DIAGNOSING TERRORISM IN SPAIN: 
MEDICAL METAPHORS IN PRESIDENTIAL DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT. This article investigates the role of medical metaphors for the discursive construction of terrorism in the political speeches of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, president of Spain. This study combines Critical Metaphor Analysis (Charteris-Black 2004) with Cognitive Metaphor Theory (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) as the two main theoretical frameworks. The corpus of analysis comprises 88 political speeches over a six year period (from April 2004 to March 2010). The research questions are as follows: 1. What medical metaphors does Zapatero use to construct the notion of terrorism? 2. What is the role of these metaphors in framing terrorism? I argue that there are three major conceptual metaphors that structure Zapatero’s construction of terrorism: TERRORISM IS A DISEASE, THE GOVERNMENT IS THE DOCTOR AND THE SOCIETY IS THE PATIENT.

1. INTRODUCTION. Spain has been struggling for five decades with terrorism in different forms. Terrorism has been one of the main political priorities for the current President of Spain, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, who took over the presidency for the first time in April 2004 and was re-elected for a second term in March 2008. Most of the terrorist attacks have been perpetrated by the designated terrorist organization called ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, ‘Basque Homeland and Freedom’) since the 1960s. However, the deadliest terrorist attack on March 11, 2004, carried out by Al-Qaeda, took terrorism to an international level in Spain. Despite numerous negotiations with ETA and failed attempts for permanent ceasefires, terrorism has been difficult to eradicate in Spain. ETA’s constant bombings and shootings have promoted a continuous fear, discontent, and distrust of the ruling governments. Thus, it has been imperative for Zapatero to redefine his position as a strong and effective political leader with the general public. Zapatero has addressed these issues in numerous political speeches between April
2004 and March 2010. I argue that Zapatero adopts metaphors from the source domain of medicine to re-establish his position as a strong political leader. I will refer to these as MEDICAL METAPHORS. This medical scenario serves to reaffirm the position of Zapatero as the expert and skilled political leader with effective strategies to end terrorism while strengthening and re-building trust with the general public.

Metaphors in political discourse have been broadly investigated (Cameron 2007; Charteris-Black 2004, 2005; Chilton 1996; De Leonardis 2008; Gavriely-Nuri 2008; Musolff 2004). More specifically, metaphors in terrorism have also been of interest for many scholars (Hülßse and Spencer 2008; Lakoff 1991, 2001, 2003; Lippens 2004; Lule 2004). While metaphors and terrorism have been extensively analyzed in English political discourse, there is little research in Spanish political discourse (Hellín 2008, 2009; Molpeceres 2009; Veres 2006). Thus, this article aims to further contribute to this research area.

This study starts with an overview about the political situation of terrorism in Spain. The next section examines the role of metaphor in politics, more specifically the use of medical metaphors. It continues with the methodology followed by the discussion. Finally, the conclusions and implications for future research are presented in the last section.

2. POLITICAL FRAMEWORK: TERRORISM IN SPAIN. Spain has been through a myriad of political changes in the last few decades. Democracy was established in 1978 after a 40-year dictatorship with General Francisco Franco. Franco’s rule was marked by a strong notion of Spanish nationalism and protection of traditional values. There was also strict censorship of regional languages and cultures during Franco’s regime. This eventually led to widespread discontent in the Basque region of Spain and gave rise to the designated terrorist group ETA. ETA, whose goal is to gain independence for the Basque Country, became stronger over time as Franco’s dictatorship transitioned into the establishment of a democratic country. The dictatorship ended, but terrorism did not. Unfortunately, terrorism has become a major issue for Spain’s government since the late 1960s, during which the first terrorist attacks were perpetrated by ETA. Another designated terrorist group active in the late 1970s and early 1980s, GRAPO (First of October Antifascist Resistance Group), aimed to establish a Spanish Marxist-Leninist Republican state modeled after Maoist China. While internal terrorist groups have set out to change the state, Spain has also experienced terrorism from outside national borders. The International terrorist group Al-Qaeda carried out a train bombing attack on March 11, 2004 in Madrid known as 11-M. Thus, terrorism in Spain has spread from national to international groups. More than 1200 victims have been killed in terrorist attacks until 2004 (Pulgar Gutiérrez 2004).
11-M was the deadliest terrorist attack which led to 192 deaths and around 1600 wounded. The 11-M attack was carried out exactly 911 days after ‘9-11’ the World Trade Center terrorist attack in New York City, which was also attributed to the terrorist group Al-Qaeda (Pulgar Gutiérrez 2004). It is argued that this date was specifically chosen to have an impact on Spain’s political structure. José María Aznar, the ruling president at that time, had supported the US-led invasion of Iraq despite widespread discontent among Spaniards. This disapproval became even greater when Aznar initially falsely accused ETA of having perpetrated the 11-M attack. Police later confirmed that it was Al-Qaeda, not ETA, who was responsible. 11-M took place three days before the general elections scheduled for March 14, 2004. The presiding Spanish government of the right-wing Popular Party was unexpectedly defeated by the Socialist Party, whose candidate José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero became president (until the present). An angry and exasperated general public attributed the 11-M attack to the political policies of the previous government. It is widely believed that Zapatero’s anti-war and anti-terrorism ideology was the decisive factor in his election win. This is a major factor that influences Zapatero’s discourse on terrorism. A dominant objective of Zapatero’s presidency (2004-present) has been to achieve peace with ETA and to end terrorism in Spain.

ETA’s first attempt at a permanent ceasefire took place in 1988 during the socialist presidency of Felipe González, who governed from 1982 to 1996. However, talks broke down and ETA again embarked on a renewed bombing campaign. ETA sought for years to obtain legal representation through Herri Batasuna, which was banned in 2003 from taking part in electoral politics. The Basque Nationalist Party, which governs the region, is more moderate, favoring greater autonomy from Spain but opposing ETA’s violence. In May 2005, Zapatero offered negotiations if ETA would renounce violence. This led to the second attempt for a permanent ceasefire in March 2006, which was shattered by a car bombing at the Madrid Airport nine months later. Zapatero released a statement indicating that the peace process with ETA had been discontinued. The current status of the conflict is still active according to ETA, but ETA has been strongly weakened by combined operations in Spain and France during which four consecutive ETA military chiefs were arrested in 2009. ETA’s last attempt to declare a ceasefire was recently announced on September 5, 2010. The government has rejected this truce since ETA made no mention of permanent disarmament in its declaration. Terrorism still goes on.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: MEDICAL METAPHORS. Language and politics are closely interrelated because language can greatly influence a person’s mind. As R. T. Lakoff indicates (1990: 7): ‘Language is politics, politics assigns power,
and power governs how people talk and how they are understood. The analysis of language from this point of view is more than an academic exercise: today, more than ever, it is a survival skill. Metaphors are widely used to persuade the public by restructuring political and social concepts since they reflect the way we perceive and express reality. Numerous language research studies show that the metaphor is an important political tool that serves many functions in the domain of political communication in multiple languages (Beer and De Landtsheer 2004, Carver and Pikalo 2008, Chilton 2004, Goatly 2007). Metaphors are consequently used to frame issues such as terrorism, immigration, racism, war, religion among others. Politicians such as George W. Bush, Bill Clinton, Margaret Thatcher, Tony Blair, Silvio Berlusconi, Mariano Rajoy, and José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero use metaphors as a persuasive tool to communicate leadership, and to transmit and establish their political ideology (Charteris-Black 2005, 2007; Hellín 2008, 2009; Molpeceres 2009; Semino and Masci 1996). Moreover, metaphors have also been used to justify wars and violence (Gavriely-Nuri 2008; Lakoff 2001, 2003, 2005).

Within political discourse, the metaphorical use of medical imagery has been reported to be a potential rhetorical tool of persuasion. Sontag (1989:16) indicates that 'It seems that societies need to have an illness which becomes identified with evil.' Illnesses such as plague, tuberculosis, cancer, and AIDS have been used to portray repulsiveness, calamity, scourge, and evilness. Politicians and political activists such as Tony Blair, Bill Clinton, Margaret Thatcher, and Martin Luther King used health, illness, life, rebirth, and death metaphors to refer to political issues (Charteris-Black 2005). Margaret Thatcher used health, life and death metaphors to contrast between Conservative and Labour policies in the United Kingdom: CONSERVATIVE POLICIES ARE A MEDICINE, whereas LABOUR (SOCIALIST) POLICIES ARE A DISEASE (Charteris-Black 2005: 102). Thatcher portrays the Conservative government as the doctor that offers the appropriate cure and treatment to the pain caused by the Labour policies. Charteris-Black (2005: 158) indicates that Tony Blair used personification to positively portray the Middle East as the patient that could get a rebirth during the ensuing peace process. On the contrary, weapons of mass destruction and terrorism are portrayed as the nourishment that drives the war of Iraq. Negative connotations of medical imagery are also found in the discourse of Martin Luther King. King used the notion of illness to address Republicans as having blood pressure of words and anemia of deeds (Charteris-Black 2005: 216). Moreover, he also uses this term to define segregation negatively: SEGREGATION IS AN ILLNESS.

Medical imagery also appears in contemporary Italian political discourse. De Leonardis (2008) shows how Silvio Berlusconi explicitly presents a medicalized view of society to legitimize his authoritarian power. His political vision could be summarized as WAR IS A MEDICINE. In this regard, Berlusconi depicted himself as
the only doctor capable of curing society from the struggle of illegal immigration and other issues. The conceptual metaphor WAR IS A MEDICINE was extensively used in Israeli discourse to justify the Second Lebanon War in 2006 (Gavriely-Nuri 2008). Hezbollah, an Islamic paramilitary Lebanese group, was depicted in the media as an infection and disease, whereas the Israel Defense Forces were portrayed as the ones who could purify and sterilize the infection. Gavriely-Nuri (2008:13) indicates that the metaphor of a surgical strike was frequently used as the reason by Israel’s military to justify civilian destruction.

The notion of disease has also been used to frame other war-related social issues. More specifically, cancer. Sontag (1978:83) argues that ‘The use of cancer in political discourse encourages fatalism and justifies severe measures--as well as strongly reinforcing the widespread notion that disease is necessarily fatal.’ Sontag explains that cancer has been used to pejoratively depict social groups or political views. Hitler’s anti-Semitism depicted the Jews as being the cancer of society. Moreover, political views such as Stalinism were also referred to as cancer by the Bolshevik Russian leader, Trotsky.

Cancer has often been used to address the major global issue terrorism: ‘Terrorism is the cancer of the modern world. No state is immune to it. It is a dynamic organism which attacks the healthy flesh of the surrounding society. It has the essential hallmark of malignant cancer: unless treated, and treated drastically, its growth is inexorable, until it poisons and engulfs the society on which it feeds and drags it down to destruction’ (Johnson 1986:31). The image of cancer has been used in presidential discourse to bring attention to the terrible consequences that terrorism may have. Campos (2007: 34) indicates how President Nixon used the metaphor of cancer to condemn several terrorist airline hijackings that occurred during 1970 in Germany, Switzerland, and Jordan. He mentions that by describing these hijackings as a cancerous disease, Nixon emphasized not only its harmful nature but also the need for multiple solutions that this disease may be cured of its different manifestations. In this regard, Campos explains that the metaphoric parallelism drawn between cancer and terrorism helps to envision the idea that combating terrorism is like combating cancer since both imply aggressiveness, indiscrimination, and possibly death. Furthermore, the image of cancer has been used to portray different kinds of terrorism. Griffith (2005: 59) mentions that the metaphoric image of cancer has also been used by the Ulster Freedom Fighters to

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1 Campos (34) mentions three specific hijackings: first, the hijacking of a British airline, the E1 A1 Boeing 707 in Munich (Germany), second, the hijacking of a Swiss airline, where forty-seven people were killed, lastly the hijacking of two airplanes with four hundred hostages in Jordan.
justify their action against the terrorist Irish Republican Army (IRA): 'We would make it clear to our people, and indeed to the world, that our methods, although extreme, are necessary. When the cancer within the human body lies deep, the surgeon must cut accordingly.'

In short, medical metaphors are pervasive in political discourse because they are vehicles to diffuse political ideology, to eliminate political practices, to magnify and hide political actions, and to justify negative political actions. Next, the methodology and corpus will be discussed.

4. METHODOLOGY. The corpus of this investigation consists of 88 political speeches by Zapatero over six years (from April 2004 to March 2010). Initially, all speeches during that period were searched in order to identify only those that contained an explicit reference to terrorism. I should also mention that by speeches, I refer to the official speeches given by the President Zapatero. Therefore, this does not include parliamentary sessions or press conferences. All official speeches are accessible on the official website of the Government called La Moncloa (http://www.la-moncloa.es/default.htm). Since the object of this investigation is terrorism, only the fragments of the speeches related to it were explored. Furthermore, only the metaphorical instances related to the source domain of medicine were analyzed, to which I refer as MEDICAL METAPHORS. Medical metaphors refer to different aspects such parts of the human body (limbs and organs), physical or mental processes, visual senses, health, disease, life, and death.

The method in this study combines cognitive and pragmatic perspectives. The cognitive view is guided by Lakoff’s Conceptual Metaphor Theory, CMT (Lakoff 1993, Lakoff and Johnson 1980), and the pragmatic one is based on Charteris-Black’s Critical Metaphor Analysis, CMA (2004).

The Lakoffian CMT framework sets conceptual correspondences in the mapping from one source domain to a target domain. In this case, the source domain of medicine is used to understand and perceive terrorism in a certain way. This cross-domain mapping (medicine-terrorism) becomes part of our conceptual system. Furthermore, there is a set of metaphorical instances that allows this disease-terrorism scenario to be applied to a particular situation. In this case, Zapatero’s choice of medical metaphors is used to portray the complexity of the current political situation with terrorism in Spain. As Lakoff (1993: 208) states: ‘metaphor is not just a matter of language, but of thought and reason.’ It is through the reasoning of these ontological correspondences between domains that we are able to perceive reality from Zapatero’s view. What is more, our understanding of why terrorism is depicted as disease, Zapatero as a doctor, and the society of Spain as the patient, lies in a motivated conceptual system that influences the social construction of one’s reality, which is not arbitrary. Thus, metaphors ‘structure how
we perceive, how we think, and what we do’ (Lakoff 1980: 4). The essence of this view is captured in the Lakoffian term conceptual metaphor, which reflects the two entities that form the ontological relation. The importance of Lakoff’s conceptual metaphor resides in that it provides the connection between a linguistic theoretical model and its application to a social and political reality. The conceptual metaphor allows one to present a social issue within a particular conceptual frame. Hence, a specific conceptual frame can change one’s perception of reality. As Lakoff (2004: xv) indicates: ‘In politics our frames shape our social policies and the institutions we conform to carry this policies. To change our frame is to change all of this. Reframing is social change.’ Thus, the conceptual metaphor has the power to activate conceptual frames based on one’s worldview and to make others reframe theirs by adopting the metaphor. I should also mention that, by convention, conceptual metaphors are capitalized to distinguish them from metaphorical instances.

Charteris-Black’s CMA indicates three major steps to analyze metaphors in depth: metaphor identification, interpretation, and explanation. Metaphor identification refers to the identification of metaphorical elements as candidate metaphors, metaphor keywords, and conceptual keys. Charteris-Black uses the term candidate metaphors to refer to the metaphorical expressions, and the term metaphor keywords to indicate the word that is being used metaphorically. Based on the notion of Lakoff’s conceptual metaphor, Charteris-Black uses the term conceptual key to refer to a more generic conceptual metaphor that would group a set of conceptual metaphors. Metaphor interpretation and explanation requires analyzing metaphor within its contextual meaning since the context will reveal information about the rhetorical and ideological function of the metaphor. Therefore, based on these two perspectives, the identification procedure employed in this study can be summarized as follows:

1. Candidate Metaphor:

   *Los terroristas golpearon el país más estéril de la tierra [...] a los ciudadanos del mundo más vacunados frente a sus métodos*

   ‘The terrorists hit in the most sterile country of the world [...] to the most vaccinated citizens against their methods’ (13 Dec. 2004).


3. Conceptual Metaphor: *SPAIN IS BACTERIA FREE, SOCIETY IS THE PATIENT, TERRORISM IS TREATABLE.*

4. Conceptual Key: *TERRORISM IS A DISEASE*
5. DISCUSSION. The analysis of the data reveals that metaphorical medical imagery is pervasive in Zapatero’s discourse. A total of 147 metaphorical expressions, 61 metaphor keywords, and 20 conceptual metaphors were identified. Medical metaphors are employed to express different aspects of terrorism, which are revealed through the identification of metaphor keywords. Their semantic categorization indicates that terrorism is mainly conceptualized through four general aspects: first, terrorism as a mental and physical disease (cancerígeno ‘cancerogenous,’ célula ‘cell,’ cronificado ‘chronified,’ delirio ‘madness,’ enfermedad ‘illness,’ enquistado ‘cysted,’ enquistarse ‘to become cysted,’ lacra ‘epidemic,’ locura ‘madness,’ patología ‘pathology,’ peste ‘epidemic,’ tumor ‘tumor’); second, its harmful consequences (brecha ‘gash,’ dañar ‘to hurt,’ dolor ‘pain,’ dolorosa ‘painful,’ herir ‘to hurt,’ fractura ‘fracture,’ muerte ‘death,’ padecer ‘to suffer,’ recrudescimiento ‘worsening,’ sangrar ‘to bleed,’ sangre ‘blood’); third, its treatment and prevention (antídoto ‘antidote,’ bisturí ‘scalpel,’ diagnóstico ‘diagnosis,’ estéril ‘sterile,’ extirpar ‘to extirpate,’ fortaleza ‘strength,’ fortalecer ‘to strengthen,’ fuerte ‘strong,’ intervenir ‘to intervene,’ operación ‘operation,’ pervivir ‘to survive,’ reavivar ‘to revive,’ revitalización ‘revitalization,’ vacunado ‘vaccinated,’ vivir/estar vivo ‘to live/to be alive’); and fourth, its associations with physical and physiological body parts, functions, and actions (alimentar ‘to feed,’ antojarse ‘to have a craving,’ cegar ‘to blind,’ ciega ‘blind,’ corazón ‘heart,’ crecer ‘to grow,’ diálogo ‘dialogue,’ dilatada ‘dilated,’ latente ‘latent,’ criatura ‘creature,’ memoria ‘memory,’ mente ‘mind,’ mirada ‘look,’ mirar ‘to look,’ nutrir ‘to nourish,’ óptica ‘vision,’ simbiosis ‘symbiosis,’ sobrevivir ‘survive,’ preñada ‘pregnant,’ sentar bien ‘to fit,’ teñida ‘dyed,’ transparencia ‘transparency,’ ver ‘to see,’ visión ‘vision’).

Findings indicate that the metaphorical conceptualization of terrorism is constructed from three different angles: first, those who support terrorism. This includes references to terrorist organizations such as ETA and Al-Qaeda, terrorist ideologies such as fanaticism, extremism, totalitarianism as well as indirect references to political organization that act as representatives of ETA such as Herri Batasuna or Acción Nacionalista Vasca. The second angle consists of Zapatero’s socialist government. Finally, the third angle corresponds to the victims of terrorism, which includes all citizens of Spain as well as those who have been directly or indirectly the victim of a terrorist attack (casualties, injured, survivors, etc). Thus, the triangular metaphoric scenario consists of a doctor, a disease, and a patient.

The three conceptual keys that serve as the main framework are: TERRORISM IS A DISEASE, THE GOVERNMENT IS THE DOCTOR AND THE SOCIETY IS THE PATIENT. Zapatero and his government are the doctors that have the knowledge and the means to cure the victims (the citizens of Spain) of the disease (terrorism) from which they suffer. The first part of the discussion will explain
how terrorism is metaphorically constructed. Then, the discursive construction of Zapatero’s government will be analyzed, and finally, the victims of terrorism will be discussed.

5.1 TERRORISM IS A DISEASE. Terrorism is evil, and evil takes the form of a disease. As Sontag (1978: 84) indicates: ‘the concept of disease is never innocent.’ It connotes pain, suffering, distress, and even possible death. She argues that ‘Feelings about evil are projected onto a disease. And the disease (so enriched with meanings) is projected onto the world’ (58). In those terms, Zapatero chooses carefully what aspects of terrorism and how he projects them onto the Spanish general public. Findings reflect that the metaphorical construction of terrorism and related aspects (extremism, fanaticism, totalitarianism) corresponds to the highest percentage of metaphorical instances in the corpus (51.70%). Metaphorical instances categorized under TERRORISM IS A DISEASE fulfill mainly two discursive functions: first, to present what terrorism is, and second, to point out its damaging consequences. Metaphor keywords related to these two aspects (mentioned previously) allow for the formulation of other conceptual metaphors that would be subcategorized under the conceptual key TERRORISM IS A DISEASE. These are the following: TERRORISM IS AN EPIDEMIC, TERRORISM IS A CYST, TERRORISM IS A TUMOR, TERRORISM IS CANCEROGENOUS, TERRORISM IS A PATHOLOGY, TERRORISM IS MADNESS, TERRORISM IS DEATH, TERRORISM IS TREATABLE and TERRORISM IS CURABLE.

Terrorism as disease is projected as an abnormal physical or mental condition that causes pain, dysfunctions, and death. Terrorism is conceptualized with generic terms lacra ‘epidemic,’ enfermedad ‘disease,’ and patología ‘pathology’) all of which highlight the after-effect of the disease rather than the specific name of the disease itself. Results of the analysis indicate that the most common metaphor keyword to characterize terrorism is lacra ‘epidemic’:
Juntos, el Gobierno, los partidos políticos, las organizaciones sociales y la sociedad civil, defenderemos nuestras instituciones y nuestras libertades. Juntos todos acabaremos con esta lacra que golpea a la sociedad española desde hace décadas.

'Together, the Government, the political parties, the social organizations, and the civil society, will defend our institutions and our freedom. Together we will end the epidemic that has hit the Spanish society for decades.' (7 Mar. 2008).

In (1), Zapatero, recalling the ETA assassination of the Basque socialist politician Isaías Carrasco, just two days after being re-elected president for a second term, emphasizes the need for unity to successfully end terrorism in Spain. The use of a more generic term to address terrorism allows Zapatero to use neutral language and be politically correct in terms of avoiding political controversy. It is important to keep in mind that one of Zapatero’s political strategies to end terrorism is to establish negotiations with ETA in order to achieve a permanent ceasefire and an eventual abandonment of their armed struggle. Successfully negotiating a ceasefire with ETA would constitute a considerable achievement from the ruling government, since 50 years that ETA has been perpetrating attacks, only three attempts of ceasefire were temporarily accomplished. Hence, although Zapatero publicly condemns terrorism, his position as a peace negotiator requires him to be linguistically neutral.

Terrorism as disease, not only provokes physical pain, but also mental distress. The abnormal mental condition of terrorism is addressed by Zapatero with metaphor keywords such as locura ‘insanity’ and delirio ‘delirium’ to denounce terrorism’s lack of rationality as a whole:

(2) La fuerza de la democracia y de la palabra siempre derrotará al delirio totalitario.

‘The strength of democracy and of the word will always defeat the totalitarian delirium.’ (5 June 2007).

In (2) Zapatero criticizes ETA’s lack of judgment for terminating in December 2006 with the permanent ceasefire that they themselves proposed in March of that same year, killing two Ecuadorians in the Madrid Barajas International Airport. Zapatero addresses terrorism’s insanity in order to denounce several aspects of terrorism such as indiscriminate terrorist attacks. ETA has not only killed politicians, military and police personnel, but also journalists, professors, and civilians among others. Al-Qaeda’s 11-M bombing attack targeted trains full of ordinary citizens to generate terror and panic. The lack of rationality can also
be noticed in the cold-blooded tactics to execute their victims (shooting in the head as in the case of Miguel Angel Blanco in 1997, or shooting in front of their children as in Ricardo Couso's assassination in 1991). Furthermore, mental disorder is also used to condemn those who embrace extremist Islamic ideologies and practices such as the use of suicide bomber to justify the use of violence for religious purposes.

Zapatero does not only use generic disease terms to address terrorism, but also more specific names such as *peste* 'plague' or *tumor* 'tumor.' Allusions to specific names of diseases allow the speaker to present different types of evil. *Peste* and *tumor* occur in the context of terrorism related to the Middle East which has acted in Spain since the 80s,' this is Islamic terrorism also known as jihadism (Gómez Bermúdez 2010):

(3) *El terrorismo no tiene justificación [...] pero, como ocurre con la peste, se puede y se deben conocer sus raíces; se puede y se debe pensar racionalmente cómo se produce y cómo crece para combatirlo racionalmente.*

'Terrorism has no justification [...] but, as occurs with the plague, its roots could and should be known; we could and should think rationally how it is produced and how it grows in order to combat it rationally.' (21 Sept. 2004).

The metaphorical use of *peste* helps to characterize this other terrorism that has also acted in Spain. *Peste* echoes the bubonic plague in the XIV century that was brought from Asia to Europe. This term anachronically placed, reveals that this illness is not of the modern world's diseases, but rather a disease from the past. This emphasizes the archaic, primitive, and traditional ideology of radical Islamic supporters. Moreover, it also implies that the *invasor* 'invader' has come from outside Spain, not from within. *Peste* also emphasizes the rapid spreading of this deadly infectious disease, affecting all sectors of the population. Its spreading nature emphasizes not only the deadly consequences of terrorism, but also its internal structure and ways of acting. As Gómez Bermúdez indicates (2010: 57-58), Islamic terrorism is not structured, and lacks a specific hierarchy. It is a horizontal terrorism with a flexible structure that has different ramifications worldwide. In this regard, all the different Islamic terrorist groups have in common a radical ideology (Alqaedism), not a specific person to follow (Al Qaeda). The spreading emphasizes the global and massive impact of terrorism as well as its uncertainty in terms of which direction, how much or to whom the disease will spread next. This also reveals important information about its structure in contrast to others, for example ETA. While Islamic terrorism tends to target massive groups of people,
ETA’s general tendency is to target a specific person. It is also worth noting that the notion of disease coexists with that of fight to indicate how the conflict can be solved, that is, to combat it rationally. The linguistic choice of *racionalmente* ‘rationally’ denotes clearly and intentionally the rational attitude of the Zapatero’s government towards terrorists’ irrationally. The coexistence of a different source domain to help to conceptualize terrorism reveals that conceptual domains as illnesses can also be interchangeable.

Middle East terrorist conflicts are also referred to as tumors to indicate the multiple and latent terrorist conflicts generated in that area:

(4) *El conflicto israelí-árabe es el tumor primario de la violencia que está en el origen de los múltiples focos de conflicto en la región, incluido el recrudecimiento del terrorismo.*

‘The Israeli-Arab conflict is violence’s primary tumor that is in the origin of multiple conflicts focusing in the region, including the worsening of terrorism.’ (7 Sept. 2004).

The image of a tumor contributes to capture the conditions and consequences of Islamic terrorism. Islamic terrorism as a tumor takes the form of an abnormal mass of tissue that grows progressively, excessively, and that can be potentially malignant. The cross-mapping of ontological correspondences of tumors onto terrorism reveals several interesting implications. The growth of cells in a tumor can be compared to the growth of Islamic terrorist cells. It is uncoordinated and uncontrollable. Furthermore, neither the location of a tumor nor those of terrorists are always easy to detect. Gómez Bermúdez (2010: 62) explains that Islamic terrorists often use false and multiple identities, misleading information in tribunals as well as sophisticated hiding strategies, which makes their capture difficult. He indicates that this contrasts with ETA, whose Basque identity is never denied and whose location is more defined in Spain or France.

Although not all medical conditions can be treated or cured, Zapatero intentionally characterizes terrorism as treatable and curable. Tumors can be removed by doctors, in this case, by the socialist government. The risk and complexity of terrorism is well conceived in tumors since the patient runs the risk of their reappearance after surgical removal; when they may again invade the organism, in this case, Spain. In addition to *peste* and *tumor*, Zapatero uses another specific disease to characterize terrorism, cancer. As we see below, cancer is used to portray ETA’s terrorism. In fact, it is interesting to note that there is only one metaphorical instance in the corpus where Zapatero refers to terrorism as cancer, more specifically, cancerogenous cells:
El bisturí tiene que extirpar las células cancerígenas que se aprovechan de la vitalidad del cuerpo, pero con cuidado de no rozar el corazón del pluralismo.

'The scalpel has to extirpate the cancerogenous cells that take advantage of the vitality of the body, but it should be careful in not razing the heart of pluralism.' (10 Dec. 2008).

Recalling the 30th anniversary of the Spanish Constitution established in 1978, Zapatero presents the Constitution as the means by which democratic principles were possible in Spain after Franco’s dictatorship. The Constitution is conceptualized through the image of the scalpel, a sharp bladed instrument used for surgery. The scalpel does not only refer to the Constitution, but it might also be understood as a metonymic extension of those who are able to use and follow the democratic principles of the Constitution, that is, the socialist government. This implicitly positions Zapatero and his government as the doctors who will carry out the needed surgical interventions. Hence, they are publically perceived as the possible instruments that will extirpate the disease of terrorism. The use of surgical verbs such as *extirpar* ‘extirpate’ helps to emphasize that the cut is from the root. This surgical action is a way for Zapatero to indirectly emphasize the drastic measures that need to be taken to end terrorism and those who form their terrorist cupola. Furthermore, the scalpel must be used by an expert who knows how to hold it correctly and successfully perform such a delicate operation. Otherwise, one can hurt himself with his own blade.

Interestingly, Zapatero does not explicitly mention cancer but cancerogenous cells. The term cancerogenous cells is a more subtle and indirect way to address terrorism as cancer. He uses the plural form of cell *células* to address the different organisms that favor terrorism. This could be interpreted as an indirect allusion to not only to the terrorist group ETA, but also to the political organizations that support terrorism as Herri Batasuna or Acción Nacionalista Vasca. Sontag indicates (1978: 64) that ‘cancer cells do not simply multiply, but they are invasive. They colonize to far sites in the body from the original tumor whose presence is assumed, though cannot be detected.’ If we follow the logic of ETA, ETA looks constantly for collaborators, attracting numerous young Basque people to fight for their cause. ETA is also invasive. They threaten Basque people, especially businessmen to collaborate economically with their organization. In addition to this, during 50 years of terrorism, the Spanish government has dismantled numerous of ETA’s operations and detained many of its leaders. However, the whereabouts of the leading members remains unknown. Gómez Bermúdez (2010: 49-50) explains that because ETA is such a classic, hierarchical, and structured group, the efficacy to finish with terrorism depends, to a large extent, on finding their cupola members, not the executors of the
terrorist attacks. As mentioned previously, the use of this oncological metaphor appears only once in the whole corpus. This may explain Zapatero’s conscious choice of avoiding controversy and being linguistically neutral when referring to ETA in the majority of his discourse. As Sontag (1978:84) mentions: ‘to describe a phenomenon as a cancer is an incitement to violence.’ Violence is the object that wants to be avoided. In fact, the high frequency of a more general term, lacra, confirms this hypothesis. This finding significantly differs from the American political discourse, where as mentioned previously, more specific illnesses such as cancer have been pervasive in discourse on terrorism (Bourke 2006: 367). This once again indicates that Zapatero keeps to a neutral position as part of his political strategy.

Results of the analysis also indicate that the disease metaphor allows Zapatero to portrait specific symptoms or signs of terrorism. In this regard, terrorist attacks are conceptualized as conflicts that are cysted, chronified, or that bleed:

(6) La violencia, el terror, es un residuo enquistado y cronificado entre nosotros, incompatible con el tipo de sociedad que hemos sido capaces de construir los españoles.

‘Violence, terror, is a cysted and chronified residue between us, incompatible with the type of society that we the Spaniards, have been able to build.’ (15 Jan. 2007).

The above excerpt refers to the terrorist attack that ETA carried out in December 2006 at the Madrid International Airport. Enquistado and cronificado are adjectives used metaphorically to characterize the type of conflict that characterizes ETA’s terrorism. Zapatero chooses the image of a residuo ‘remains’ to express that terror and violence are as toxic waste disposal. The image of the cyst describes terrorism as an encapsulated conflict. As with cancerogenous cells, he does not mention explicitly the noun (cyst) but the adjective (cysted), which is a less direct way to define the conflict. The cysted condition implies various elements: first, Zapatero uses a common medical condition, with which citizens may be familiar and recognize as the harmful condition. Second, cysts can be removed by surgery. This implies that terrorism can also be eliminated despite its difficulty and complexity. Besides, the medical condition of being cysted highlights that terrorism in Spain has been and still remains a deeply embedded conflict for almost 50 years. Cysted also denotes that terrorism is a hidden conflict, and that its solutions as well as its cupola leading members are neither evident nor easy to find. Therefore, it is necessary to dig in deeper. It should be noticed, that unlike tumors that are always malignant, cysts can be either benign or malign. This interpretation leaves the door open to reconciliation
with ETA. Along with this, the adjective *cronificado* highlights the notion of a chronic condition. This chronic condition refers not only to the duration that Spain has been suffering from terrorism for five decades, but also as a continuous condition of suffering.

5.2 **THE GOVERNMENT IS DOCTOR.** The notion of disease requires a doctor that is able to diagnose its treatment, this doctor comes in the form of the government: **THE GOVERNMENT IS THE DOCTOR.** Zapatero portrays himself as a strong and expert political leader and a peace negotiator that knows how to control the situation. The presentation and performance of self in a public scenario is crucial to achieve one’s goals since one’s performance will define the impact on the audience. As Goffman (1959: 252) indicates: ‘the self ... is a dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented, and the characteristic issue, the crucial concern, is whether it will be credited or discredited.’ Zapatero constructs his credibility as a politician by setting a medical scenario in which he and the government performs the central role of a skilled and confident doctor. Thus, the government is portrayed as being able to diagnose the disease, to analyze its nature, and to determine possible treatment solutions. A recurrent image in political discourse is to portray a leading politician or the ruling government as the doctor. Charteris-Black (2007:170) indicates that the relationship between follower-leader can be metaphorically understood as patient-doctor since there are some shared human values such as trust and dependency. In this respect, he formulates the conceptual metaphor the POLITIAN IS A DOCTOR, which portrays such a relationship. Furthermore, to specify the acquired knowledge and experience of the politician, he also suggests POLITICAL PRACTICE IS MEDICAL PRACTICE. In a similar way, I propose **THE GOVERNMENT IS THE DOCTOR** as the main conceptual metaphor that best represents Zapatero and his government within this medical scenario. Taking this conceptual metaphor as a starting point, the metaphor keywords that characterize the government (scalpel, antidote, to extirpate, to diagnose, etc) reveal a series of interesting conceptual metaphors that I formulate as follows: **THE GOVERNMENT IS A SCALPEL, POLITICAL PRACTICE IS MEDICAL PRACTICE, POLITICAL SOLUTIONS ARE ANTIDOTES, TERRORISM IS BLINDNESS, and GOVERNMENT IS VISION.** The data indicates that 28.57% of the metaphorical instances refer to the conceptualization of the government. Findings show that the socialist government is implicitly depicted as doctors who have the knowledge to treat and cure the disease of terrorism. As previously explained earlier, the metaphorical usage of doctor allows Zapatero’s government to position itself as experts in the matter and who are in control of the situation since they have the adequate knowledge and experience. At the same time, Zapatero uses the ‘doctor-patient’ relationship to establish a hierarchical and dependant doctor-patient relationship with the public. Patients need the doctors
to be cured, there is a sense of trust and dependency from patient to doctor. In the same way, there is a sense of care and protection from doctor to patient. This relationship serves to establish a common background in terms of values and beliefs to reinforce the bond between Zapatero and the public:

(7) En todo caso, centrémonos en el punto en que coinciden los diagnósticos: el terrorismo se cierne como una grave amenaza de nuestro tiempo para la seguridad y la paz. A partir de esta coincidencia en el diagnóstico, se abren dos caminos que, aún a riesgo de simplificar, denominaré la vía del miedo y la vía de la libertad. 

‘In any case, let us concentrate on the point in which the diagnosis coincides: terrorism is a serious threat in our times to security and peace. From this coincidence in the diagnosis, there are two paths that, even at the risk of simplifying, I will designate the path of fear and the path of freedom.’ (15 Sept. 2005).

The idea of diagnosis implies that the cause or nature of terrorism can be identified, analyzed, and treated. Knowing what causes them and how terrorist organizations work it will help to predict a more effective treatment or prevention. Solutions to the disease are expressed metaphorically with the notion of journey. They take the form of a path: the path of fear or the path of freedom. The convergence of medical and journey imagery shows again how different semantic fields coexist and they are interchangeable to construct the metaphoric conceptualization of terrorism. Zapatero’s government is not only able to diagnose the cure, but also able to provide the antidote for it. Antidote reinforces the hope and trust from the general public. In fact, the idea of prevention, not only acknowledges terrorism in Spain, but the phenomenon of terrorism worldwide:

(8) […] las perspectivas de un futuro político y económico más dignos son la mejor garantía, el mejor antídoto para que las generaciones afganas futuras no sientan la tentación de abrazar el extremismo fundamentalista religioso […].

‘[…] the perspectives of a more honorable political and economic future are the best guarantees, the best antidote for the future Afghan generations to not feel the temptation of embracing the religious fundamentalist extremism.’ (6 July 2004).

Antídoto represents the possible solution to the harm that fundamentalist extremism has caused in Afghanistan. In the extract above Zapatero mentions that
a better economic and political prospective for the future is the best antidote for the Afghan people. The antidote emphasizes that there is a remedy to counteract religious fundamentalist extremism in Afghanistan. This remedy is that the Afghan people should have political and economic goals and not be part of religious fundamentalist extremist organizations.

5.3 SOCIETY AS A PATIENT. Disease not only requires the presence of a doctor to treat the illness, but also implies the presence of the patient who suffers from it. This patient is metaphorically conceptualized as the society of Spain: the society is the patient. The metaphorical conceptualization of Spanish society corresponds to the lowest percentage (19.72%). The patient refers to the victims of terrorism. The figure of the patient does not only include the actual casualties and wounded victims of terrorist attacks, but also the collective society of Spain that still suffers from terrorist violence. In relation to this conceptual key, I suggest the formulation of the following conceptual metaphors: terrorism experience is a long-term illness experience. Spain is bacteria-free and terrorism prevention is vaccination. The patient is metaphorically presented to the public as suffering from a long-term illness and being familiar with that type of illness. Furthermore, the patient is portrayed as being vaccinated to avoid further infectious contagion and to worsen the medical condition.

Spain and its citizens are depicted in medical terms as suffering from a dilated and painful experience:

(9) Con su dilatada y dolorosa experiencia de más de treinta años de firme combate contra el terrorismo, España sabe que es esencial mantener la unidad y respetar estrictamente los fundamentos y límites del Estado de Derecho.

‘With its dilated and painful experience of more than 30 years of firm combat against terrorism, Spain knows that it is essential to maintain the unity and strictly respect the foundations and limits of the State.’ (15 Sept. 2005).

The long experience of terrorism is described with the adjectives dilatada and dolorosa, which evoke the process of a very long and painful illness. Furthermore, it is interesting to consider the parallelism between the adjectives that describe the terrorist experience (dilatada and dolorosa) with the ones describing the terrorist conflict (enquistado and cronificado) to reveal important aspects about what type of conflict terrorism is. In addition, Spain is defined as a sterile country in the world. A sterile country connotes citizens with no germs, that is, free from live bacteria such as those responsible for terrorism.
Los terroristas golpearon en el país más estéril de la tierra a los ciudadanos más vacunados frente a sus métodos.

'The terrorists hit in the most sterile country of the world to the most vaccinated citizens against their (terrorist) methods.' (13 Dec. 2004).

The idea of cleanliness expressed with sterile is amplified by another medical metaphor that evokes protection that is, vaccinated. This shows that not only is the country portrayed to be free from bacteria, but the citizens also are protected against bacteria through vaccination, as a measure of preventing infection. This metaphor emphasizes that citizens of Spain are physically and mentally prepared to fight terrorism. Therefore, Spain’s citizens show political maturity in the face of a big problem such as terrorism. As a result, the conceptual metaphor realized can be formulated as SPAIN IS BACTERIA-FREE.

In sum, findings reveal that Zapatero uses medical metaphors intentionally to transmit his political message clearly: terrorism is evil. In doing so, not only does he use general medical terminology (lacra, enfermedad, patología), but also specific medical conditions (peste, tumor, células cancerígenas, enquistado). Interestingly, references to specific illnesses serve the function of distinguishing between the two main types of evils that act in Spain (Islamic terrorism and ETA) and, furthermore, reveal information about their infrastructure and political ideology. Results suggest that Islamic terrorism is portrayed with more specific medical conditions (peste, tumor) as opposed to domestic terrorism, which is repeatedly addressed as lacra. There is only one metaphorical instance that depicts ETA as células cancerígenas. This evidence suggests that the way that Zapatero approaches ETA seems linguistically gentler than how he addresses Islamic terrorism. Furthermore, it is not only about projection, but also about perception. The public’s perception of terrorism as disease also allows a stronger public’s projection of Zapatero as doctor. It is in Zapatero’s best interest to be perceived as the protector of the nation, able to maintain the hygienic condition and well-being of the country. This strategy allows Zapatero to restore himself as a strong political figure as well as to transmit the sense of hope and confidence to a distressed general public.

6. CONCLUSIONS. While the use of medical metaphors in political discourse is well-known in English, there has been very little research on this subject in the Spanish language. Thus, this study not only contributes to the field of metaphor and political discourse, but also, and more specifically, to terrorism discourse in the Spanish language. This study provides evidence of the use of medical metaphors in Zapatero’s discourse on terrorism and their persuasive role. The medical scenario allows him to establish an analogy with the current situation of terrorism in Spain.
This analogy can be understood in terms of a triangle, whose angles form the conceptual structure of Zapatero’s political perception on terrorism: TERRORISM IS A DISEASE, THE GOVERNMENT IS THE DOCTOR AND THE SOCIETY IS THE PATIENT.

Furthermore, the analysis showed how medical metaphors perform several crucial functions in Zapatero’s discourse. First, the implication of Zapatero as a doctor reveals aspects of his leadership role as an expert and experienced professional in the matter. Zapatero and his government not only know what instruments to use to end terrorism, but how to use them. This reaffirms his control over the drastic situation that has been present in Spain for almost 50 years. Therefore metaphors are used to portray healing and hope with this government. Second, the doctor-patient relationship contains several fundamental aspects: on the one hand, the dependant relationship of the public on the government; on the other hand, the common ground of shared values and trust. Third, the effectiveness of medical metaphors also results in portraying terrorism as a disease that can be treated and cured. This again reinforces the hope of ending such a long-standing problem once and for all.

Finally, it is interesting to observe that Zapatero’s discourse in addressing ETA and Islamic terrorism differs. The former is addressed in more general terms; the latter is presented with more specific names. This differs from findings in American presidential discourse where the use of diseases such as cancer is frequently employed.

These findings suggest several avenues for further research such as the rhetorical construction of terrorism through medical metaphors not only by left-wing politicians, but also by right-wing ones. In addition to this, it would be interesting to explore how terrorist organizations construct the idea of terrorism and employ it through medical imagery.

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