The new configuration of the Valencian party system. An institutional approach

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Abstract: The main objective of this article is to explain the evolution of the party system of the Valencian Community (Spain) between 1978 and 2015. We will start from a historical neo-institutionalist approach and a methodology focused on historical analysis (path dependence and critical junctures). It will be centered on the changes produced in political parties, in terms of the Valencian cartelization and identity and its present position. This way, three working sub-hypotheses are to be explained: H1a: parties have had a continuity dynamic that has changed due to abrupt changes in the environment; H1b: political forces have taken advantage of these events to obtain electoral revenue and; H1c: current political parties are the result of changes experienced in the period studied. This complex hypothesis opens new fields of study for future research in terms of strategy, discourse and perceptions about these organizations.

Key words: party system, institutionalism, cartelization, identity, Valencian community.

Resumen: El objetivo del artículo es explicar la evolución del sistema de partidos de la Comunitat Valenciana (España) entre 1978 y 2015. Se parte de un enfoque neoinstitucionalista y de una metodología centrada en el análisis histórico (path dependence y critical junctures) de los cambios producidos en los partidos políticos, en cuanto a la cartelización y la identidad valenciana, y su caracterización actual. Así, se han generado tres subhipótesis de trabajo: H1a: los partidos han tenido una dinámica continuista que ha variado por cambios bruscos del entorno; H1b: las fuerzas políticas han aprovechado dichos acontecimientos para obtener rédito electoral; y H1c: los actuales partidos políticos son fruto de los cambios experimentados en el periodo estudiado. Esta hipótesis compleja abre nuevos campos de estudio para futuras investigaciones en cuanto a estrategia, discurso y percepciones sobre estas organizaciones.

Palabras clave: sistema de partidos, institucionalismo, cartelización, identidad, Comunitat Valenciana.

Introduction

This work aims to offer a general view of the Valencian party system, as well as the hypothesis creation and response through the analysis and interpretation of some changes occurred in the Valencian Comunity (Spain) political parties. For this, the focus will be on the party's variables and the evolution of the identity component of this Spanish region. The purpose will be to answer the starting hypothesis in an exploratory way:

> *H1a: The Valencian parties have had a continuity dynamic in terms of results, which has been damaged only by accidental events or sudden social changes.*
>
> *H1b. When there has been a change of this kind, political forces have taken advantage of it in order to get electoral gains, which have caused changes in the parties system.*
>
> *H1c. The current political parties are a result of the changes occurred during the historical period studied.*

Based on a neo-institutionalist approach, a methodology based on the evolution of the phenomenon studied is used for this work. Due to the formal limitations of the article, there will be a macro investigation level, aiming to study the relations between parties where they, as privileged actors, change their strategy over time as a response to the environment modifications.

The underlying idea is that the Valencian party system is stable because it is immersed in an inertial trajectory that restricts it, and changes only if there is a disruption resulting from an event or accidental changes in the society's social variables (Mahoney, 2000; Peters, 2003; Pierson, 2004).

This work updates and complements previous works that studied some parts or all of the party system, such as Bodoque's (2009), Català's (2014), Franch's (1995, 1996 and 1998), Franch and Hernández's (2005), Franch and Martín-Cubas' (1999), Martín-Cubas' (2007 and 2015), Martínez-Sospedra's (1996 and 1999), Oñate's (2013) and Sanmartín's (2010), about the constituting and genuine elements of the electoral system, the party system and the electoral behavior of the voters of the Valencian Community.

However, at the same time, the study of the Valencian party system evolution is a good starting point, and it is representative in order to understand the modifications happening in the social and political level of the Spanish state. The Valencian Community is a sub-state entity that has a peripheral geographic position in relation to Madrid, as the capital of the State; and, at the same time, shares cultural and linguistic aspects with Catalonia, which has marked the institutional construction and the Valencian party system's construction.

This system has undergone a series of changes such as the step from the traditional alternation in the government between the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) (1983-1995) and the Popular Party (1995-2015), with a vote concentration of between 80 and 90%, in a scenario where such concentration is around 50% (Pablo and Abellán, 2016).

This work is structured in the following way: first, the historical neo-institutional approach will be explained, as well as the concepts of *path dependence* and *critical junctures*, which is the starting point of the theoretical framework. Then, the idea of cartelization in political parties will be explained, as well as the post-cartel strategies. After that the phases and strategic guidelines will be discussed, especially the Valencian identity conflict. Afterwards, the actors of the Valencian party system's principal characteristics will be addressed, through their cartel/post-cartel strategies and their position regarding the identity issue. Finally, the principal conclusions will be outlined, which will led to a complex hypothesis and the future possible research lines.

Theoretical framework

The neo-institutionalism is a political science approach that rises as a reaction to both, the studies that focused on methodological individualism, and those that came from the classic institutionalism, which was characterized by: a) an aggravated legality, b) the formalism, c) the limited plurality in the processing of the institutions that form the political system of a country, and d) the simple appeal to history.

The result of this reaction produces an interest in the individuals' behavior inside a certain society, how they behave with the cultural aspects and how institutions and organizations perform in the socio-political phenomena.

With this approach it is intended to understand the political phenomena from a new perspective, which has to do with the institutional aspects, as well as the actor's behavior in order to explain the political process (Easton, 1997; Immergut, 1998; Pierson, 2004; Mahoney, 2000; Peters, 2000).

The neo-institutional approach allows various versions, and one of them is the one known as historical neo-institutionalism, which, as its name, focuses on the historical aspects and their effects on the norms and regulations that rule a certain society (Peters, 2003).

History is important, and the decisions taken when designing the institutions have inertia that has long-term effects that are very difficult to revert. Because of this, Steinmo (2013) states that: a) a specific political

environment determines the political phenomena, b) history is a learning element; and c) history conditions the expectations of individuals. These three aspects are linked to two essential concepts of this approach: *path dependence* and *critical junctures*.

Path dependence refers to the form in which the investigation problem is analyzed, and how the causes that determine the social phenomena are constructed through incidental phenomena chains, that is, it explains the development of a sequence of events in a historic period and how, when an important event occurs, the course of the events will result permanently altered (Ladman, 2011).

These relations between events lead to two different complementary phenomena: a) the reinforcement effects in which the created dynamic remains throughout time when creating incentives, in order to be that way in a balance point, and b) the reactivity produced by a phenomenon that contradicts the own inertia of the institutions, and breaks the previous balance point (Mahoney, 2000; Pierson, 2004).

The *critical junctures* dynamic introduces the institutional change in the *path dependence*, forming a dual model in which long inertia periods can be found, accompanied with change elements produced by fortuitous events, typical of the institutions environment. Such events are crucial because they rupture the inertia with which an institution proceeded with in order to create effects opposed to it (Capoccia and Kelemen, 2007).

Along with the two concepts previously mentioned, the strategic aspect of the decision-making must be added. Ultimately, strategic decisions of the actors are focused on the survival of the responsible of it, as well as the survival of those supporting either the change of the status quo or its continuity (DiMaggio, 1988; Mahoney and Thelen, 2010; Oliver, 1988; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978; Thelen, 2003).

As it will be seen later, strategic relations are produced inside political parties as principal actors of the Valencian party system, and when fortuitous events occur in the environment, their organizations react in favor of the improvement of the competitiveness of its political formation.

In order to analyze the change processes in the Valencian party system and its actors, once the approach is stated, the focus will be on the cartelization of the political parties phenomenon and the identity sense -with its controversies and difficulties- to know its dynamic on the Valencian Community.

The cartel and post-cartel strategies in the Valencian party system

Political parties constitute key elements of the representative system. Since they are intermediaries, they are undeniable protagonists of and for governability. They do not only provide leaders and candidates for placing them in institutions, but they also transform the society through the interventions contained in their political programs, essential instruments of ideological identification.

It is known that such organizations have suffered a series of changes in their missions and organization, going from a cadre party to a mass party in order to, eventually, becoming a 'catch-all' party (Kirchheimer, 1996). This expression characterizes the parties that want to expand their interclasist electoral base to the maximum, they tend to the political pragmatism adopting flexible political programs and having a lower ideological orthodoxy in order to obtain a greater number of votes. In this evolutionary path, a historical adaptation is produced as a result of the separation between the civil society and institutions, which leads to the emergence of the cartel party (van der Eijk, 1992; Downs, 1957; Franklin, 1992; Katz and Mair, 2012; Kirchheimer, 1966; Kitschelt, 2004).

The most remarkable characteristics of the cartel parties are the following: a) the parties in office define capital aspects of the electoral system, the regulation of parties organizations, institutional financing and communication; b) relations that occur inside the party itself lead to a *estratarquía*, a structure in which the party's central organization patterns are reproduced; c) the competence in the electoral field and the clearly centripetal messages sent to the public with the aim of preserving the *status quo*; and d) the professionalized behavior of the party's representatives in the execution of public political-administrative positions (Detterbeck, 2005; Hutcheson, 2012; Kopecky and Mair, 2011; Sandri and Pauwels, 2010).

The cartel party merges with the political-administrative institutions, and loses the connection with the civil society, creating therefore a relation of dependence, direction and capture. The design of the electoral system or the funding of the parties is in the origin of the creation of the cartel, and it transforms instruments that avoid political parties outside the cartel from accessing the political-administrative structures.

Parties that belong to the cartel go along during quasi monopoly situations about issues that interest them, so that the electors do not have the capacity to choose and isolate the smaller parties aiming to minimize them as much as possible (Duvergerm 1957). It can be said that the parties in such

stage try to limit the pluralism with the purpose of safeguarding ther own interests as an organization (Sartori, 2005).

Because of these practices, which have been enhanced by Spain through the shielding of the political parties in their Constitution (López-Nieto, 2010), a series of party strategies have appeared in order to recover the connection with the civil society that Yishai (2001) has called post-cartel. The post-cartel strategies consist of the aim of a party or group of parties –generally opposed- of ousting the government formation, assuming the popular outcry and the claims of the civil society in order to gain supporters and legitimacy.

The corners of this post-cartel strategy are the following:

1. The relation between political parties and the civil society through social, economic and ideology-cultural links. The political formations take claims and aspirations of social movements or the defense of political and social causes. This support can go further by becoming an economic one inside the campaing itself or with the inclusion of members of the civil society in responsibility positions.

2. The exploitation of the ruptures in the society (Manin, 1999) -which produce a sense of belonging and are channeled through the defense of issues related to ethnic origin, gender, sexuality or culture- affects different groups excluded from the typical dynamic of the political-social life (Yishai, 2001).

Definitely, the post-cartel strategy aims to undermine certain aspects of political-administrative institutions that have been established by cartel parties, and to reconcile with the civil society. The main characteristics of the cartel and post-cartel strategies can be found in Table 1[1].

Once both types of strategies and their characteristics have been defined, the focus will be on the evolution of each one of the actors in the intra-partisan dynamics throughout time.

The evolution of the Valencian party system

There are many variables that affect the formation of the party system, but, as it was said before, the focus will be on the change of the cartel and post-cartel strategies during the studied period, and there will be a special emphasis on the identity issue. The dynamics have been divided in four different periods: a) the Valencian transition and the approval of the Statute of Autonomy of the Valencian Community (1978-1982); b) the construction of the

1 All tables can be found at the end of this article, in the Appendix (Editor's note).

Valencian autonomy (1983-1995); c) the consolidation (1995-2015): and d) the change of paradigm (since 2015 until now). This periodization will be analyzed through the *path dependence* and *the critical junctures* in the historical neo-institutionalism framework.

First period (1978-1982): from the Valencian transition to the approval of the Statute of Autonomy of the Valencian Comunitat

The Valencian transition was marked, in this first stage, by two inertial paths that affected the procedures and arrangements to set the self-government. On the one hand, there is a scenario where the political forces with representation in the provinces of Alacant, Castellón and Valencia were in charge of piloting the decentralization. On the other hand, the instruments for the political-administrative decentralization continued along the path marked by the Basque party and Cataluña, regarding procedures and claims (Sanz-Díaz, 1982).

At the same time, the pre-automat institutions identified themselves as a part of Joe Fuster's thinking, which enhanced the identity sense. Initially it had the approval of all relevant forces, except for the People's Alliance's. The result was the acceptance of the Catalan linguistic unit, a flag without a blue band and the emblem of the Generaliat, as well as the denomination of Country of Valencia, and they aligned in a bloc that sympathized with Cataluña and the *Catalanism* in a different level[2].

The critical situation of this period occurred when the Union of the Democratic Centre (UCD), party in office at that time, changed its position, complicating the implementation of the Valencian self-government and embracing ideas that were already being supported by People's Party. The statement of this right wing clashed with the pre-automat executive institutions, and from this collision the movement known as *blaverismo*[3] emerged.

2 The postulates of this sector of the Valencian parties were supported, to a greater or lesser extent, in Joan Fuster's ideas. These justified themselves in a Germanic idea of the term nation in which the same language, the same culture, and therefore the same people were the prelude of a State formed by such uniformity. This conception matches with the German idea of nation (Brubaker, 1990; Fuster, 1967).

3 Blaverism became a powerful social movement that defended the Valencian personality and that originally emerged in n four foci: a) the youth of *Lo Rat Penat*, a Valencian cultural entity and a referent in the promotion, defense and dissemination of the Valencian language and culture; b) the *Grupo d'Acció Valencianista*; c) the fallero environment; and d) the Valencia-2000 Association, which intended to organize conservative Valencianism politically.

The *blaveros* represented a political sector embodied by conservatives that accused autonomists of 'anti-Valencian' and assumed the traditionalism based on the ancient Kingdom of Valencia, on the flag with the blue band, and established the Valencian as their own language and different from the Catalan. These arguments were supported from an idea of the Valencian people in which this had remained immaculate and pure, even though different majority groups had settled thought history[4] (Garcia-Oliver, 2016; Sanz-Díaz, 1982; Sanz Díaz and Felip i Sardà, 2006).

Since then until today, this identity confrontation, instead of languishing, has become worse on the public scene[5]. Definitely *blaverismo* pretended to create an alternative legitimacy from the official (the cartel and post-cartel strategies during this period can be seen in Table 2).

The conflict between both ways of understanding the Valencian territory, led to a battle of symbols and to some violent dispute that occurred in the known 'Valencia Battle'. Even though democrats accepted the Valencian Statute of Autonomy, the alignments regarding the language, the lag and the territory denomination were far from a consensus, and were characterized by a great belligerence in different fronts.

Such period finishes with the formulation of the *Estatut de Benicàssim*, which would eventually become the Statute of Madrid by ignoring the agreement between the Socialist Party of the Valencian Country (PSPV-PSOE) and the UCD about the statutory symbols, and give their conformation to the right wing parameters (Sanz-Díaz, 1982). The Statute of Autonomy also marks a before and after in regards to identity, existing parties that opt for having a pragmatic vision and embrace the symbols stipulated by such text (Vallès i Sanchis, 2000).

This 'give and take' has suffered different evolutions that mark the alignment of the parties throughout the 39 years of the Valencian Community history as a political entity[6]. Such difference in understanding the Valencian territory and its identity implied the conformation of three blocs differentiated in a first stage (see Table 3).

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4 It was said by some of these actors and 'intelectuals' that Valencian was an ancient language originated from the Mozarabic and even the Iberian, contradicting the ruling trend of experts that had studied the subject (Garcia-Oliver, 2016).

5 One of the most representative indicators is the derogation of the Law 6/2015, from April the 2nd, of Recognition, Protection and Promotion of the Identity Signs of the Valencian People, on January 2016.

6 This period includes the four years of pre-autonomy and the 35 years of the creation of the Valencian institutions through their Statute of Autonomy.

Second period (1983-1995): the construction of the Valencian autonomy

This second period is determined by two *path dependences*. The first inertia materialized itself when the new political entity and its modern conception as Valencian Community was marked by the polarization between actors and the weak consensus arranged (Mira, 2015). The absence of a political agreement conditioned the design of the autonomic Valencian process, taking into account that, initially the Article 151 of the Spanish Constitution (CE) was considered in order to access autonomy and, finally, was achieved through the slow road of Article 143 and the enactment of the LOTRAVA[7], which would transfer more competencies to the Valencian territory.

Along with this deductive lack of own entity, there is a second inertia that affected the autonomic elections of 1983 and reproduced the results of the general elections of the previous year in which the PSOE was victorious and the downfall of the UCD as the majority coalition in the central right wing until that moment was caused. It is necessary to add the cohabitation of small parties that are at a larger distance than these formations and other parties that obtain no representation (Martín-Cubas, 2015; Oñate, 2013; Reif and Schmitt, 1980).

Regarding the symbols of the Valencian Autonomy, socialists constructed an automatic consensus on the statuary text and the identity signs contained in this. The search of legitimacy by the political actors present in the institutions materialized an ambiguous message towards the claims of the political Catalanism or the regionalism unbalanced to the right wing (Català, 2012).

To this must be added the economic policy focused on the traditional economic sectors of the Valencian economy. The critical rupture on this period starts with the economic recession in the first half of the 1990s decade, the appearance of many corruption cases I the state field and an increasing wear, a result of a prolonged period in the office. This starts a stage of political belligerence that was cleverly exploited by the People's Party of the Valencian Community in order to access the institutions through a modernizer speech, consisting with the one produced at a national level, which would result in a change of government since 1995 (Català, 2012) (see Table 4).

In regards to the case of the post-cartel parties, and specifically regarding parties with a nationalist nature, a less extreme thesis arises, which breaks with the fusterian ideas and focus on defining the Valencian people as a political entity that had and still has autonomy, but at the same time shares historical,

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7 Organic Law of Transfer to the Valencian Community.

cultural and linguistic characteristics with other territories such as Cataluña and the Balearic Islands. This way of understanding the Valencianism would be assimilated and accepted by parties like UPV (Unitat del Poble Valencià) as an strategic adaptation to the new consensus created with the Valencian autonomy (see Table 5).

Third period (1995-2015): the consolidation

The period 1995-2015 starts with a reduction of the tension related to the battle of symbols. The position of the right wing regarding the identity issue kept a low profile situation while encouraged the creation of the Valencian Academy of Language (AVL), which contributed to its positioning in an autonomy statuary line and the continuity of the inertia of the period started by the socialists.

The policies adopted by the different governments of the People's Party benefited from the prosperity period of the Spanish economy since the second half of the 1990's decade until 2010, in order to develop projects based on major investments on recreation equipment and events focused on attracting tourists. This model was supplemented by the big bet on residential and sea tourism that sponsored the leadership of the construction sector in the Valencian economic activity.

The predominance of single-party governments supported by absolute majority, except for the one of the 1995-1999 term, contributed to the impressive unfold of the increase of the public sector exactly in a time in which the dominant theories advocated for a decrease and dismantling of the public structures. This economic rupture turned into a potential inertia to guide the government action and the adoption of further decisions.

The economic crisis, which acted as a *critical juncture*, finished with the prosperity period revealing the cases of corruption that had been developed during the two decades of popular government. Simultaneously, the Valencian society experienced a deterioration of the public services, the territory under-funding and the negative perception of the state government.

The parties outside the government action carried out an opposition focused on the questioning of the economic model, demands on democratic regeneration and the fight against corruption. Subsequently, it came as no surprise the appearance of partisan and ideological alternatives, which main pragmatic lines were founded on the regeneration of the Valencian institutions and the public symbolic policies (see Table 6).

Fourth period (since 2015 until now); the change of paradigm

The current period is characterized by the continuity of the previous inertias that are those marked in the political agenda. However, since it is a period that is still in formation in the political game, it makes it complicated to move forward with the critical ruptures that are being developed at the moment, as well as the inertia produced by the *path dependence*.

Nevertheless, some of the inherited and strategic tendencies of the previous periods are the following:

First, we find ourselves in a liquid society, permeated by the globalization and the economic and social and social interdependences in which the biggest systematic changes have affected the way in which political phenomena and their identification are perceived (Bauman, 2000; Berger y Luckmann, 1975; Castells, 1999).

From the identity problem view, there is a proliferation of ways of understanding and perceiving the Valencian Community, where the principal development pathways of own identity come together: a) an Spanish affiliation feeling with an anti-centralist response; b) a pro-Spanish Valencian regionalism; c) a strict Valencian nationalism; d) a minority nationalism identified with the term 'Països Catalans' which highlights the Catalan identity of the country of Valencia, and rejects its identification with Spain; and e) a civic nationalism that accepts that distinguishing elements such as language, culture and history work as a reinforcement of the own national sense that is originated in the will of the individuals[8] (Hernàndez i Albert, 2012; Mezquida, 2015).

Secondly, the elections for the Cortes of Valencia in 2015 have materialized a coalition Executive, which, by means of a post-cartel strategy, has developed public policies opposed to those of the previous period. The preferential political lines have focused on the change of the social-economic model, the implementation of legitimacy symbolic policies and transparency, and the recovery and claim of the characteristic linguistic aspects of the territory.

Finally, a characteristic of the current stage is the proliferation of the electoral supply, showing regenerator and even emancipatory signs. As it will

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8 Mezquida (2015) points out that this Valencian identity can not ignore the predominant identity that, in this case, is the Spanish identity and must integrate other values such as Europeanism, the defense of the environment, democratic regeneration, republicanism, feminism or the defense of the rights of LGBTI people (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex).

be seen, political formations have leveraged the deterioration of the main parties originated from the whim of the democratic transition, in order to suggest an alternative in which aspects such as legitimacy, democratic regeneration and the change of political uses are the key axis of their position.

Discussion

Once there has been explained the scenario of the most relevant transformations that are in the origin of the strategic changes of the political parties during the four periods previously proposed, there will be a brief comparison between their principal foundations and pragmatic guidelines, and for that purpose the electoral programs used for the elections in 2015 will be considered. The focus will be specifically on the actors of the current party system: the People's Party of the Valencian Comunitat (PPVC), Socialist Party of the Valencian Community (PSPV-PSOE), Compromís, Esquerra Unida (EUPV), We Can, and Citizens.

As it was anticipated, the spatial scope of this article is the Valencian Community, however, that does not mean that the suggested arguments are also representative of the Spanish party system. This is explained because except for Compromís, political parties do not have independence from the central organizations, and their ideological dynamics and partisan strategies reproduce the state isomorphism.

The PSVS-PSOE as well as the PPCV are the authors of the current political-administrative Valencian system. Socialists constructed the self-government of the Generalitat, agreed, along with the principal representative of the opposition, to an electoral system that tends to the vote concentration for the main parties, and, definitely, established the fundamentals for the appearance of cartel parties by creating a complicated design to make the access difficult for other political forces. From 1995 the PPCV reaches the Generalitat and it not only continues with this situation, but it also develops a strategy focused on the unprecedented hypertrophic increase of the public sector, the organizational engineering design, and the colonization of political-administrative institutions.

It is not surprising that both parties are defenders of the *status quo* resulted from the transition. On the one hand, People's Party defends the Statute and the EC, as well as the constitutionality bloc formed by the conservative EC and the Statutes of Autonomy of the Automat Communities. During the years of governance of the conservatives, there was a clear alignment with the materialist aspects focused on the creation of employment and economy

in order to generate loyal voters and a setback on the post-materialist public policies related to the strengthening of the rule of law and accountability, the openness of the institutions to the citizens and the transparency promotion. This statement is confirmed through the proliferation of corruption cases (Della Porta, 2002; PPCV, 2015; Sanmartín, 2010).

The PSPV-PSOE has adopted a more opened strategy than the PPCV regarding their forms. Socialists respect the 1982 agreement concerning the Valencian autonomy, and defend the political-institutional aspects of the Spanish state and the sub-state government. Where there have been significant differences with belligerent speeches is in aspects of democratic regeneration and recovery of legitimacy, and they have adopted various empowering and citizen participation measures (PSPV-PSOE, 2015 and 2015a).

They propose as well a reform of the Statute of Autonomy and the Electoral Law among others. The socialist turn is explained by two reasons: 1) the social-democratic party has been outside the Valencian institutions for 20 years, and has needed a renewal of its message to return to public institutions, and 2) the current situation has been marked by cases of corruption, waste and lack of profitability of public investments, as well as a galloping economic crisis. In a certain way, the PSPV-PSOE has acted as the PPCV did in the 1990's, promising efficient management and without corruption cases.

Both parties have a high degree of political professionalization, and in legislatures without governmental power, their cadres take refuge in representative institutions.

From the internal organizational point of view, the PPCV still does not hold primaries for the election of positions and candidates, and the PSPV-PSOE began in 2013 with an open format. Regarding the identity issue, even though both are autonomists, their approach of the subject differs clearly. The PSPV-PSOE defends the foundations of the Statute of Autonomy, which does not prevent from realizing some other wink towards the fusterian-based nationalism or the reformulations of such vision (Català, 2014).

On the other hand, the PPCV tunes in with the *blaverism* and, definitely with the Spanish centralism[9], especially with the emergence of the Catalan

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9 For example: a) at the end of its mandate, in 2015, they enacted a Law of Identity Signs against the consensus created with the approval of the Statute, and b) they oppose a policy of promotion and use of Valencian and accuse the executive of lefts of pro-catalan and antivalencian.

conflict and the loss of territorial political power. Citizens also adopt this position with more centralist overtones than the popular ones. Therefore, the main objective of the People's Party and Citizens has been to build a new conceptual framework to be perceived by the voters as the true defenders of the Valencian interests, compared to the rest of political formations that, in their opinion, represent rather the interests of Cataluña.

Returning to Citizens, this party understands that reforms are necessary for the improvement of democratic functioning and advocates for changes in the Electoral Law, and the hardening of systems of accountability and the fight against corruption (Ciudadanos, 2015), sharing an Anglo-Saxon and liberal vision that is supported by a large part of the Spanish economic powers. However, the formation of Albert Rivera[10] believes in the basic consensus resulted from the Transition and the Statute, but does not close the door to changes regarding the improvement of the functioning of the State of Autonomies, protecting the equality and equity among the Spanish.

Citizens, as well as EUPV, Compromís, and We can, hold primaries for the election of candidates for the elections. These last three parties, positioned to the left of the ideological spectrum, share a broad transformative program of political emancipation that includes the trends of the 15M, a classification of their repertoires and several post-cartel strategies.

Compromís, a leftist and nationalist formation, took advantage of the weakness of the PPCV to report cases of corruption throughout the legislature and used social networks to make its discourse visible in the mass media. The EUPV had a similar used strategy denouncing before the court the Taula case and the malpractice that took place in the Council of Valencia.

EUPV has focused on the demand for changes in the political-administrative system, with the purpose of seeking the participation of citizens through direct democracy and deliberation, the extension of suffrage to those over 16 (Acord Ciutadà, 2015). In a very similar line, We Can articulates, through its 'Citizen Rescue Plan', the same values: a) civic empowerment, b) citizen participation, c) accountability, and d) transparency, which therefore is aligned with the thesis of civic republicanism (Podemos, 2015).

The ideological-programmatic conception of Compromís merges the regenerative elements of the democratic system with the Valencian territory and identity; this fusion of the regenerative and identity repertoire is what marks distance with We Can and EUPV. Copromís unites the existence of a nationalist Valencian consciousness to elements of democratic regeneration, the promotion of citizen participation and empowerment, along with the

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10 Leader and founder of Citizens.

defense of causes of collectives such as LGBTI, ecologists and feminists, among others.

Therefore, they promote a civic nationalism with communitarian overtones, and it can be said that this formation has become the main actor that brings together the majority of voters with a nationalist cultural conception that encompasses fusterianism, the third and fourth way, and part of the autonomism (Català, 2014, Compromís, 2015, Mezquida, 2015).[11] In this way, Compromís works as a party "catch-all" in the Valencian national cleavage[12] and, although they respect and adopt the symbols of the Valencian autonomy, they do not give up on transforming the territory into the 'Country of Valencia'.[13]

The difference between We Can and EUPV in this matter is that both of them promote part of the elements that Compromís defends, through plurinational mechanisms (We Can) or federalism (EUPV). However, and unlike formations such as the PPCV and Citizens, they are not belligerents with Compromís regarding the nationalist identity issue. What the three do share is a common stock of postmaterialist values (Inglehart, 1991), integrated into a paradigm that brings together modern forms of life and weaves together a network of physical and digital networks.

Conclusions

This paper of an exploratory nature has focused on explaining the changes in the party system and on comparing the current positions of each of the main actors of the Valencian party system. The latter are immersed in long periods of stability (*path dependence*) that only break with the production of *critical*

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11 It is what has been called Majority Valencianism by Initiative of *Poble Valencià*.

12 In the Compromís Coalition we find today (July 2017) the defense of a purely Valencian nationalism, together with an integrating civic nationalism, which has expanded its electoral base. Likewise, there is also a minority aligned with the Catalanist theses.

13 The identity symbols aligned with the denomination of *Country of Valencia* are: a) the senyera of four bars (the conquest banner); b) the *Muixeranga*, like the Valencian anthem; c) the unity of the language and the usual use of the denomination Country of Valencia; d) the reinforcement of the economic, historical and cultural links between the Country of Valencia, Catalonia, the Balearic Islands, Northern Catalonia and the Aragón strip; e) the strengthening of the dynamism and influence of one of the most powerful regions of southern Europe: the Old Crown of Aragon and the Mediterranean Arc (Euram zone); f) support for instruments that contribute to the structuring of the Country of Valencia; g) the localization; and h) the recovery of historical memory.

junctures, which are used strategically by these actors. In this scenario there have been changes in the support levels of these parties, which has resulted in electoral overturns that have changed the political sign of the government (H1a, H1b and H1c).

These changes have been translated in the following way in each of the actors studied:

1) The PPCV is a party that, since winning the Valencian Courts elections in 1995, has used public institutions to perpetuate itself in power. It is not surprising that his strategy is that of a pure cartel party that defends at all costs the shaping aspects of the regime of 78 and the professionalization of politics. To this attitude there is only one 'but': it still does not recognize the consensus reached in 1982 in terms of identity symbols and uses this conflict to attack its political rivals. The popular prefer to focus on issues such as the effectiveness of government action rather than public ethics and the defense of Spain and its identity over any pluralism. Therefore, it can be affirmed that the PPCV is a party that embodies the fundamental features of the cartel party.

2) The PSPV-PSOE and Citizens are parties that move halfway between the cartel and post-cartel strategies, since, on the one hand, they defend the basic consensus of Valencian society, such as the creation of autonomy and its performance; but, on the other hand, they advocate for qualified changes in the institutional framework, through the improvement of representativeness in the transformation of votes into seats, the strengthening of accountability mechanisms or citizen participation. The PSPV-PSOE has been a party that has gone from using a cartel strategy to becoming a reformist actor in the system.

Meanwhile, Citizens has become a party that uses a post-cartel strategy in terms of the identity component, but which is rooted in the own consciousness of a cartel party similar to that of the PPCV regarding the idea of Spain. Therefore, it can be affirmed that both Socialists and Citizens are parties that combine mixed strategies of cartel and post-cartel.

3) Finally, there is a series of actors that advocate a change of system from their ideological angles, and that assumes the demands of civil society and seeks an expansion of public space. That is the case of EUPV, Compromís and We Can, which, from their own idea of the territory and its meanings, try to produce a citizen empowerment through instruments of citizen participation, the promotion of transparency and the improvement of accountability. These parties are to a greater or lesser extent post-cartel parties with a post-materialist orientation.

Future research

Once we have got to this point and after exposing the two variables identified -cartelization/post-cartelization and the identity component-, we consider that the most powerful developments in the short and medium term are: a) the analysis of the discourse of political formations that, from a historical series, allows to verify the changes experienced by each one of them, and b) the design of a plan of in-depth interviews with relevant political actors on the identity and the strategies of the parties to know their real evolution.

A third way, in the long term, aspires to carry out a quantitative research that makes it possible to know the positions of affiliates, sympathizers and voters of the current formations, as well as the changes in the socio-demographic profiles of the voters.

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Appendix

Table 1

Characterization of the cartel and post-cartel strategies

Cartel strategy	Post-cartel strategy
a) The definition according to their interests in capital aspects of the electoral system and the financing system. b) The establishment of cooptation strategies based on patronage (Kopecky and Mair, 2012). c) The use of State resources for the placement of supporters in positions of responsibility. d) The articulation of communicative strategies and messages with a centripetal tendency between the government party and the opposition party. e) The use of the communicative springs of a polarized pluralism system to mark the communicative agenda (Pardo and Abellán, 2017).	a) The recovery of the party's relationship with civil society through: • the assumption of their claims as their own and the defense of causes demanded by society. • the recapture of funds and support for their action by civil society. • the use of human resources for positions of responsibility. b) The inclusion of fractures occurring in the society that depend on the feeling of belonging. c) The construction of an alternative against the cartel parties, through profound changes in the constitutive legislation, institutional structures and functional aspects. d) The use of the new means of communication and its symmetrical and simultaneous bidirectionality to mark the communicative agenda.

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 2

Cartel and out-cartel strategies during the 1978-1982 period

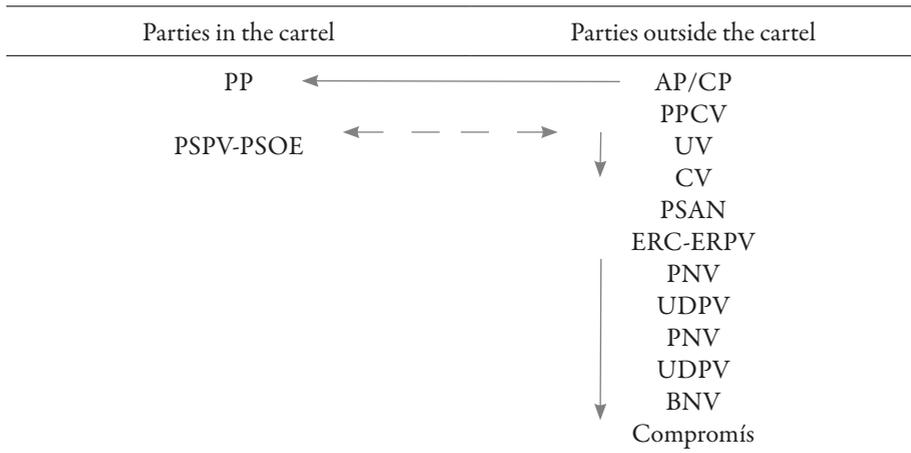| Parties in the cartel	Parties outside the cartel
	PSAN
	MCPV
	PSPV
PSPV-PSOE ◄—————————	PSOE-PV
	PCE
	UDPV
	PNPV
UCD-RV ◄—————————	UCD-RV
	URV
	FN
	AP

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 3

The partisan positioning on the Valencian identity from the transition until 1982 (preautonomic stage)

Catalanism (Fusterism)	Statuary identity	Regionalism or Centralism
PSAN	UCD-RV ◄—————————	UCD-RV
MCPV		URV
PSPV ————————►	PSPV-PSOE	FN
PSOE-PV	PSOE-PV	AP
PCE ————————►	PCPV-PCE	
UDPV		
PNPV		

Source: Adapted from Martín-Cubas (2007).

Table 4

Cartel and out-cartel strategies during the 1982-2015 period

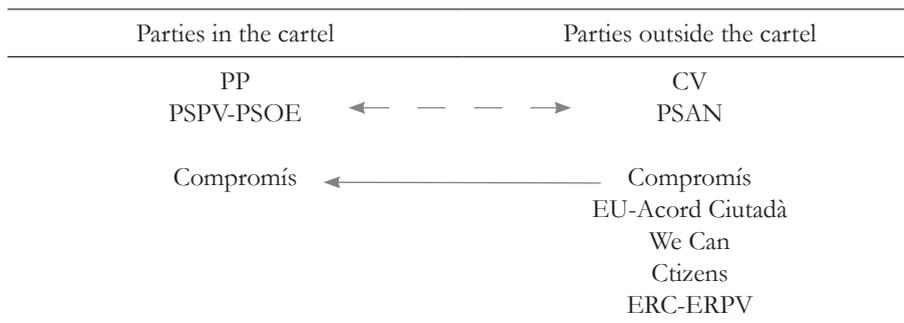| Parties in the cartel	Parties outside the cartel
PP ⟵	AP/CP
	PPCV
PSPV-PSOE ⟵ – – ⟶	UV
	CV
	PSAN
	ERC-ERPV
	PNV
	UDPV
	PNV
	UDPV
	BNV
	Compromís

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 5

**The positioning of political parties with respect to
the statuary identity 1995-2015**

Catalanism (Fusterism)	Third Via	Statuary Identity	Regionalism or Centralism
PSAN	PNV		AP/CP
ERC-ERPV	UDPV	PPCV ⟵	PPCV
EUPV		PSPV-PSOE	UV
UPV ⟶	BNV	PCPV/ EU	CV
	Compromís		
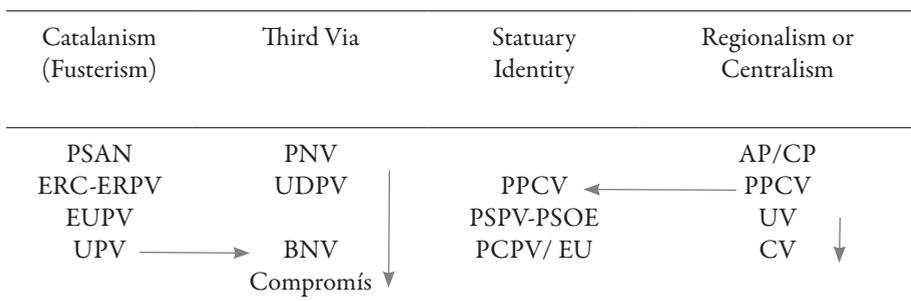
Source: Adapted from Martín-Cubas (2007).

Table 6

Current cartel and out-cartel strategies

Parties in the cartel	Parties outside the cartel
PP	CV
PSPV-PSOE	PSAN
Compromís	Compromís
	EU-Acord Ciutadà
	We Can
	Ctizens
	ERC-ERPV

Source: Elaboration

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