?
- B3: *No. Of course the left/right split exists. But I do not believe in two sides.*¹²⁴

Finally, B3 raised a very interesting paradox. When I asked her if she considered that the younger generation will be interested in recovering the debate of the historical memory in the future, she clearly denied that possibility: *in a few years that interest will disappear.*¹²⁵ However, she declared, in her usual analytical tone, that maybe that lack of interest would mean that the conflict has disappeared and thanks to that, a productive conversation will be able to take place without acrimony.

¹²³ Alberto Sendra & B3, *op. cit.* p. 2

¹²⁴ Alberto Sendra & B3, *op. cit.* p. 2-3

¹²⁵ Alberto Sendra & B3, *op. cit.* p. 3

3.9. Interview B4

The interview with B4 was recorded on the 27th of October of 2014. It was conducted in a classroom of the English academy he runs. We only had a spare hour before he had to start a lesson but it was enough time to develop our conversation without interferences. Before starting the recording we had a brief conversation about life in general, in order to catch up with each other. I already knew him as my English teacher when I was a child, but years had passed without talking.

The length of the recording was almost 17 minutes. When I proposed that he define himself according to the political chart, he placed himself on a 5. In this sense, his political self-perception is of being a centrist person.

Personal history and family

B4 was born in 1973. He did not have relatives who were subjected to reprisals during the War or the Dictatorship. In his words, he grew up in an environment with both left and right wing convictions. His father was a leftist man involved in politics all his life. He had an important position in the socialist trade union Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT). On the other hand, his uncle was councillor for decades in a town on the outskirts of Valencia, representing a Valencian regionalist right-wing party. As he told me, his childhood was marked by all of these different kinds of political influences. As a consequence of this he remembers an anecdote during our conversation, from when he was a small child. It happened at a family dinner, his father and his uncle started a political argument which ended up with his father, his mother and him being kicked out of his uncle's home. After that, they weren't on speaking terms for years.

When I asked him if it was a taboo in his home to talk about the times of the war and the dictatorship, he emphatically answered: *for what reason? Why would we talk about those things? To talk about unpleasant things, it is better to talk about pleasant things. I think it would be stupid to remember those times. It makes no sense.*¹²⁶

From the way he answered, I inferred that he himself considers the topic as taboo. However, on the other hand he had told me previously about the absence of relatives who had been subjected to reprisals during the conflict. That means that the matter was brought up in his home, otherwise how would he know such information about the past of his family. It seems he answered the question on the basis of his personal opinion rather than the real situation

¹²⁶ Alberto Sendra (Interviewer) & B4 (Interviewee), (2014), Document A1 [Interview transcription], p. 1

at home. Anyway, it seems he considers such a conflictive topic should be avoided, so he is automatically tagging it with the label of 'taboo' although not for the same reasons as many older people, who are still traumatized by the vivid memories of the fateful times. What he seems to convey is a will for positivity which would block every kind of negative feeling. This would lead, however, to the continued transmission of the same kind of taboo emotion attached to such a thorny topic. For instance, the taboo of historical memory might be transmitted into the next generation through his children.

Transition and Pact of Silence

B4 was 8 years old when the failed coup d'état took place. He focused his discourse about the Transition on this specific moment. In his words, he was too young to understand anything but he remembers his parents were really scared, especially his father, due to his political affiliation. His assessment of the whole process is really positive. At this point he made a joke, which manifests a conception of a sensitive gap, or a before and an after: *I value the Transition positively. To pass from a dictatorship to a democracy full of 'chorizos'¹²⁷ is still positive!* [laughs]. *Today we have the freedom to steal money.*¹²⁸ His words trivialize the political change with a sense of humour, however, reading below the surface, his understanding of the democratic regime seems to be constructed by looking backwards from the point of view of the present moment, a time in which there exists a generalised political disappointment. He is tracing a presentist argument.

B4 kept on saying: *to cut deep with certain things could be positive in certain circumstances. Nobody forgets: a pact is something diametrically opposed to total oblivion. Books of history will be there forever, nobody has deleted them.*¹²⁹ His position should be interpreted as a positive evaluation of the agreements about the forgetfulness. He does not seem to perceive a politically conflictive dimension in the matter. Later he challenged this position about forgetfulness from the present moment, but always keeping it in the realm of the apolitical. In this sense, he suggests that a recovery of the people disappeared during the conflict should be conducted, but he avoids a conception of the matter as a political conflict. This point is developed later.

¹²⁷ 'Chorizo' literally means a kind of pork sausage, but in Spanish political argot it means someone who steals public money.

¹²⁸ Alberto Sendra & B4, *op. cit.* p. 1

¹²⁹ Alberto Sendra & B4, *op. cit.* p. 2

Historical memory

B4 clearly placed what he called politics and the process of historical memory on two different levels. It should be taken into account, notwithstanding, that his understanding of a process of recovering historical memory is merely based on the recovery of bodies of those murdered during the war and the dictatorship. At this point he made a passionate soliloquy, where he seemed to feel annoyed with the political dimension that the political forces on the left try to endow on the process. His argument goes hand in hand with the discourse of the conservative political force (PP), analysed in the previous chapter:

- B4: *to use such a topic with political interests is not valid [my interpretation of 'political interests' is 'partisan purposes']. Of course we should undertake a process of recouping, but we should be saying 'look: this person is buried in this place. Let's go and unearth it. This victim was killed by the government, this other one by Francoist troops, this other...' that is all right. But there is a problem when we politicize such a process. Imagine that we do not call it 'historical memory', but 'unearthing bodies' instead. In the first case it seems that those in favour of the process are saying to the right-wing 'confess that you killed these people!' I am not in favour of that. (...) It seems that the right-wing have to confess its crimes of the past. I am not in favour of this. What is the purpose? We already know it! (...) What new are we going to achieve with recognition of the crimes of the past? But, of course, recovering the bodies? Yes, I totally agree with that. Because there are a lot of people who want that.*
- Interviewer: Okay. So you are in favour of the recovery of the bodies by the relatives.
- B4: *Yes, not from a political point of view but a human point of view.*¹³⁰

B4 talked in this part about a vengeful purpose, although he did so indirectly just like the conservative party in Congress quoted in the last chapter. However his viewpoint diverges from theirs because he considers the necessity of recovering the bodies of those murdered and later forgotten, as a gesture of humanity albeit, as he constantly said, in an apolitical way. It is remarkable that he does not consider any kind of other possible political repercussions at all; that he contemplates an aseptic procedure in the unearthing of the corpses as possible:

¹³⁰ Alberto Sendra & B4, *op. cit.* p. 2

- Interviewer: Don't you think that the mere fact of conducting such a process carries political implications?
- B4: *No. Why? It is a police work! Something technical.*¹³¹

The point where his discourse diverges from the position of the PP, detailed in the previous chapter, is when it joins the position embodied by the PSOE. If a review of the whole memory over which the democratic regime has been built would carry problems, the individual rights should be granted to the families:

- Interviewer: Don't you think it could have positive implications for society as a whole?

B4: *For the whole society? No: it would be something completely indifferent. For the families, however, it would be something really important.*¹³²

¹³¹ Alberto Sendra & B4, *op. cit.* p. 3

¹³² Alberto Sendra & B4, *op. cit.* p. 3

3.10. Conclusions

Throughout the interviews, a great disparity of profiles has been analysed. The division into different generational categories does not imply that the individuals within each category do not exhibit their own distinct opinions and points of view about historical memory in Spain. Variables such as the educational background or the self-political perception were also taken into account, in order to complete the profiles. However, the generational viewpoint of the investigation gave results which allow distinguishing certain patterns in the perception and values to be distinguished with regards historical memory, which are common to the cohort of the A's and the B's respectively.

What first catches attention is the general understanding regarding the conflict of the mass graves. The A's tended to understand it as 'the tip of the iceberg' of the conflict that is dragging an even more conflicting political load. For the B's, however, in spite of recognising a conflict, the topic of the mass graves seemed to constitute the problem itself. In this sense, it seems that there is much less understanding of the polemics around the alleged will of revenge of one side towards the other among the younger generation. Their readings in this sense seems to be much more superficial, apparently not connecting the process of recuperation of the bodies, long called for by associations of the civil society and the left-wing parties, with an issue of warring factions. Rather, it is a question which connects with a personal interest.

Through the second chapter, which corresponds to the analysis of the debate on the Law of Historical Memory which took place in the Congress of Deputies in 2006, a deeper interpretation of the implications of recovering historical memory can be observed in the positions of different political parties. Whilst the critics of the law –*PP*– argued that it would imply a return to a confrontation that had allegedly overcome in the period of the Transition, for those in favour –*PSOE*, leftists and Peripheral nationalists–, the lack of a process to gaze back in time in order to solve the latent problems of memory produced a situation of insufficient democratization in Spain, due to the continuities from the Dictatorship into the current democratic system. For this reason, those in favour considered the process essential in order to do justice and improve the nation's democracy.

The A's seem to reproduce the viewpoints sustained in these pro-historical memory positions more conspicuously. The B's, in turn, seem to maintain a viewpoint far from this mind map. Apparently for the B's the issue is more of a personal matter; a right of the families, rather than a matter for confronted national factions, but at the same time something that needs to be

performed for an in-depth democratization of Spain and healing old-wounds. Thus, they seem to maintain some of the reasons largely expressed by those traditionally favourable to the process, but without the political load connected to the memory of the war and its bands.

Almost all the A's –A3 being the only exception- tended to consider historical memory a remnant issue from the dichotomous confrontation which was buried during the Transition, which still remains below ground. Leaving apart their personal opinion –in favour of the process or against it-, they conceived it as a motif which could still cause real political problems because of the 'fear and anger' –A1-, the 'aim of revenge' –A2-, or the 'survival of the two Spains' –A4-.

In the case of the B's, despite comprehending the dispute and the latent tension, their positions and motifs are quite distinct with respect to the A's. That is to say, the B's considered the necessity for a process of recuperation of historical memory as a matter of democratic health, rather than the old motifs of the confrontation exposed by the A's –fear, rancour, anger, or the sides division-. As a conclusion, for the younger interviewees it ceased to be a subject for a political confrontation and division, becoming instead a matter of a collective necessity, beyond taking sides.

The apparent connection between the A3 – whose opinion on the topic of the mass graves specifically was an exception to those interviewed of his age-, and the B's constitutes a paradox. Both conceive of a necessity for recuperation as a matter of human rights and a right for the families. But while the other B's express this opinion to lead into the higher necessity for the collective good, A3 does not give a political significance to it. Her case, as it is explained in her interview, can be understood with the tag of what have been called 'sociological francoism'. This implies an absolute depoliticisation, due to the pernicious impression she gets from politics.

The explanation of such a phenomenon responds to principles beyond the generational explanation. Of course, this element is vitally important, but not decisive. In words of Francisco Erice: *generational changes and biological rhythms do not explain anything on their own. They should be put in relation with other historic and cultural transformations which serve as a reference for them.*¹³³ In this sense, an observation of B3 seems interesting. She imagined a hypothetical future scenario in which the attempted debate of 2006 will be

¹³³ Erice Sebares, F. (2010), *Combates por el pasado y apologías de la memoria, a propósito de la represión franquista*. In J. Aróstegui, S. Gálvez (eds.), *Generaciones y memoria de la represión franquista*, Valencia: PUV, pp. 75-108

enabled, paradoxically thanks to the lack of interest new generations will supposedly have in such a topic.

The notion of the growing de-politicisation of younger generations looks really seductively as an explanation for this lack of interest. However, this viewpoint seems to be vague, if the current political situation in Spain is observed which suggests that the opposite is true: political debates are much more heated than in the pre-crisis times, and the waters are more unsettled than ever in the realm of politics. It seems that 'the political times' are back, in the sense that there is an apparent revival of general interest for public life on the part of the citizenry. The bipartisan model *-PP+PSOE-* is being clearly challenged by new political forces which arise from the decomposition of the prevailing scheme which is one of the basic pillars of the political system established in the Transition. The notion of de-politicisation of the society in abstract terms, and especially among the youth, is not valid then. Rather, it can be argued that a new politicisation responds to new values and interests, within which the traditional left-right division somehow formulated by the A's, embodied in the topic of historical memory researched in this thesis, has no room. At least not in its 'classical form' of a dichotomy of irreconcilable positions.

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis intends to emphasize the political conflict of historical memory about the Civil War and the dictatorship of Franco, embodied in the Pact of Silence reached in the Transition, which continues to affect the democratic normalization of Spain. In this regard, the assumed historiographical viewpoint is that of considering the agreements of the Transition that hide a conflictive past also creates an unintended obstacle for the correct functioning of a country which has formally been a democracy for almost 40 years.

Two different perspectives of analysis have been undertaken: the political, through the examination of the parliamentary debate which took place in 2006 in the Congress of Deputies about the Law of Historical Memory proposed by the government of Zapatero, and the *social*, through the analysis of individual voices from personal interviews on the subject of historical memory. This twofold distinction is presented as a novelty, due to the separation in the same work between the voices of the official politics – embodied in the political parties points of view-, and the individual voices interviewed in this respect. It engages directly with the already mentioned distinction made by Fernández Aguilar between the *politics of memory* on one hand, and *memories of politics* on the other.

But the core of this work has to do with the generational categorization of the interviews between those who lived through the Transition and those who did not. This sought to identify discursive differences between the two groups with respect to the perception of historical memory. As a general conclusion in this respect, the older generations seemed to be closer to the viewpoints held by the political parties analysed in the second chapter. The eventual process of the recuperation of historical memory, in this way, appeared to them somehow as a political weapon, both for those in favour of the process and for those against it. In contrast, those who did not live the process –the younger generation-, expressed the necessity of performing such a process, but from political positions which do not correspond with the *old* division of political sides, but as something necessary for the common good for Spaniards as a whole.

The limitations of these conclusions are obvious, since the sample of the interviews is quite limited in number and restricted to a just one region – Valencia-. However, the intent was to show a prefigured generalized tendency, as an aspect of the change in the political values in the new generations, and the coordinates over which they structure their frame of reference. Although

this reality could be explored over a wide variety of political fields and topics, this thesis has investigated the specific domain of historical memory.

If during the Transition, as it was shown in the first chapter, memory of the Civil War played a decisive role in the way in which the political events eventually took place, and which led to the establishment of a series of *gag rules* embodied in the Pact of Silence. Nowadays, in the scenario of the emergence of a series of young new political movements critical of those agreements, it seems that memory –or in this case, *the absence of memory*- could be playing once again a paradoxical role in the development of a memoristic process which could bring justice to all those somehow forgotten; first by the Francoist authorities and historiography, and later by the establishment of the democratic system. Of course, this interpretation is quite open, but the views from this watchtower could serve in future debates about the generational importance in the processes of Transition.

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