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SOCIO-ONOMASTICS AT WORK: THE NAMES OF SPAIN'S POLITICAL PARTIES (1976–2021)

This study analyses the names of political formations (politonyms) in Spain from the start of the country's transition to democracy in 1976 to the present day. Based on a corpus of more than 5,000 names, the evolution of the creative systems is examined according to a series of parameters: the hallmarks of territoriality, the use of collective names, and ideologically defined terms, as well as the global nature of the name and language used. The quantitative data confirm constant elements in the structuring of politonyms on the one hand, and changes in trends associated with historical events and the evolution of the political course itself, on the other.

Key words

socio-onomastics; politonyms; political parties; Spain

1. Introduction

From a linguistic perspective, the names of political parties are clearly proper nouns insofar as the main trait defining them, namely, uniqueness, which the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines as “the fact or condition of being unique or unequalled; unique quality or character; an instance of this; a unique fact or circumstance.” The same dictionary defines a proper name as “A proper name is written with an initial capital letter. The same proper name may be borne by many persons in different families or generations, or by several places in different countries or localities; but it does not connote any qualities common to and distinctive of the persons or things which it denotes. A proper name may however receive a connotation from the qualities of an individual so named, and be used as a common noun...”. Accordingly, their formal diversity and kind of reference in Spanish provide a good fit with one of the types that Bajo Pérez (2002, p. 193; 2008, p. 39) distinguishes within the classification: “Nombres musicales, artísticos, académicos, vecinales, deportivos... de grupos, asociaciones, entidades [Musical, artistic, academic, community sporting names... of groups, associations, agencies]”. Fernández Leborans (1999, p. 82) considers them to be a “no puro” [not strictly pure] type of proper name (within the concept of “organisations”), denominative expressions with a descriptive or mixed origin based on a common noun, which tend to be accompanied by adjectival or prepositional determinants or modifiers, which she illustrates in Spanish through the *Real Academia Española* [*Royal Spanish Academy*]. Indeed, formally speaking, they consist mostly of compounds that are syntagmatic,¹ nominal or nominalised (*Centro Popular – Popular Centre*, *Los Verdes – The Greens*), although more recently they have also appeared with a verbal core (*Somos Castuera – We Are Castuera*, *Tú Decides – You Decide*), an

adjectival one (*Unidos por Chipiona – United for Chipiona*), or with a prepositional structure (*Por mi Pueblo – For My People*).

Like all proper names, and as in English, these denominations use the upper case for the first letter of the initial word and all the other major words in the sequence (*España Real – Royal Spain, Partido de los Vecinos – Party of the Community*). Furthermore, they are especially prone to abbreviation in the form of initialisms or acronyms (Fernández Leborans, 1999, p. 81): ULC (*Unidad Local Ciudadana – Citizens’ Local Unity*), UNID (*Unión Nuevo Impulso Democrático – New Union for Democratic Progress*).

Although there are numerous studies on political terminology (Bacot, 2010), the onomastic studies on these kinds of proper names have not received sufficient attention considering their interest, diversity of functions and actual use. One outcome of this lack of attention is the difficulty in finding, within the long list of “-onyms” at our disposal, a technical term that can be used to group them. One of the very few studies dedicated to this matter in Spanish includes several different expressions, such as *nombre de partido* [*party name*], *nombre programático* [*programmatic name*] (Colas, 2019), *nombres de organizaciones políticas* [*names of political organisation*], *onomástica partisana* [*partisan onomastics*] (Bacot, 2010), or the more general *onomástica política* [*political onomastics*] (Bacot, 2010). Slavic tradition makes broad use of the technicism *politonym*, with its impeccable etymological roots,² although it also has the disadvantage of being used in other disciplines and in other contexts. This means that *politonym* has been used, with arguably little success, to define any word with a political content, such as *Marxist* (Fuchs, 2016). Above all, it has been used as a specialised term in anthropology to describe both an artificial spatial agency (in the political, administrative and historical sense) and its inhabitants, as opposed to the term *ethnonym*, which refers to a spatial unit of a cultural nature and its members (e.g., Reisigl – Wodak 2001; Pizarro, 2005). According to the meaning applicable here, *politonym* has been used by some scholars, such as Maksimchuk (2017), Tkachenko (2019), Tameryan – Kachmazova (2019), and Shimkevich (2019a; 2019b) to classify the names of socio-political organisations, political parties, labour organisations and trade unions, and other public associations within the socio-political field.

The use of this term means defending these types of proper nouns as a clear-cut area within onomastic research, with differentiating features compared to other ambits that have been more widely studied (Maksimchuk, 2017). As we have seen,

¹ There are only a handful of cases that use a single component: *Mogarén – Mogarén, Ciudadanos – Citizens*.

² Private discussion with Juan Luis García Alonso, an expert in onomastics and researcher in Classical Greek.

therefore, we are dealing with syntagmatic compounds, a clear shift from a common to a proper noun, thereby individualising a segment of reality that has its own particular characteristics. Firstly, although their use and semantics leave no doubt about their classification as proper names, they distance themselves from the most prototypical ones (anthroponyms and toponyms) in one key aspect: while the latter tend to have lost the name's actual origin, and may therefore be considered arbitrary (Coates, 2006), political names keep their semantic content alive, although the common replacement by initialisms dilutes their informative capacity. Secondly, these are proper names that designate groups of people, which, thirdly, and by contrast to other onomastic cases in which the name is attributed by others, refer to themselves using words that belong to everyday use, which, fourthly, are chosen with a clear strategic purpose within the political arena (Bacot, 2010). Politonyms therefore have three roles to play when we consider the three recipients they address (Bacot – Lecolle, 2019): they serve as a common denominator for their members, as a moniker when standing for elections, and as a standard for their location and positioning within a series of groups with similar leanings.

Their undeniable pragmatic function and their impact on different recipients have meant that politonyms have been included as ergonyms, a more general term used for the objects or products of human activity, which include brands and collective names (Bauer, 1985). Politonyms have often been treated, therefore, as brand names, with which they partly share their definition: 'A name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or combination of them which is intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors' (American Marketing Association, 1960 in Kumar – Dhamija, 2017). They also share the same remit (name, inform, suggest) (Shimkevich, 2019a) and the two facets of their processing: functional and emotional (Mensah, 2011). These concomitances have led to the highly intense development, especially in English-speaking countries, of a specific branch of techno-marketing referred to as *political branding* (e.g. Kumar – Dhamija, 2017; Marland, 2013; Mensah, 2011). From this perspective, therefore, and more so since there has been a decline in voting as an expression of belonging to a social group (Smith – Speed, 2011), a party's name is designed to provide an image of what it stands for, responding to voters' expectations and forging an emotive link with them (Aguerrebera – Rodríguez Virgili, 2011).

Besides their brand value, proper names in general and politonyms in particular are linguistic units of considerable cultural value, heavily ideologised and often playing a very central role when reconstructing social reality (Rutkowski – Skowronek, 2019). Our case involves a proper name that closely mirrors a society's historical evolution (Akin, 2019; Courtois, 2019). Bacot (2010) contends that just as anthroponyms and toponyms operate as deictics that respond to the question of *who* and *where*, politonyms provide an answer to *when*, as in themselves they con-

stitute a discourse, even before they are inserted into a higher text. This involves a discourse that has been drawn up at a very specific time by clearly defined authors and users, as well as with their contemporary recipients.

For the above reasons, therefore, we are dealing precisely with terms that are basically informed by the fluctuating circumstances of the present, the influence of more or less transcendental events with an impact on political life. For that very reason, they also undergo many alterations, from cosmetic changes, which tend to respond to the need to adjust to modern times, through to radical “renaming”, which involves returning to the drawing-board for their launch as a collective. This renaming has focused scholarly interest, whereby it has been analysed in different settings and from different standpoints, some more linguistic in nature (Accolla, 2014; Tkachenko, 2019; Treille, 2019; Fretel, 2019), others more sociological (Smith – Speed 2011; Kim – Solt 2017).

2. Method

One of the advantages of these kinds of lexical units is that their origins are easy to date and locate. We have precise data on the official registration of all of Spain’s acknowledged political formations. The Ministry of the Interior’s website has a freely accessible search engine (https://sede.mir.gob.es/nfrontal/webpartido_politico.html) covering all the entries recorded from 4 October 1976 to the present.³ Our analysis maintains this same start date, but ends this study period on 9 March 2021. This provides the longitudinal data required for identifying the different political-onomastic trends that have been recorded in Spain over the past 45 years.

The 5,160 entries in our database⁴ have been processed and ordered according to a series of strictly formal and predominantly quantitative analytical parameters, leaving the qualitative study of the lexicon to future research.

This study considers the date of registration and a further five criteria for classifying the corpus that will help us to describe the trends’ evolution: firstly, a distinction will be made between those parties whose name contains an explicit collective name (*partido – party, grupo – group, movimiento – movement...*) and those that do not or which have used an alternative procedure to convey the notion of collectiveness (*Juntos por Arganda – Together for Arganda, Salvemos Doñana – Let’s Save Doñana...*).

³ Besides the name (*formación política*) and/or initialism (*siglas*) and date of recording (*fecha de inscripción*), the search in Spanish provides the registered address and sundry contact details. The platform does not include the names of temporary alliances or coalitions formed for specific elections, so these have not been included in our corpus either.

⁴ It should be noted that some formations explicitly ask to be removed from the Ministry’s census when they disband.

Secondly, we also differentiate between those names that contain a term with ideological content (*socialista – socialist, comunista – communist, conservador – conservative...*) and those without these kinds of descriptions.

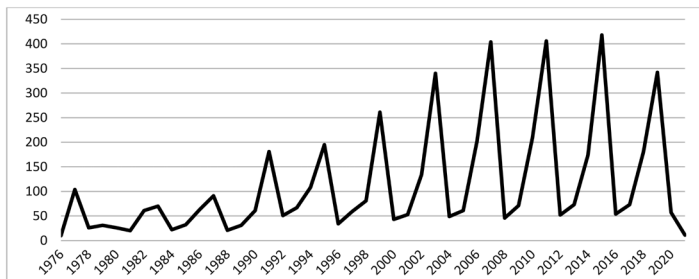
Thirdly, we record the presence or absence of territorial definitions, which means the spatial identities corresponding to the formation's operating scope (*nacional – national, local – local, regional – regional, autonómico – autonomous*, referring to one of Spain's 17 autonomous communities and two autonomous cities, etc.), toponyms (*Cataluña – Catalonia, Almuñécar, España – Spain, País Valenciano – Community of Valencia...*) and inhabitants (*Español – Spanish, Aragonés – Aragonese, rondeño – from the town of Ronda...*).

Fourthly, the nature of the politonym is specified; in other words, whether the name describes the formation (*Partido Conservador Español – Spanish Conservative Party* or *Unión de Juventudes Maoístas – Union of Young Maoists*) or whether it is connotative or evocative (*Arco Iris – Rainbow, Liberación – Liberation...*), which is difficult to fathom outside its context.

Finally, note has been taken of the language or languages used to create the names. As is only to be expected, many of the entries in the corpus include, firstly, the different languages spoken in Spain, some of which have official status (Spanish, Catalan, Galician in Galicia, and Basque) and others do not (e.g., Asturian-Leonese /also known as *Bable/* in Asturias, Aragonese in Aragon); secondly, the bilingual combination of Spanish and others, and thirdly, much less frequently, other non-national languages, such as English or Latin.

After compiling the percentages for each one of the 45 years, we obtained a more global snapshot of the phenomenon's evolution by grouping the data into four-year periods, taking the end of each segment to be the date of the local elections. We have proceeded in this manner for several reasons: on the one hand, it is the most stable electoral calendar, as they are not subject to snap polls or delays as with other elections, such as the general elections or those held in the autonomous communities, where they sometimes overlap, are held on different dates, or even coincide in different communities on the same date. Furthermore, local elections are the ones that set the pace for the creation of political formations because it is within these demarcations that new projects are more readily launched. Graph 1 plots the frequency with which new parties are registered.

There is a very clear correlation between the creation of parties and local elections. There are two aspects to be highlighted here: firstly, and contrary to expectations, the trend does not involve an initial explosion followed by one of stability, with moderate growth, but instead we are witnessing a trajectory with no foreseeable end that has had several moments of clearly defined growth in recent decades, and we will be seeking to shed light on this when we examine the results. Secondly, in the first period, defined by the end of Franco's dictatorship and the country's first democratic elections, the number of registrations barely exceeded 100 in 1977.



Graph 1: Number of political formations registered per year (the peaks correspond to years holding local elections)

These mostly involved nationwide formations, with a general sphere of action, and which at that time met the electorate's needs in terms of ideological diversity, which of course clearly trumped the scarcity of options available during the dictatorship. As events ran their course, more groups appeared with the remit to provide a project that identified more closely with local or regional concerns.

The statistical study has involved the tools provided by the Excel spreadsheet and version 22 of SPSS software. As is the norm in onomastic studies, the reference measure involves the frequencies of the different parameters analysed compared to absolute frequencies, whose values do not reflect onomastic changes or changes in the size of the sample (Weitman, 1981).

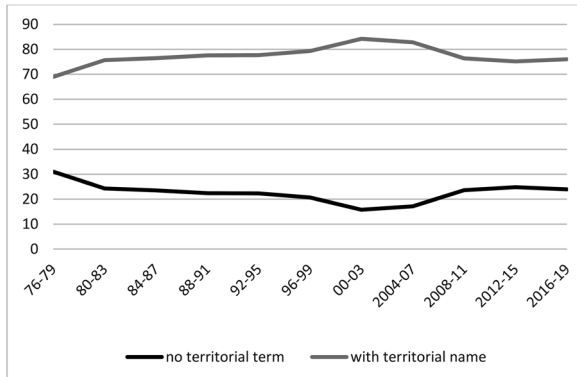
Finally, and for reasons of space, this study does not address the analysis of an aspect of considerable linguistic interest, namely, initialisms and acronyms. They have a high semiotic value and respond to reasons of brevity and to a strategy of personal engagement and identity (Aguerreberre – Rodríguez Virgili, 2011; Bacot – Desmachelier – Honoré, 2011; Rodríguez González, 1988), which means they will be left for a more specific study in the future.

3. Analysis of results

3.1 Territoriality

Spatial markers are a constant feature of names that, as we shall see, are a common presence throughout the period under study. A consideration of the corpus as a whole reveals that 77.9% of the cases include a term that demarcates the political group's area of operations. Graph 2 plots the corresponding tendencies in this matter over the twelve segments used here as our temporal reference.

The graph clearly shows that territoriality is a primary concern in the definition of Spain's political formations, and it is part of their discourse through their most visible hallmark, their name.



Graph 2: Use of territorial terms in the period under study

Table 1 provides a breakdown of the different procedures used to define this value. Column 2 quantifies the names or adjectives that specify the formation's operating scope (e.g., *vecinal* – *communitarian*, *barrio* – *neighbourhood*, *local* – *local*, *municipal* – *council*, *rural* – *rural*, *aldeano* – *district*, *cantonal*, *insular* – *insula*, *isleño* – *island*, *autonómico* – *autonomous region*, *regional* – *regional*, *nacional* – *national*, *federal* – *federal*, *europeo* – *European*, and *internacional* – *international*). Column 3 reflects the myriad toponyms that range from the most general (*Europa* – *Europe*, *España* – *Spain*) to the most specific (*Vilanova*, *El Bierzo*, *Arona*). Column 4 details the nature of the population as *español* – *Spanish*, *astur* – *from Asturias* or *mijeño* – *from Mijas*.

Table 1: Use of territorial markers in the corpus

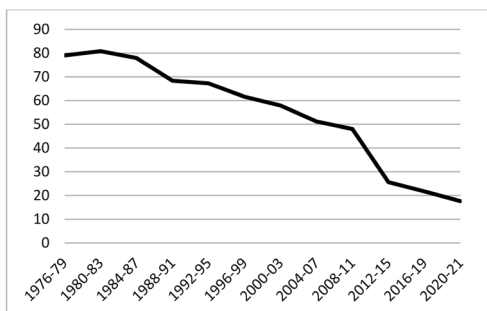
Period	Spatial Levels	Toponyms	Population	Total
1976–1979	5.3	34.5	29.2	69.0
1980–1983	1.7	36.2	37.9	75.7
1984–1987	2.4	42.3	31.7	76.4
1988–1991	2.4	49.7	25.5	77.6
1992–1995	2.4	50.6	24.7	77.7
1996–1999	2.8	53.6	23.0	79.3
2000–2003	1.2	65.6	17.4	84.2
2004–2007	1.8	65.6	15.5	82.8
2008–2011	1.8	62.4	12.2	76.4
2012–2015	1.5	65.0	8.6	75.2
2016–2019	1.4	66.3	8.3	76.0
2020–2021	1.5	45.6	14.7	61.8

The most common way of defining space is through the use of toponyms. This provides an unequivocal indication of proximity to the electorate and, at the same time, opens up a gap with parties that extend their influence to broader catchment areas and may ignore the specific interests of a given location in favour of consensus over those shared by a number of areas. The use of proper names for forming other proper names is not an uncommon practice. There are anthroponyms that provide the basis for the names of places, toponyms that are used as anthroponyms, both first names and last names. In the case that concerns us here, there are anthroponyms (*Agrupación Ruiz Mateos “Trabajo y Empleo” – Ruiz Mateos “Labour and Employment Group”, Partido Agrupación de Electores Luis Villarejo – Luis Villarejo Voters Group Party, Candidatura Independiente Antonio García Fernández – Antonio García Fernández Independent Ticket*), albeit they are only a very small minority. Toponyms (and to a lesser extent populations) play a significant role in politonyms and sometimes feature as their very core (*Mogarén, XLeón, Canarias Libre – Free Canary Islands, Grau unit – United Grau*, in Catalan, *Extremeños – those from Extremadura, Altzakoak – those from Altza*, in Basque, *La Castellana – The Castilian, Gijoneses – Gijon inhabitants*).

3.2 Collective names

One of the more defining traits of politonyms is their need to resort to different mechanisms conveying the notion of group, and one of the easiest ways of doing so is through collective names. Graph 3 plots the percentage variation across the different stages of Spain’s recent democratic history regarding the use of names that use a singular form to refer to uniform groups of persons or things:

Graph 3: Use of collective names in politonyms



The graph shows a constant downward trend in the use of this lexical resource, although, overall, these kinds of words occupy a prominent position in the corpus, being detected in over half of the politonyms (54.8%). Thus, the term *partido – party* (and its equivalent in Spain’s other official languages, *partit, partiu* and

alderdia)⁵ appears 899 times, thereby accounting for 17.2% of the cases analysed, well ahead of the other nouns serving the same or a similar purpose, such as *union* – *union*⁶ (324 cases), *agrupación* – *grouping* (269), *grupo* – *group* (136), *plataforma* – *platform* (103), *movimiento* – *movement* (100), *gente* – *people* (59), *asamblea* – *assembly* (41), *candidature* – *ticket* (39), *bloque* – *block* (35), *coalición* – *coalition* (30), *frente* – *front* (30), *federación* – *federation* (28), *alianza* – *alliance* (23) and *asociación* – *association* (27).⁷

These names proliferated in the first registrations of political parties, although they have now been replaced by other systems designed to convey the notion of community, as a very important consideration because it appeals to the recipient as a member of it. Over the past twenty or thirty years, there has been a steady replacement of collective words in their truest sense (Accolla, 2014) by mechanisms such as the plural form of nouns and adjectives (*Vécinos por Torremolinos* – *Local People for Torremolinos*, *Centristas Españoles* – *Spanish Centrists*, *Ciudadanos* – *Citizens*, *Los Parados* – *The Unemployed*, *Jaeneros* – *People from Jaén*), a collectivising device that is apparent in other settings (Bacot – Lecolle, 2019). Use is also made of other expressions that involve the notion of collective work or unity: *alternativa* – *alternative* (226), *iniciativa* – *initiative* (104), *unidad* – *unity* (90), *acción* – *action* (59), *acuerdo* – *agreement* (31), *compromiso* – *commitment* (43), *juntos* – *together* (41), *convergencia* – *convergence* (35), *foro* – *forum* (23), *todos* – *all* (20) and the metaphorical use of *marea* – *tide* (12). More recent times have also witnessed the spread of a morphological tool with a considerable capacity for expressing not only plurality, but also inclusion. This involves the use of verbal forms conjugated in the first person plural, generally in the present indicative (*Podemos* – *We Can*, *Proponemos* – *We Propose*, *Somos vecinos* – *We Are Local People*), as well as the present subjunctive as a rallying cry (*Ganemos* – *Let's Win*, *Demos el Cambio* – *Let's Bring About Change*, *Recuperemos* – *Let's Recover/Re-establish*), also using this opportunity to make a play on words with the homonym of the verbal expression in other languages (*Demos +* – *Let's Give More*). These are supplemented by the continuous inclusion of *nosotros* – *we/us* that serves a clearly inclusive purpose (*Todos nosotros* – *All Of Us*, *Guk bai* – *Yes We Are* (Basque), *Nosaltres Som* – *We Are* (Catalan), *Nós Baiona* – *We Are Baiona* (Galician).

⁵ These figures include the term and, as appropriate, their equivalents in Spain's other official languages. We do not think that breaking them down by languages will provide any significant nuances, as these trends tend to be applicable nationwide.

⁶ In the sense of 'confederación' as "Agrupación o asociación de personas" (DEL), or union as "The action of uniting, or the state or fact of being united, into one political body; esp. formation or incorporation into a single state, kingdom, or political entity, usually with one central legislature." (OED)

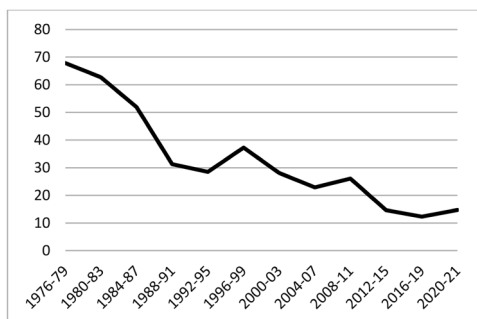
⁷ We list solely those that occur more than 20 times.

3.3 Ideological indicators

The ideology and political programme that underpin a formation are not always explicitly stated by their creators (Tameryan – Kachmazova, 2019). As they are usually syntagmatic compounds, the option to combine different concepts means they may contain *transparent* terms, whereby they make their identification easier and so help the voter to choose. The electorate may thus see in the brand being offered components that reflect their political filiation and affinity, and which have been referred to as *ideological schemata* (Rodríguez González, 1988).

Graph 4 plots the frequency of terms with an ideological content over the period of more than four decades studied here.

Graph 4: Use of ideological terms in politonyms



This is another feature whose use has clearly undergone changes over the passage of time. From being a majority phenomenon in the first years of Spanish democracy, which we could refer to a teething period when, on the one hand, traditional pre-Franco and anti-Franco names were reinstated, which are explicit in this matter (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español – Spanish Socialist Workers Party, Partido Comunista de España – Spanish Communist Party, Comunió Tradicionalista – Traditionalist Communion, Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya – Republican Left of Catalonia, Izquierda Republicana – Republican Left, Euzko Alderdi Jeltzalea-Partido Nacionalista Vasco – Basque National Party*⁸). In turn, the new situation favoured the founding of new formations across the entire political spectrum. The prior absence of criteria upon which to base the political identification of electoral options required furnishing them with clearly delimited terminology that would help to define the collective (*Partido Liberal – Liberal Party, Democ-*

⁸ The Spanish name is not an exact translation of the Basque. The word *Jeltzalea* refers to the party's traditional motto encapsulated in the initialism JEL (*Jaungoikoa eta Lege Zaharra – God and the Old Law*). It is also interesting to note that the party has recently changed its translation into English from the *Basque Nationalist Party* to the *Basque National Party*.

racia Cristiana Aragonesa – Christian Democracy of Aragon, Liga Comunista Revolucionaria – Revolutionary Communist League).

Over the passage of time, the connotations of the expression *partido político – political party*,⁹ seem to have acquired a pejorative meaning, more in keeping with professional circles than with a public service, leading as far as possible to the avoidance of possible labels that are considered to some extent outmoded, preferring other tags such as *independientes – independents* (917 appearances in the corpus), or conceptual categories with no ideological biases, such as *social – social* (120), *popular – popular* (100), *progreso – progress* (92), *libre/libertad – free/freedom* (44), *cambio – change* (36), *renovación/renovador – renovation/renewal* (30) or *cívico/a – civic* (22).

A lexical analysis highlights the disparity of frequencies in the different positions within the political spectrum. The most often repeated cluster is undoubtedly *democracia/democrático/demócrata – democracy/democratic/democrat* (423 mentions), which is indicative of the importance this cluster of terms has acquired as a shared notion of a common positive stereotype.

Elsewhere, there is also a plethora of terms that are also commonly attributed to left-wing leanings, such as *izquierda – left* (214), *socialista – socialist* (154), *progresista – progressive* (122), *republican – republican* (62) and *comunista – communist* (53), while there is only the occasional inclusion of terms clearly associated with the right: *derecha/s – right/right-wing* (9), *conservador – conservative* (6) and *Cristiano – Christian* (16). This asymmetry may be due to the rejection caused by the long night of the dictatorship, in which the latter group of terms prevailed over the ostracism of the former. According to the surveys on ideological persuasion conducted following the restoration of democracy, we could also add that the average person in Spain considers themselves to be centre-left,¹⁰ so it is only to be expected that the corresponding terminology is to prevail over those with opposing views.

In parallel with this cluster of terms, there are others that avoid polarisation, such as *centrista – centrist* (100 mentions), those that are more ambiguous in terms of political positioning, such as *liberal – liberal* (96), *nacionalista – nationalist* (84), *regionalista – regionalist* (24) and *reformista – reformist* (23), and those that focus on a more specific aspect of political action, such as *verdes – greens* (124) and *ecologista – ecologist* (26).

⁹ As it is not a presidential system, parties are the focal points of political action (Aguerreberre – Rodríguez Virgili, 2011).

¹⁰ According to Spain's Sociological Research Centre (CIS), the surveys on Spanish people's ideological self-positioning (1996–2021) indicate that, on a score of 1 to 10, where 1 is the far left and 10 is the far right, the average for those interviewed systematically stood at between 4.5 and 5.

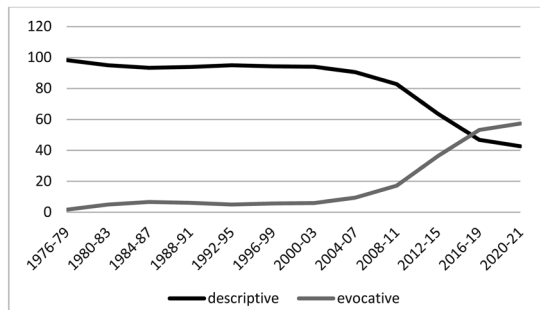
Understanding the decline in the use of terms with an ideological slant also requires considering the ever more frequent appearance of politonyms referring to groups whose remit is to defend the implementation of specific measures within their political activity. The second stage of our corpus therefore contains such examples as *Plus Ultra Pensiones Dignas – Plus Ultra More Decent Pensions*, *Partido de Perjudicados por las Preferentes – Party for those Affected by Preference Shares*, *Comerciantes Ambulantes y Minorías Étnicas – Street Vendors and Ethnic Minorities*.

In sum, there is no doubt that political formations have substantially altered their naming habits over time, as we shall confirm forthwith.

3.4 The nature of politonyms

The preceding sections have shed light on the main changes in the naming of Spain's political parties. There now follows a final summarising step that addresses these names' general nature: more descriptive, with indications of their formulation as a group and with information on their aims and principles, or more evocative and connotative, opaque in terms of their identity, and more akin to a slogan than a definition. Graph 5 shows how both tendencies cross over during this 45-year study period.

Graph 5: Trend in descriptive or evocative politonyms



Following a long period in which descriptive usages have prevailed, the trend has been bucked, and now names of an evocative nature applied to newly created formations outnumber those that resort to more traditional expressions. It seems that the sea change occurred between 2012 and 2015 (with a swing of almost 20 percentage points). It involves a turning point that begins precisely in the final year of this previous stage, 2011, coinciding with the emergence of a phenomenon referred to as 15M (15 May), a popular protest movement headed by sundry groups that among numerous different demands of a very broad nature called for new approaches to politics, with more active participation of all the agents involved,

and a strong criticism of the party system in place.¹¹ The outcome of this popular outburst was the creation of a series of pressure groups and new political formations, with one outstanding example being *Podemos – We Can* (registered in 2014), whose name also serves to illustrate the new usages in naming.

That year, 2011, signalled the start of the widespread use of connotative politonyms with structures that broke with onomastic tradition, as in the following cases, which provide a sample of the new creative patterns: firstly, the procedure already mentioned in 3.2, using verbal forms and the inclusive *nosotros – we/us*, for both descriptive and rallying purposes (*Proponemos – We Propose*, *Ganamos – We Win*, *Sumemos – Let’s Join Together*, *Avanzamos – We Advance*). This use extends to other verbal forms: infinitives and gerunds (*Cambiar Madrid – Change Madrid*, *Ser de Marín – Being From Marín*, *Creando Futuro – Creating Future*), appeals to the familiar singular *tú – you* (*Abre los ojos – Open Your Eyes*, *Tú decides – You Decide*, *Tú Aportas – You Contribute*, *Gobiérnate – Govern Yourself*) and other verbal forms used to personalise abstract entities (*Teruel Existe – Teruel Exists*, *Molins Camina – Molins Is on the Move*) or to depersonalise, as in the recurring *Sí Se Puede – Yes, It’s Possible* (33 variants in the corpus). Further incorporations include other forms of composition that may initially seem alien to naming processes and which conjure up models that are repeated for different place names: prepositional syntagma (*Por Ávila – For Ávila*, *Por y Para el Pueblo – By and For the People*, *A Por Ellos – Let’s Go After Them*, *Con Almodóvar – With Almodovar*), non-nominal statements and syntagma (*En Común – In Common*, *Ahora Getafe – Now Getafe*, *Catalunya Sí – Catalonia Yes*, *Oiartzun Bai – Oiartzun Yes /Basque/*, *Más Castro – More Castro*, *La Línea 100x100 – La Linea 100x100*, *SOS Llaveneres – SOS Llaveneres*, *Adelante/Entabán/Davant/Avante/Adiante – Forward in different languages and dialects...*, *En Progrès – In Progress /Catalan/*, *Primero Alcalá – First Alcalá*), questions and exclamations (*Zergatik ez? – Why not /Basque/*, *Vamos ya!! – Come on!!*, *Viva! – Up with/Long live!!*) and structures involving both the population and the toponym (*Loreños por Lora – People of Lora for Lora*, *Moguereros por Moguer – People of Moguer for Moguer*), amongst others. Last but not least, there are structures with cultural references (*Primavera Andaluza – Andalusian Spring*, *Partido Eñe – Party for ñ*, *Plataforma Ñ – Ñ Platform*, with both these latter cases referring to the exclusive use of the letter *ñ* in Spanish), and a play on words (*Leganemos*, combining *Leganés* and *let’s win*, *AIKE /A Guadalajara hay que quererla – you have to love Guadalajara*, with *AIKE* sounding the same as “hay que”), *Mondra Arrasa* /which uses the bilingual Spanish/Basque name *Mondragón-Arrasate* and the word *Arrasa* meaning “on the rampage”).

¹¹ This is not an isolated case, but instead has been preceded by other social upheavals such as those in Greece in 2008 and the so-called *Arab Spring* of 2010–2011.

Faced with this imaginative display of innovative naming, the traditional parties, which have adopted what may be referred to as a “classic pattern” (Bacot – Lecolle, 2019), have to strike a balance between two opposing options: remain faithful to the name by which they are recognised (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español*, *Partido Comunista de España*, *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*, *Euzko Alderdi Jeltzalea-Partido Nacionalista Vasco*, *Coalición Canaria*, *Bloque Nacionalista Galego*), a highly esteemed brand value in social communication, or use internal or foundational changes to change their names (*Junts per Catalunya – Together for Catalonia* /Catalan/, *Sortu – Created* /Basque/, *Euskal Herri Bildu – Unite the Basque Country* /Basque/, *Adelante Andalucía – Forward Andalusia*, *Navarra Suma – Navarre Onwards and Upwards*).

3.5 The languages of politonyms

Spain has a range of languages with varying legal statuses. The names of its political parties reflect this diversity for a number of reasons: as a vehicle for communication, as a hallmark of identity, as a strategy for engaging with the electorate, and as a way of promoting the autochthonous language or dialect, for example. Table 2 details the use of these languages and dialects in the different periods analysed. Column 7 covers the minority varieties or dialects spoken across the country: Asturian-Leonese (12 cases), Aragonese (6), Aranese (2), Andalusian (1) and Cantabrian (1), as well as other non-national languages: Latin (4) and English (3).¹² Column 8 provides the rates for all the languages except Spanish.

Firstly, the minority varieties (column 7) have only a token presence in the overall corpus, quite the opposite to Spanish, which is the main language in all the periods and appears in all the bilingual combinations. Nevertheless, in second place, it is apparent that as time goes by, Spanish is accompanied by the other three official languages in their use of onomastic material, and they even increase their share, although their growth rate is not as steep as the other features we have analysed in the preceding sections.

To assess the greater or lesser presence of each one of them, we should not focus so much on their degree of implementation in their regions but instead on the weight of the population where they enjoy official status within Spain as a whole. When we establish a correlation between these two factors, population and the presence of two official languages, we find that in no case does the latter record the rates that the number of local inhabitants suggest, although Catalan and Galician

¹² As in Lat. *Cives* ‘Citizens’, *Libertas* ‘Freedom’, *Aequalitatem* ‘Equality’ or in Eng. *National-Bolshevik Party-Partido Nacional Bolchevique*, *EuroReset* and *Europe United-Europea Unida España*.

come very close to these figures,¹³ in consonance also with the sociolinguistic situation of the communities involved. It is also true in the case of Basque that its use is not as widespread as its two counterparts, although there may be a crucial factor for explaining this: its level of comprehension, especially for monolingual Spanish speakers. It is obvious that a name exclusively in Basque will be more difficult to understand, and therefore faces more obstacles to work as a brand. This explains why there are more Basque-Spanish bilingual cases (46) than monolingual ones (41). By contrast, the language kinship between Spanish, Catalan and Galician does not pose the same disadvantages, nor for those members of the population that while not speakers, coexist with them.

Table 2: Use of languages in the politonyms in the corpus

PERIOD	LANGUAGE						TOTAL OTHER LANGUAGES
	Spanish	Catalan	Galician	Basque	Bilingual Spanish – other	Others	
1976–1979	79.5	15.2	2.3	0.0	2.3	0.6	20.5
1980–1983	81.9	11.3	2.8	0.6	1.7	1.7	18.1
1984–1987	82.2	12.5	2.4	1.0	1.0	1.0	17.8
1988–1991	80.6	13.6	4.1	0.0	1.0	0.7	19.4
1992–1995	78.4	14.5	3.6	0.5	2.4	0.7	21.6
1996–1999	73.3	22.5	3.0	0.2	0.5	0.5	26.7
2000–2003	73.2	21.4	2.6	0.4	1.9	0.5	26.8
2004–2007	76.7	17.2	2.5	0.6	2.2	0.8	23.3
2008–2011	69.8	23.6	2.5	1.4	2.2	0.5	30.2
2012–2015	68.2	21.8	5.2	1.0	2.8	1.1	31.8
2016–2019	67.8	24.6	4.3	0.5	1.7	1.1	32.2
2020–2021	69.1	23.5	4.4	0.0	2.9	0.0	30.9

3.6 Significance of variables

We end our characterisation of politonyms with the help of version 22 of the SPSS software, applying a chi-squared (χ^2) test to all the parameters described in the preceding sections with regard to their evolution over time. There are two variables whose formulation favours the dissemination of data, which means they have

¹³ The population in the area speaking Catalan (Catalonia, Community of Valencia and the Balearic Isles) accounts for 29.4% of Spain's overall total. Galician and Basque, for their part, account for 5.7% and 4.6%, respectively.

received specific treatment. In the case of territoriality, we have separated the figures into two groups: with and without a territorial marker. In the case of languages, the dichotomy has been Spanish and other languages, and we have focused on the period studied in six intervals rather than twelve. The results support the pertinence of the selected criteria. In all cases, the degree of probability is significant at the level $p < 0.001$, which is particularly revealing. This refutes the null hypothesis and confirms the correlation between the factors analysed (territoriality, use of collective names, use of ideological terms, nature and use of languages) and the development of party names over time.

4. Conclusions

The names of political formations have hardly been studied within a discipline that has also been somewhat ignored in linguistic research. The past decade has seen more interest in these kinds of proper names, although the studies have been conducted more within the fields of political science or marketing than in onomastics, and focus on certain specific settings, with little research within a Spanish-speaking environment.

This study bases its results on the processing of a longitudinal and multilingual corpus involving the names currently registered in Spain, over a 45-year timeframe. By examining the trajectory of the naming process involving these collectives, we may confirm their onomastic diversity and wealth, which have shrugged off traditional restraints (nominal structures) to include a raft of other constructions: verbal and prepositional syntagma, statements, etc.

There are also a number of permanent features running through the corpus, such as territorial markers, which are crucial for establishing proximity with the recipient of the message, as required for conveying the formation's level of action. The stability of signals of a spatial nature contrasts with the rapid development of other aspects of these types of names: on the one hand, the decline in the use of collective names in favour of other inclusion procedures (verbal, pronominal, motion of number); on the other hand, the reduction in the number of terms with an ideological content in favour of others with a more politically aseptic content, but still with a social message. There are also changes in the use of the different languages spoken in Spain: despite the pre-eminence of Spanish, Galician, Catalan and, to a lesser extent Basque, other languages and dialects are claiming their own space as symbols of identity, as a strategic instrument of political communication.

The set of qualities that inform these kinds of names underpin their very nature, which has shifted from being predominantly descriptive to the adoption of a more evocative and connotative role. This has not been a sudden process, although it does reflect a turning point, somewhere between 2011–2015, when significant changes occurred in the way people saw political governance in Spain, with the emergence

of popular groups that have sometimes evolved into formal political parties. These groups have sought to express their rejection of the extant political tradition in several different ways, one of which is their electoral brand, their name.

As a synchronic entity, the corpus therefore has myriad perspectives: from the traditional names of parties as brands that are deeply embedded with a loyal following, through to today's new politonyms, precisely designed to distance themselves from the former. We should remember, accordingly, that proper names are in themselves a discourse that is not satisfied with simply fulfilling their role as a name, as they also seek to provide added information about their social value (Bacot, 2010). In other words, besides their value in the political arena, as a symbol used as a banner to identify their own followers and differentiate themselves from the rest, the names of parties inhabit a cultural and historical universe full of cross references with other names of a similar nature (Bacot – Lecolle, 2019). A study of onomastic trends is a way of analysing the political system and its values (Accolla, 2014). This array of Spanish politonyms provides a window onto our most recent past, with all its conflicts and upheavals (Rutkowski – Skowronek, 2019), as well as its agreements and consensus.

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SOCIOONOMASTIKA V PRAXI: NÁZVY ŠPANĚLSKÝCH POLITICKÝCH STRAN (1976–2021)

Tato studie analyzuje názvy politických stran (politonyma) ve Španělsku od počátku přechodu země k demokracii v roce 1976 do současnosti. Na základě korpusu, který obsahuje více než 5 000 názvů, je zkoumán vývoj systému tvoření podle řady parametrů: znaků teritoriality, používání kolektivních názvů a ideologicky vymezených pojmů, jakož i globální povahy názvu a použitého jazyka. Kvantitativní údaje potvrzují na jedné straně konstantní prvky ve strukturování politonyma a na druhé straně změny trendů související s historickými událostmi a s vývojem samotného politického kurzu.

Klíčová slova

politické strany; Španělsko; socioonomastika; politonyma

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