Abstract

The Spanish political party Podemos was born in January 2014 in a country deeply marked by the Great recession (2007-09) and by the 15-M movement (2011). The founding members of Podemos regularly repeat that the « the 15-M movement existed without Podemos but Podemos couldn't have existed without the 15-M ». The aim of this work is to show how a political and economic crisis, followed by a social movement, creates a breeding ground for the birth of a radical-left populism. A left-wing populism can find its roots in a social movement by articulating its claims, expectations and protests. Podemos can be considered as the result of a synergy between a social movement and a political party, and, therefore, appears as a textbook case. The party was created by a dozen of political sciences professors from the University Complutense of Madrid. They saw in the crisis and in this social movement a « window of opportunity » allowing the creation of a new political force. The main goal of this new force was to « turn outrage into political change » (« convertir la indignación en cambio político »). Noting the failure of the left and the rise of far-right parties all over the European continent, the founding members decided to reject the left/right axis and to mobilize a new opposition, which finds its origins in the 15-M movement : the people (« el pueblo ») against the elite (« la casta »). This strategic fracture was mainly inspired by three authors : Antonio Gramsci, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (and, more generally, the Essex School). Leaning on their concepts, theories and insights, the founding members began with the ambition to create a radical-left populism.

Key Words: Podemos, Populism, Social Movement, Great Recession

Authors: Laura Chazel (Sciences Po Grenoble) and Guillermo Fernandez Vazquez (Universidad Complutense de Madrid)
The Spanish political party Podemos was born in January 2014 in a country deeply marked by the Great Recession (2007-2009) and by the 15-M movement (2011). The founding members of Podemos regularly repeat that the « the 15-M movement existed without Podemos but Podemos couldn't have existed without the 15-M ». The aim of this work is to show how a political and economic crisis, followed by a social movement, creates a breeding ground for the birth of a radical-left populism. A left-wing populism can find its roots in a social movement by articulating its claims, expectations and protests. Podemos can be considered as the result of a synergy between a social movement and a political party, and, therefore, appears as a textbook case. The party was created by a dozen political science professors from the University Complutense of Madrid. They saw in the crisis and in this social movement a « window of opportunity » allowing the creation of a new political force. The main goal of this new force was to « turn outrage into political change » (« convertir la indignación en cambio político »)\(^1\).

Podemos was born by rejecting a number of assumptions of the traditional radical left, and the founding members of the party decided 1) to recognize the performative power of discourse and to value the importance of political communication (they didn't reject media, as television or radio, as the radical left had traditionally done) ; 2) to reject traditional leftist symbols ; 3) to reject the idea that a direct link exist between social forces and political forces, more precisely : that winning political power means accumulating social force (Errejón, Mouffe, 2015) ; 4) to adopt a new attitude towards the power : the goal was no longer to influence social-democrats policies but to build a political majority and to win the elections ; 5) to end the opposition « ideology » / « common sense ».

Noting the failure of the left and the rise of far-right parties all over the European continent, the founding members decided to reject the left/right axis and to mobilize a new opposition, which finds its origins in the 15-M movement : the people (« el pueblo ») against the elites (« la casta »). This strategic fracture was mainly inspired by three authors : Antonio Gramsci, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (and, more generally, the Essex School). Leaning on their concepts, theories and insights, the founding members began with the ambition to create a radical-left populism, capable of winning elections ; populism which would be, as above-mentioned, the result of a synergy between a social movement (15-M) and a political party (Podemos).

The Podemos case presents several interests. Firstly, Spain is one of the only European countries where a radical-left populism was born from the crisis, studying the Podemos case follows the footsteps of the academics studying left-wing populism, « social populism » (March, Mudde,\(^1\) Podemos' manifesto. January 2014.)

\(^1\) Podemos' manifesto. January 2014.
2005 and March, 2011 in Ramiro, Gómez, 2016), which is less studied than populist radical right (Ramiro, Gómez, 2016). Secondly, as Kriesi and Pappas showed, the combination of a political and an economic crisis, intensifies populist phenomena (Kriesi, Pappas, 2016). The Spanish case, which was not studied by these two authors, brings an additional empirical support to the assumption of the authors. Third interest, the founding members of Podemos are in line with the recent analyses using the work of Gramsci as a tool to understand new social movements and how to transform « subaltern subjects » in « political subjects » (Ciavolella, 2015). Lastly, the Podemos case shows the tensions that can exist between the strict logic of a political party (institutionalized) and the horizontal logic of a social movement.

Our main question is: Did the leaders of Podemos really manage, by leaning on the work of the above-mentioned authors, to aggregate the heterogeneity of the claims of the 15-M? In other words, is this new political identity the result of the aggregation of social claims born from the Great Recession or is it the result of another logic? To answer these questions, qualitative methods were used. Firstly, by analyzing the theoretical production of the leaders of Podemos which shows how they tried to create a hegemonic force. Secondly, analyses of the election campaigns were done.

We will first see how the founding members of Podemos considered that the Great Recession led to a social and political crises corresponding to an « organic crisis » (Gramsci), a « populist rupture » (Laclau, Mouffé) (I) from which the 15-M movement was born (II). Then we will explain how, according to the leaders of Podemos, the 15-M has built a « counter hegemonic discourse », which broke with the traditional radical left frame. This rupture, which took place in 2011, would have allowed the beginning of a « War of Manoeuvre » (Gramsci) with the creation of Podemos, in 2014 (III). Finally, we will show how Podemos, by choosing a populist hierarchical partisan organization with a strong leader, cannot be considered as the voice of the 15-M. Between the ambition of becoming an « electoral war machine » (« una máquina de guerra electoral ») and the idea of remaining a « movement-party » (« un partido-movimiento »), the tensions remain strong among the current debates in the party (IV). The conclusion of the article shows how the debates, between Pablo Iglesias, general secretary of the party, and Íñigo Errejón, secretary of strategic analysis and political change, that currently exist in Podemos found their roots in these questions.
I. How to articulate social movement and political force? From Hardt and Negri to Antonio Gramsci, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe

In 2015, in his article « Un nouveau prince au-delà des antinomies : lectures de Gramsci dans les mouvements sociaux contemporains », Riccardo Ciavolella put forward the two main visions that oppose each other when it comes to considering the articulations between social movements and political forces. The first one, coming from the works of Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, promotes the idea of spontaneity and horizontality of the occupation of public places and therefore refuses any institutionalization of social movements. The second one, which can be seen as the ideological heir to Gramsci’s thoughts, and in which Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe can be classified, defends the necessary «verticalization» of social movements to be able to act on the reality. The academic conflict is paramount to understanding the birth of Podemos, as well as the strategy that the party has adopted concerning the 15-M movement since the theoretical dissensions can be found between the party founders themselves. In the academic works of Pablo Iglesias and Íñigo Errejón these two different and opposing visions can be clearly seen.

Theoretical differences between Pablo Iglesias and Íñigo Errejón

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<th>Pablo Iglesias</th>
<th>Íñigo Errejón</th>
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| Academic background | - Marked by Italian politics.  
- Speaks Italian.  
- Erasmus exchange in Bologna.  
- Phd thesis subject: altermondialist movements in Italy and in Spain.  
- During his thesis: academic exchange in the EUI (Firenze). Works with Donatella Della Porta on social movements. | - Politics origins in liberatian and anarchist movements (« Juventudes Libertarias » et « Juventudes Anarquistas »). Always very suspicious about the Communist Party.  
- First marked by Latin America: PhD thesis about Bolivia. |

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1. Pablo Iglesias and the Multitude

Pablo Iglesias has been deeply marked by Italian politics and theoretically influenced by the Italian intellectual and politician Antonio Negri. Through the Erasmus exchange program, he spent a year of academic mobility in the University of Bologna. He then goes on to write his PhD thesis (defended in 2008) on social movements in Italy: *Multitude and postnational collective action: a comparative studies of the disobedient citizens: from Italy to Madrid (2000 - 2005).* He then became highly interested in the Tute Bianchi, an alter-globalist movement created in 1994. In this thesis, he used and discussed the writings of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri and their concepts of *Empire* and *Multitude* (Torreblanca, 2015).

Hardt and Negri offer a theoretical framework to analyze the mechanisms of domination of the capitalist power. According to these authors, capitalism, through a formidable bio-political power, is able to retain its domination through political, cultural, military and judicial networks. They coin the concept of *Empire*, defined by them as a « new political subject », or a « new form of global sovereignty », which adapts and globalize itself in order to resist the ever growing resistances it must face. They simultaneously coin the concept of *Multitude* which they consider is the only form of resistance able to emerge from within this *Empire*. The Multitude, which is collectively created and self-organized in networks, opposes itself to the concept of « people », since it doesn’t reduce the *multiple to the one* but is composed by *diversities*. It is defined as « *a series of individualities* », which « *formulates the desires, struggles and resistances of men within the Empire* », made of « *the ensemble of those working under the pressure of the capital and therefore the class of those who potentially refuse this domination of the capital* » (Yousfi, 2012). Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt hence refute any institutionalization of social movements because they see in this « *project of multitude* » a serious possibility of *transformation of the reality* and of the implementation of a democracy on the global scale (Hardt, Negri, 2004).

In the end, from his thesis, his experience in social movements, the analysis of the works of Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, and the observation of the failure of the big alter-globalist movements, Pablo Iglesias concludes than spontaneous and horizontal movements will never be able to *transform the reality* without adopting a vertical organization and accepting institutionalization (Schavelzon, 2015; Torreblanca, 2015). Leaving out Antonio Negri, Pablo Iglesias draws from Antonio Gramsci (yet another important Italian author in Iglesias’ theoretical development) an important lesson: the one and only way to deeply change a society is to seize power. In 2012, one year after the 15-M movement, and observing the victory of the conservative People's Party (PP) at the 2011 general elections, Pablo Iglesias wrote: « *I recognize that the majority of analysis and diagnostics of Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt appeal to me, but their*...
suggestions and their actual impacts on the real life leave me cold » (Iglesias in Schavelzon, 2015). Pablo Iglesias simultaneously highly admires the Italian Communist Party (PCI), considered by Gramsci as the « modern Prince ». He states that the electoral successes of the PCI, once the most important European communist party, came from the efficiency of its organization as well as its « theoretical flexibility » (Torreblanca, 2015).

2. Íñigo Errejón : counter-hegemony and institutionalization of social movements

Íñigo Errejón defends his thesis The struggle for hegemony during the first MAS government in Bolivia (2006-2009) : a discursive analysis in 2012. His work is heavily inspired by the works of Antonio Gramsci, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. On the opposite end of Hardt and Negri and their concept of Multitude, Errejon uses the concept « people ». Leaning on the writings of Laclau and Mouffe, he defines this notion of « people » as a political subject which has to be built through discourse in order to create new collective and political identities. Centered around the works of Gramsci, Laclau and Mouffe, this approach allows the study of the articulation between social movements and political forces from two broader orientations.

The first orientation comes from the writings of Gramsci. This author is now perceived by some social movements theorists as an an author unable to understand these new forms of mobilization based on a horizontal organization and refusing any form of political representation. Still according to these theorists, the transformation of the world is not developed by a « specific revolutionary subject » but by « the acknowledgement of a plurality of fragmented political subjectivities » (Ciavolella, 2015). Richard Day, in his publication Gramsci is dead. Anarchist currents in the newest social movements, criticizes the very notion of hegemony and denounces what he refers to as a « hegemony of hegemony », typical, in his view, of the left. He writes : « Gramsci’s Marxism, critical towards bourgeois hegemony, would promote the implementation of another hegemony, which, albeit proletarian, would impose itself through heteronomy upon the diverse and fragmented ensemble of social and cultural subjectivities » (Day in Ciavolella, 2015). Day states that the « old social movements », which he defined as political parties and unions, use vertical, hierarchical and coercive actions, in opposition to the new movements which embody an alternative to this « old left ».

On the other hand, for his followers, Gramsci’s writings are an indispensable tool in order to analyze and understand the new social movements. Newer analysis of gramscian theory focusses on analyzing how to transform the subaltern movements in political subjects. The key is to imagine political subjects able to perform the shift from a cultural war of position to a political war of manœuvre (Ciavolella, 2015).
A second orientation that allows understanding this articulation between social movements and political forces, as well as the shift from a war of position to a war of manœuvre can be found in the works of Laclau and Mouffe. Both of them can be counted among these intellectuals relying on Gramsci’s theories to imagine such an articulation. Reacting to the Nuit Debout movement in the early 2016, Chantal Mouffe expressed herself more than once on its necessary verticalization and came back on the importance for spontaneous civil movements to adopt vertical organizations. She explained: « the occupation of places and the setting in motion of the « multitudes » held dear by Toni Negri and Michael Hardt are not enough, it is paramount that we also act at the level of the institutions » (Mouffe, 2016). According to her, the works of Negri and Hardt are « seriously lacking in political strategy » as the matter of the creation of an actual political movement is tackled on by these authors who do not offer solutions to unite the different struggles. « For them, it is useless to worry about the articulation of a diversity of movements defined by different interests and potentially contradictory demands », she wrote (Mouffe, 2016). In collaboration with Ernesto Laclau, she puts forward the concept of « chain of equivalence » which allows the union of different and heterogeneous demands of the civil society.

During an interview in Madrid in spring 2016, Jorge Lago, then the head of the Instituto 25M, the think tank of Podemos, stated that the key to this articulation between political and social movements lied in the gathering of the demands of the civil society through this motion of chain of equivalence. This motion has to be done by underlining the concrete aspect of these struggles, which means in making so that « physicians, nurses, firemen, teachers, see in a political force the representation of their demands, even if their demands are not explicitly stated in this political force, but, one way or another, are transferred in terms of hope »

II. The 2008 crisis: Organic crisis and populist breaking

Podemos leaders have considered that the 2008 crisis would have ended with an economic, social and political crisis, which would correspond to a regime crisis. The appearance of the 15-M movement in May 2011 has to be understood in this context. Podemos founders have considered that the 15-M, thanks to its new oppositions and framework of interpretation, had created the right conditions for the creation of a party such as Podemos. In this context, its founders aimed to build a left-wing populism which would be the result of a synergy between the 15-M movement and Podemos.

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2 Interview with Jorge Lago, Madrid, 27th of April 2016.
1) Organic crisis and populist rupture in Spain from the 2008 crisis

Leaning, once again, on the analyses of Laclau and Mouffe, the founders of Podemos have described the situation of post-2008 Spain as a situation of « populist rupture ». This concept matches with the Gramscian notions of « organic crisis » or « hegemony crisis », which describes a timeframe in which « the old world is dying, and the new world struggles to be born ». These structural crises, which affect every sphere of society - economic, institutional, moral, cultural, political - may end in a « caesarism » as happened with Mussolini. However they also open up a space that can be occupied by progressive forces which allows for the rebirth of the hope for groundbreaking social changes. This « populist rupture », in Laclau’s theoretical framework, allows for the appearance of both reactionary and/or progressive forces. This rupture is characterized by the dichotomization of the social space. It happens when « the citizens see themselves as belonging to one or the other side in a conflict that has two sides. Building the people as a collective actor requires calling upon the « downtrodden » in a frontal opposition to the existing regime. » (Laclau, 2007).

Relying on these analyses, the founders of Podemos have chosen to build a left-wing populism in order to seize this new political space. In the party’s first manifesto, the signatories underline the necessity of « not letting the window of opportunity that has been opened by the citizens be shut ». Populism is understood as a logic consisting of creating new political identities in a context of a fragmented society. It also embodies in their eyes the neutral symptom of a broader discontent - its neutrality meaning that it could slip into a conservative, authoritarian right-wing populism or into a progressive and emancipative political force.

According to the leaders, the economic and financial crisis of 2008 was this point of fundamental rupture. Among the consequences of the crisis can be found a dramatic rise in unemployment (going from 8.3% in 2007 to 26.1% in 2014) and home expulsions, a stark increase in the extreme poverty situation numbers. This situation affects especially the youth, dealing with an impressive 51.4% unemployment rate in 2014. Young graduates have often been forced to expatriate themselves : estimations go up to 220.000 forced economic expatriations since 2008 (Muñoz in Nez, 2015). In this context, many associations have been created, among which the Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca (PAH). Launched in 2009 in Barcelona, its goal is to protect the right to a decent home, threatened by the Spanish housing crisis. Its founding member, Ada Colau, became Mayor of the same city six years later. Another example is the creation of Juventud Sin Futuro in Madrid in 2011, launched by several academic collectives alarmed by the growing precariousness of the Spanish youth (Salazar in Manzano, 2015).

In order to be able to tackle the crisis and receive economical help from the European Union (EU), Spain along with other European countries, had to implement austerity measures. As of 2008, the socialist government of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero implemented a series of reform in this direction - increase of VAT, freezing of the recruitment, decrease of wages in the public sector, increase of the minimal age of retirement and so on and so on. In 2011, under the pressure of Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy, Zapatero had the budgetary stability written into the Constitution, as an answer to the collapse of the Spanish banking system. From this date onwards, the budget cuts in the sectors of education, health, social security and others are now legitimized by the article 135 of the constitution which states that the priority of the administration will be the reimbursement of the debt. Many commentators have perceived this reform as the «constititutionalisation» of the neo-liberal principles at the expense of fundamental rights, and the imposition by supranational entities of non-voted and unwished for reforms, a denial of democracy and the loss of national sovereignty. It has been also analyzed as one of the strongest manifestations of the crisis of the welfare State.

The economic crisis of 2008 that has led to these reforms has thus led to a social and crisis. 60% of the Spanish population consider that «the wealthy hold too much power in their country» (Torreblanca, 2015), the perception of politicians becoming more and more negative. In 2009, more than 730 inquiries linked to corruption cases have been accounted for, 63% of which are directed towards People's Party or Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) members (Fernandez, Petithomme, 2015). Many observers assess this as a rupture of the social contract (Sánchez Cuenca, 2014).

2) The 15-M movement

The 15th May 2011, collectives such as Democracia Real Ya and Juventud Sin Futuro call through social networks for a wide series of demonstrations throughout Spain. Thousands of people took to the streets and decided, once the demonstration finished, not to go home. Everywhere in the country, and without expressive specific demands at that time, demonstrators chose to occupy public places on the ground that «They do not represent us» and in order to denounce the consequences and management of the crisis. In the very centre of Madrid, on the Puerta del Sol, a camp that was to last for one month was set up. The movement then took on an unseen scale, gathering daily hundreds of thousands of demonstrators across the country. Day after day, the demands of the 15-M grew clearer : more transparency in political life, more involvement of the citizens in the political and civic life, more social justice, more proportionality in the electoral system. The enemies are named : banks, politicians and austerity («we are not marchandises in the hands of bankers and politicians »).
On the Puerta del Sol, the camp became a self-governed structured, manned by thousands of Spanish staying days and nights. Many commissions were created with each a specific issue: feminism, rewriting of the Constitution, international exportations, reflections on the nature of labor, etc. General assemblies were held every day with the aim of engaging a process of rethinking society, representation of citizens, democracy and politics. Some slogans were to become symbols of this movement, such as: «real democracy now!» «let’s get rid of them!», «another world is possible», «the united people needs no party».

One of the main characteristics of the 15-M being its transversality, no political force could hope to claim to represent this movement in which the traditional symbols of the radical left had been left aside. The people involved in this movement that we interviewed have all expressed how surprised they were to not have seen «red flags, black flags nor republican flags» or any symbol traditionally used for demonstrations. This has been a major change of the classical analytical reading grids used for politics. The 15-M movement had quickly adopted an horizontal, deliberative organization, composed of assemblies, rejecting any political recuperation, any form of representation as well as rejecting the traditional political actors - parties or unions. Far from a struggle that would be driven by classes antagonisms or the traditional left/wing axis, the 15-M offered a new analytical reading grid: those from the top against those from the bottom. This axis is now the strategic base of Podemos and represents for Laclau the sine qua non conditions in order for a «populist rupture» to happen (Laclau, 2007).

Although it was constituted mainly with middle-class students battered by the crisis, i.e. a «futureless youth» in their own words, the movement is first and foremost characterized by its heterogeneity and by the massive support of the Spanish population for the movement: between 64 and 70% of the Spanish population stated that they sponsored the demands expressed by the 15-M (Anduiza, 2014). However, in spite of this support, the general elections of May 2011, that took place at the same time and in which the PP obtains the absolute majority, corroborates the difficulty of creating a political force from a spontaneous social movement.

III. From War of position to War of manoeuvre

In the eyes of the founding members of Podemos, the structural crisis that took place in Spain has thus been visualised with the 15-M, which has for the first time been able to build up a counter-hegemonic discourse by setting in motion a process of dismemberment of dominant signifiers (Howarth, 2005). This process having been the strategic base from which Podemos has fed itself, the 15-M corresponds to the war of position and the creation of Podemos to the war of manoeuvre.
1) New political identities and universalisation of the struggles: the 15-M as a counter-hegemonic process

In the works of Antonio Gramsci, hegemony is defined as a form of domination exerted by a ruling class over civil society. This domination relies on the ability for some people to show themselves as embodying the universal of any society: their imposed ruling class worldview becomes the cultural norm, it is an interpenetration of coercion and consent. The mightiest hegemonic systems are the less coercive, since they can rely on the force of consent, the «pure collaboration of the willing and active consent». Hegemony is first built at the superstructure level, which means more within the politico-cultural fields than the economic ones. The dominant ideology, imposed through powerful cultural tools (pop culture, media, school etc.) builds up a common sense. Building a counter-hegemony thus requires a shift from the individual to the universal. As Gramsci explains: «the working class, in order to claim the hegemony from the ruling class, must learn to embody the «people» so it can struggle» (Hoare, Sperber, 2013).

In a 2011 article, Errejón analyzes the 15-M as a counter-hegemony event based on an approach he himself describes as «neo-Gramscian». He describes how this movement has been able to go beyond traditional ideological frameworks and how it has finally been able to embody a «popular will being built», to build a new common sense and thus to reap a «transversal sympathy» from very diverse groups. Relying on four major theorists: Laclau, Mouffe, Gramsci, and Schmitt, Errejón lay the bases of the «podemist» analysis of social movements: the discourse creates new identities, creates against a new «them» a new «us» which pretends to embody the universal, that is, general interest. According to him, the discourse as a tool is the real heart of politics and what allows for the construction of a «subject which embodies sovereignty». «By deserting the preexisting ideological frameworks, the 15-M has generated a political identity on the outside of the dominant political order, though from within the social consensus from which political actors draw their legitimacy», he writes (Errejón, 2011). This process is thus not built upon some kind of tabula rasa. On the contrary, it feeds itself from the common sense of the society it evolves within, which is not to be rejected but redefined from the inside. As he states: «The process, opened by the 15-M of 2011, is counter-hegemonic in the way that it is not denouncing the «lie» of the 1978 regime but stems from the questioning of the promises of this regime with its own terms. This discourse, this general feeling which gains ground has shown itself - precisely because of the attention paid to hegemony and its political reading grid - a much better way of social change than the moralizing and esthetically satisfying principles of the traditional left» (Errejón, 2011).
Still according to him, despite the crisis, the *rupture of the social contract* and the ever growing discontent, the ruling class has been able to maintain the general consensus, the *common sense*. By waging a war of situation, which he defined as a war against dominant and self-legitimized values, the 15-M movement has shattered the consensus. He specifies that two logics worked within the 15-M and allowed the constitution of a counter-hegemony.

**A. A new transversal political identity and the passing of ideological frameworks.** On the Puerta del Sol could be found a wide variety of specific struggles (poverty, expulsion...) which have built up strength for the movement since these do not come from a specific ideology but showcase the daily experience of the majority of the population. In the same way, shifting the left/right axis to a bottom/top one while claiming to be apolitical has allowed for the movement to go beyond ideological frameworks.

**B. The universalisation of these struggles.** The 15-M has managed to appropriate « precious » political notions, such as « citizenship, democracy, dignity, justice ». Laclau has described these notions as « floating signifiers », since they are floating above the heterogeneity of society. They are fundamental as they legitimize the faith in politics, contain affective involvement and produce collective identities. By recuperating these terms, the 15-M has been able to build a politically alternative discourse able to challenge the *common sense*. For instance : with the 15-M, citizenship now refers to « those from the bottom » (against « those from the top ») ; the institutions of the representative democracy cannot be labeled as democratic anymore since « they do not represent us » etc.

By coining new oppositions and opening up a process of de-legitimation of what was previously perceived as *natural*, the 15-M has, according to Errejón, started a war of position. Conservative press affiliated with the PP have tried to trapped the movement by labeling as « leftist », « marginal », « extremist », and have thus partaken in this war of position. The 15-M has won the hegemonic struggle on some points, especially the battle for some *floating signifiers*, and through the appropriation of symbolic notions. It has managed to create a shift in the public perceptions and their imagery, and to « normalize » struggles that were once labeled as marginal.

**2) From the war of position (15-M) to the war of manoeuvre (Podemos)**

In the eyes of Podemos founding members, the 15-M was committed into a war of position that allowed for the revocation of the dominant consensus. The second phase was the war of manoeuvre, that is, the creation of a political party able to feed itself from this war of position. Has Podemos been able to embody this new political subject able to ignite the war of manoeuvre? The
discursive strategy of Podemos rests upon the breach that the 15-M has highlighted in the system. They consider that the 15-M as movement cannot be represented, but that Podemos ought to become a « declination », of its discourse since this is the first party that used the bottom/up axis in lieu of the left/one. Jorge Lago explained that Podemos is « a possible expression, among others, of the 15-M »

Defining itself as movement-party, coming directly from the 15-M, Podemos adopts a Gramscian vision of social movements and is standing de facto next to « intellectuals and critical thinkers who refer to Gramsci to describe social movements as subjects able to re-discuss the ideological and cultural presupposition supporting the current capitalist system » (Ciavolella, 2015). It could thus be possible to go beyond the power-protest dichotomy if a new Prince (in the words of Riccardo Ciavolella) would emerge and grow from the spontaneous movements, and be able to carry « the task of social changes and the organization of the diverse subjects of the struggles, by giving shape to collective will » (Ciavolella, 2015).

Íñigo Errejón, drawing from the works of Gramsci but also from the concept of « chain of equivalence » coined by Laclau, considers that the challenge Podemos has faced is the articulation of the different struggles and its inherent difficulties. As the founding member repeats : « We are not a party, we are a popular movement ». In its discourses, the party voluntarily uses a vague rhetoric so it can bring the fusion of these particular interests into a « national-popular subject », thus creating a « people ». For example, in its discourse for the « march of change », the 31st January 2015, Iglesias did not call the « people of the left » but to various groups : feminists, Indignants, precarious youth, immigrants, nurses, militants : « To the young people who have filled the places in may, these exemplary citizens who have prevented expulsions with their very bodies at the risk of their liberty. To these heroes and heroines in white gown who have fought for the right to health, and for acceptable working conditions for health workers. To these patients stricken with Hepatitis B who have occupied the hospitals to claim their right to life. This « Green Tide » that reminded us that there is no democracy without a proper public education. To this courageous working class, the AENA workers, the Coca-Cola workers : you are an inspiration. To these grandparents calle « yayoflautas » who defended their children and grandchildren. To these thousands of exiled young : I promise you that we will build a country so that you can come back. To these women who have reminded that no one has a right to their bodies but themselves. To those who have by the most dangerous thieves of all : the ones with hair gel and a tie. To these migrant workers, no one has the right to call you a foreigner in Spain »

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4 Interview with Jorge Lago, Madrid, 27th of April 2016.
5 Speech of Pablo Iglesias during the march of change, January 2015: : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b4WoMdxJUwc
About the articulation of the different struggle, Íñigo Errejón explained: «It becomes essential to conceive the political identity as the collective construction of a tale that sums up pains and disappointments, offers a different vision of the situation as well as a horizon which regroups the unsolved and frustrated demands. A vision that produces both emotional links of solidarity and sense of belonging, and a common objective, icons and leaders catalyzing a new identity» (Errejón, 2016). According to him, the success of Podemos can not only be reducted to the interest the party has shown for the demands of the «street» since these demands are varied, diverse and sometimes contradictory. It should be more understood in the challenge that Podemos has stood up to, that is, the articulation of such a heterogeneous ensemble.

IV. Podemos, the «voice» of the Indignants?

Podemos built its strategy on the basis of the speeches developed by the Indignants. The party can be seen as an example of a successful junction between a spontaneous movement and a political project. While in 2011, the Indignants were claiming «¡Nos nos representan!» (They don't represent us), the 20th of December 2015, when Podemos, only one year and a half after its creation, obtained 20,7% of the votes in the general elections (only 300.000 votes less than the PSOE), the activists were singing «¡Que si nos representan!» (They represent us). Nevertheless, by privileging a populist strategy with a strong hierarchical organization that gives a central place to the figure of the charismatic leader, Podemos cannot be considered as the voice or the representation of the indignation expressed in 2011. Podemos was born declaring itself to be a «movement-party». Many critics are today directed to the party which would have «lost its initial spirit» or «spoiled the potentiality of the 15-M movement». The relative failure of the Circles, civic spaces created at the birth of Podemos, accentuated these criticisms. The founders of the party have since a long time justified the partisan organization chosen by the necessity to build an «electoral war machine» to be able to gain the elections which took place in December 2015. Nowadays, the founders of the party, no matter to what current they belong, all insist on the «necessary return to the streets».

1) «Movement-party» or «electoral war machine»?

When the party was created, the founders presented it as «movement-party» and claimed to have registered the movement as a «political party» only for legal reasons. The leaders since a long time advocated for the possibility for «normal» citizens, «non-professionals» to do politics. They were defending the idea to give back to the citizens the power that had been taken from them.
In the phase of creation of Podemos, Circles, geographical or thematic, were developed throughout Spain on the basis of spontaneous citizen initiatives. Héloïse Nez explains that these Circles initially adopted an organization close to the assemblies of the 15-M movement: «Meetings are generally held in a public square. They are open to everyone and operate in the manner of an assembly, with a rotation of tasks to animate the debates to take turns or to write the report» (Nez, 2015) the only notable difference is the fact that the decision is made by vote and not by consensus as it was the case during the 15-M.

The question of the organization of the party was scheduled during autumn 2014, ten months after the party was founded. From September 15 to November 15, 2014, the citizens' assembly «Sí se puede» was organized online to debate the founding principles of the party. On the 18th and the 19th of October, a meeting was organized in Madrid, at the Palacio Vistalegre, during which 8 000 people were present. During this Congress, the partisan organization was mainly debated. Two main visions were opposed: the first one represented by the team «Claro Podemos», supported by Pablo Iglesias and for which Errejón was considered as the main ideologist, and the second by the team «SumandoPodemos», supported by Pablo Echenique. The team «Claro Podemos» defended a strong pyramidal structure and, logically, the reduction of the power of the Circles in favor of an organization characterized by its effectiveness. Íñigo Errejón fears that an excessive protagonism of the Circles would lead Podemos to recover the symbols and the ways of speaking of the traditional left. Íñigo Errejón contradicts between the fact of knowing that he needs the participation of the activists and, at the same time, doesn't trust the activists. On the contrary, the team «Sumando podemos», represented by Pablo Echenique, Teresa Rodríguez and Sánchez, privileged the processes of participatory democracy and defended an organization that gave an important power to the Circles. This proposition was supported by «Izquierda anticapitalista», a political party with a Trotskyist matrix.

It was finally the more vertical choice of the team «Claro Podemos» which won. The organization chosen is finally a classic one with a general secretary, who politically and institutionally represents the party during three years, a coordinating council composed of 15 people and an executive body (The citizen's council) composed of 80 members elected during the Congress of Vistalegre.

More than «movement-party» or the pure and simple translation of the organization of the 15-M, Podemos has in fact tried to mix these two logics of horizontality and verticality. The partisan organization of Podemos takes up the Gramscian theory according to which the «excess of spontaneism» cannot lead to anything except to block the revolutionary passion in the phase of the war of positions and to block the possibility of the emergence of a war of manoeuvre. According to
Antonio Gramsci, a political party which intends to make this transition from a war of position to a war of manoeuvre must, imperatively, adopt a hierarchical and effective organization. Gramsci also advocates a «citizen overflow», to use the Podemist vocabulary, which means, in Gramscian terms, to understand that «the consensus cannot be passive and indirect, but active and direct: it requires the participation of individuals, even if it causes an appearance of disintegration and tumult» (Hoare, Sperber, 2013). Jorge Lago explains that there is, in Podemos «a very hierarchical direction but which, nonetheless, allows popular overflow from the bottom. The people in the Circles could do whatever they wanted. There is a kind of dance between the horizontal overflows and the vertical decisions, this dance permitted Podemos to carry out a very good election campaign».

2) A «foot in the street», a «foot in the institutions»

Despite the strong place given to the leader and the vertical organization chosen, there is still, in Podemos, a process of reflection on participatory democracy and the desire not to become a «party like the other ones». Podemos maintains a complex relationship with social movements as shown by the example of Nuit Debout in France. In the 2016 Spring, following the movement Nuit Debout that took place in France, a «Noche en pie» was organized in Madrid on the main square of the Puerta del Sol to show support for the French movement. On the 9th of April 2016, a spontaneous citizen assembly was created: while the questions linked to the 15-M were central, Podemos was only mentioned once to emphasize its «betrayal» of the 15-M spirit, its excessive verticalization and its lack of internal democracy. The day following this citizens' gathering, one could read on the Facebook page of Podemos «What was the 15-M for Spain, the movement NuitDebout wants to be the same in France […] We need to convert the indignation in political change, we need the social majority to win against the privileged». This same day, on Twitter, Pablo Iglesias published a photo of the assembly that took place in Madrid to support France and commented, in French, «the mobilization is still essential to change things #Nuitdebout».

A month later, on the 15 of May 2016, a demonstration was organized in Madrid to celebrate the five years of the 15M. On the same square, La Sexta, a Spanish television channel, set up a television program to comment live on the citizens' gathering. Errejón was invited. A group of demonstrators surrounded the scene yelling «Outside», «Podemos does not represent us», «This is our place, not that of one of your television channel». Two days later, in reaction to this mobilization, Errejón published a Facebook statement in which he wrote: «We consider that the 15M is annon-representative movement, a movement that belongs to everyone, and at the same time that belongs to no-one. Although a majority of those who today militate in Podemos shouted five

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6 Interview with Jorge Lago, Madrid, 27th of April 2016.
years ago « they do not represent us ». Podemos is not the representation of the 15-M and does not pretend to be [...] We learned from the 15M that we must never forget the need to speak to all our people, to those in demonstrations and to those who watch these events from internet or the television, this teaching, we must never forget it ».

Since October 2016, Podemos has presented itself as an opposition force in the Parliament and must manage its passage from a "street" protesting force, resulting from the 2011 Indignant movement, and denouncing the "caste" to a protesting force in the institutions.

There has been, in Podemos, a strong debate on the relationship between the « streets » and the « institutions », a debate that brings back on the table the tensions that were always present in Podemos. The sector affiliated to Pablo Iglesias (including Irene Montero, Pablo Echenique and Rafael Mayoral) advocates a Podemos able to lead a social movement able to keep open the exceptionality of this Spanish political period. In addition, it recovers much of the symbology and language of the traditional left. In contrast, the sector linked to Íñigo Errejón (Pablo Bustinduy, Eduardo Maura, Clara Serra, Rita Maestre) maintains that Podemos shouldn't keep a relation of dependence with the social movements: Podemos needs the social movements for certain changes but, at the same time, has to detach itself from them to adopt a more institutional profile. According to Errejón, Podemos must be able to fight the meaning of « order » and « stability » while, thanks to the action of the social movements, the signification of the words « order » and « stability » change at its benefit. Íñigo Errejón argues that the parliamentary opposition is indispensable because, besides acting concretely on reality, it simultaneously detaches the party from the « radical » image often given to Podemos and allows the party to seduce a new electorate. Iglesias considers that the current Spanish context and the reforms that will lead the PP will create a climate of social protests and Podemos should take advantage of it. It should be noted that while Iglesias is thinking more about the model of the PCE before 1977, Errejón is thinking fundamentally about Argentina and the experiences of both Peron and Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner.

In February 2017, during the second congress of Podemos, known as « Vistalegre II », the theoretical dissensions between these two currents, which were for a long time hidden, reappeared. During this congress, Pablo Iglesias and Íñigo Errejón defended two separate projects. Juan Carlos Monedero, co-founder of Podemos, who had resigned from the party in March 2015, and who is affiliated to Pablo Iglesias, explained these differences in this way : « Between Íñigo Errejón and me, there is a difference since the beginning. Íñigo Errejón thought that it was necessary to represent the 15-M. I did not. I thought we had to instigate a new 15-M. The 15-M was composed of popular sectors but also of middle classes affected by the crisis which simply wanted to return to their previous situation [...] I did not want to represent bourgeois who simply wanted to go on
vacation three times a year or drink beers in bars but who had never been concerned about the 10 millions of poor living in Spain in the time of the crisis »

The victory of Pablo Iglesias' list, supported by Juan Carlos Monedero, at the Congress of Vistalegre II — which, although insisting on the necessary «return to the streets», did not defend a more horizontal partisan organization — marks a huge change in the strategy of Podemos which had been for a long time largely dominated by Íñigo Errejón's approach. In October 2016, Pablo Iglesias announced the change of Podemo's slogan from «Sí, se puede» to «Crear, luchar, poder popular», a phrase taken from Salvadore Allende. In parallel, Iglesias launched a new popular movement, «Vamos!», whose first public meeting was held at the Plaza Dos de Mayo in Madrid on the 17th of October 2016. He repeated the need to create, in parallel of Podemos, a popular movement: «I say it very clearly, we were not born to stop a social movement by creating a political party. We are an additional tool and we will try to be exemplary in the Parliament, in town halls and in all the institutions [...] Many people say that, by Podemo's fault, there are no more street mobilisations, no more demonstrations. If this is true, we need to change it. We will need the people. This is the initiative «Vamos», the popular power in the hands of the people»

**Conclusion**

The theoretical differences about populism that exist in Podemos are, above all, linked to which political model the founders were inspired by. Errejón looks to Argentina while Iglesias is more inspired by Italy and, to a lesser extent, to the role of the Communist Party of Spain during the final years of the Franco era. The Argentine model makes Errejón think a political party needs a popular movement behind it. Nevertheless, he considers that reaching such a situation requires: 1) a powerful discursive work from the top of the party in order to appeal transversally to very different sectors of the Spanish society; 2) to abandon the labels and symbols of the traditional left; 3) not to leave the construction of the popular movement in the hands of traditional leftist activists. Hence Errejón's insistence on appealing to «those who are missing» and his ambivalent relationship with the Circles (he needs them and, at the same time, distrust them).

On the other hand, Pablo Iglesias considers the Spanish experience of opposition to Francoism, which was led by the PCE, as an example. According to him, during this historical period, the PCE was able to gather diverse political demands around one party. The PCE knew according to Pablo Iglesias (and in Laclau's words) how to draw the «chain of equivalence» and

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7 Interview with Juan Carlos Monedero, June 2017.
8 Speech of Pablo Iglesias during the “Vamos” political meeting against energetic povrety, Plaza dos de mayo, madrid, October 2016: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7u9FyhjfEDg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7u9FyhjfEDg).
was able to lead the opposition to Francoism. From the point of view of the sector related to Iglesias, Podemos must recover this spirit to prevent the Government of Mariano Rajoy managing to return to political normality. Podemos must lead the opposition in the street to maintain and make visible the situation of exceptionality and of social emergency. In this logic, Iglesias relies on the activists of the organización gathered in the Circles. The Circles are mainly composed by people over 55 years-old, their task can be understood as a kind of revival of the Transition.

From a theoretical point of view, the decisive point that differentiates Pablo Iglesias and ÍñigoErrejón is the importance distinction in the definition they each give to the concept of interest. An exchange of tweets between Errejón and Monedero is very indicative of this difference:

- Íñigo Errejón tweets : A political subject is not constructed by « social interests » but by identities: shared myths and narratives and horizons.
- Juan Carlos Monedero replies: @ierrejon sums up our debate. But if reality is only one more data: why do we nowadays understand Espartaco?
- Íñigo Errejón: We must continue this debate. Book a date.

This exchange of tweets reveals one of the most important points to understand on what the controversy about how to create a new political identity is based. The question of « social interests » concerns the scope of the performative capacity of the discourse. Juan Carlos Monedero analytically opposes the notion of « social interest » (derived from material conditions) to the notion of
« demand » defended by Íñigo Errejón (as formulated by Ernesto Laclau, whose meaning, character and existence are not determined by the materiality of the reality).

The central point of the debate consists of elucidating what Podemos should do in order to create a new political identity: articulating this new identity around the « people » (as opposed to the « elite ») to incorporate within this identity space the greater number of social interests embodied in organizations, groups and civil society figures; or if, on the contrary, is denied the political relevance of the interests apart from their discursive elaboration and if Podemos should instead bet on the creation of a political identification that, through projection in stories, tales, confers a meaning to diffused and little articulated discontents. It is therefore a matter of knowing if the function of discourse is secondary and presents an eminently aggregative character (of concrete positions and interests); or whether, on the opposite, the function of the discourse is primary and its most prominent feature is to operate as an « inscription surface » of demands.

This debate also concerns the role of affects in politics. Neither sector disdains the value of the affects in the construction of political subjects. However, while Iglesias' position defends that, despite the importance of the affects, we shouldn't underestimate the thought and the rationality when trying to recognize the truth in the own interests and the authenticity of the point of view of the enunciator (Fernandez-Liria, 2016); the position of Errejón emphasizes the sentimental and affective component in the establishment of political identities. According to him, the political identification occurs through the projection of feelings in the imagination and its expression in a story, a tale (Errejón, Mouffe, 2015)

The speech as a glue of social interests already constituted

In this fundamental debate (whose consequences are perceptible in the day-to-day communication of Podemos), the position that Pablo Iglesias Turrión leads is based on multiple and varied reflections. Among them, the contributions of Manuel Monereo, Juan Carlos Monedero and, more recently, Luis Juberías, Laura Arroyo, Beto Vázquez, Pedro Antonio Honrubia Hurtado. This sector has numerous internal supports, among them the Secretary of Organization, Pablo Echenique, the Secretary of Relations with Civil Society, Rafael Mayoral, the Deputy Spokesman of the Unidos Podemos parliamentary group, Irene Montero, and numerous deputies and senators.

From this perspective, the discourse is something that comes later. It works as a glue to something that precedes it: social interests. Political identities then arise of this game between
discourse and interest, between narration and objective position. Consequently, if Podemos wants to
set up a new political identity it must attend to the social interests and thread them through words.
Stories and tales can only provoke political identification and affective projection if the discourse is
correlated to something else. This is the position that defends the sector of Podemos related to Pablo
Iglesias. As we shall see later, this point of view is constructed on a few classical teachings of
historical materialism.

From a theoretical point of view, the premises of this position are:

1. The discourse does not operate on something empty/on a gap
2. The discourse operates on a materially determined reality
3. This material reality gives rise to diverse social interests
4. Social interests are the basis of political identities

Regarding the first premise, Juan Carlos Monedero explains it as it follows: « constructing
the political pretending that discourses can invent reality quasi-absolutely is so unfortunate, in the
same way than those who deny the capacity of language to invent reality. The sign « Beware of the
dog » clearly works, but not always, not during a long time and not in any situation » (Monedero,
2016). Language only produces a long-term action (and not a mirage) when it is associated with the
plot of interests that constitutes reality.

The discourse produces effects on reality, but not in an indeterminate way, but conditioned
by facts; negotiating and adapting to them. Reality, as the second premise underlines, is materially
determined. At this point, the positions defended by this sector of Podemos is connected with
classic Marxism. The construction of new political identities must start from an earthly base. This
earthly basis is marked by the relationship between need and interest: the material constitution of
reality produces needs that create diverse, objective and conflicting social interests. Political
identifications emerge as an effect of this plot between need, interest and conflict. Therefore,
striving to build political identities without taking into account the material element as a necessary
condition would be a vain speculative exercise. A theory without any anchoring in reality fades as
soon as reality contradicts it.

A too « discursive » approach to political identities brings a collateral problem: it makes
political identifications something extremely fragile and flimsy. If the position defended by Pablo
Iglesias uses the notion of interest it is because it considers that this allows making political
identifications stronger. It allows words not to be carried away by the wind of political communication or the accelerated times of the mediated society. Or, to put it in another way: basing the new identities on the interests that arise from social conflict facilitates the duration of these affective projections. Hence the importance of the third and fourth premises.

From this point of view, the political subject that tries to construct Podemos is drawn from the social conflict and, in particular, from the positioning of the party within the social conflict. That is why the notion of interest is here fundamental: the support to social and collective groups in struggle becomes the driving force behind the new partisan identification. Manuel Monereo explains it clearly in a recent article: «Podemos pretends to construct a social and political subject placing itself at the center of the subaltern clases, the employees, the working classes, the self-employed, the peasants, to hunders of small and medium sized-enterprises, to the world of work in general. We are not neutral in the social conflict and we act as an «instance of part» (Monereo, 2016). Thus, according to this point of view, if Podemos manages to condense a new political identity, a long-term one, it will be explained because the party managed to connect with the social interests of those groups in conflict: managing to represent them and bring them together. The exchange of tweets between Errejón and Monedero reproduced previously is therefore very revealing of the position that defends this current of Podemos: only sharing interests (and assume their representation) can create solidarities through time. This is why the inks are charged against what is considered an excessive «theoreticism» of the populist hypothesis of Ernesto Laclau: is reproached a certain «idealism of the discourse». According to this current, the performative capacity of the discourse to create new political identities is conditioned by the concept of interest and by the position within the social conflicts.

The discourse as a seedbed of political identities

According to Íñigo Errejón, the central objective of the consolidation of a new political identity is not to reconstitute the unity of fragmented broken sectors but, in his proper words, to «construct the people». The people and the hegemony are not constructed «sociologically» as an expression of specific material interests, but symbolically by mobilizing collective emotions and common signifiers. Consequently, the key to build a new political subject is not to express, nor canalize, nor shape a political subject which would already be partially constructed: Podemos should construct a brand new one. This explains why, recently, in April 2016, Íñigo Errejón and the people affiliated to him multiplied the references to «We, the people» of the American revolution and, more generally, to all those moments of political exceptionality during which an heterogeneous
multitude named itself « the people » and gave themselves a new task and a new sense.

According to this sector, when Podemos speaks about « the people », it is not addressing itself to all the individuals, groups or organizations that have the feeling to be « left-wing », not even to all the people that reject the traditional political parties (nor all the people dissatisfied or indignants), but potentially to anyone who wants to change the state of things. In this mode of interpellation, the preceding labels do not count, if one identifies itself as progressive or conservative, what counts is if one intends to project a turning point.

According to this perspective, the political work of construction of a new popular identity must start from the fragmentation and the plurality of characteristic identifications of the postmodern world. To illustrate this starting point, Íñigo Errejón narrates the following anecdote: « A few weeks ago, I was in a supermarket and two workers came to talk to me separately. The first, encouraging me, asked me, when « we will have the power », not to forget the rights of animals, on whose legislation she had a profound knowledge. Shortly after, the butcher also encouraged me and told me we had to take care of Chueca, where he didn’t live but spent a lot of his time. In both cases, it was a widespread support expressed for Podemos, although I was surprised that neither of them made reference to their working conditions and that they expressed their demands in terms not reducible to a common issue or belonging » (Errejón, 2016).

From this point of view, it is not so much a question of calling, recognizing, naming or distinguishing interests that exist in the present but to project them in the future. In this case, the construction of a new political identity would not pass by the recognition of positions of subalternity in different domains and their subsequent linkage through discourse, but above all by the postulation of a common horizon. Or, to put it in another way: it is not so much about compiling a series of human rights in a petition but to create a framework of meaning in which can fit both 1) clearly formulated claims and more 2) diffused and abstract demands. In short, according to Errejón the identities do not have so much to do with the recognition but with the projection.

Thus, according to Íñigo Errejón, the construction of a popular subject does not have so much to do with collecting demands or groups in conflict, but with adding to them a symbolic surplus of meaning. Because exploitation, injustice or inequality are, in themselves, politically ineffective. Here is one of the great differences between classical Marxism and post-Marxism, between discourse theory and materialist position. In this text, Errejón explains it clearly taking up the example of the supermarket: « In the anecdote he used to illustrate it, the sympathy and the
possible vote for Podemos didn’t have so much to do with an utilitarian conception nor a mechanical translation of his working conditions to his political position but with […] a symbolic surplus which puts in common its unacknowledged claims and its general will for a «change», identified with the rebalancing of the social contract in favor of the citizens and not in favor of a small privileged minority» (Errejón, 2016).

Therefore, according to Errejón, Podemos tries to summon individuals to identify themselves with the position or interpretation of society carried and represented by Podemos, that they identify themselves with a general tale, that they feel called by and projected into a collective narrative. By its structure, this general identification encompasses a heterogeneous variety of particular positions.

It is then understood why, from this constructivist perspective of politics and identities, language (signifiers, metaphors, images) has a crucial importance. But the language is never understood as a translation of something else or as a costume. Íñigo Errejón likes to insist (in keeping with the positions of Hall, Du Gay and the Essex School) on the fact that it is impossible to understand the discourse of Podemos as a simple disguise that the classic left adopts in the twenty-first century to be in condition to seduce more and better. To summarize, it is not a change of look of the Left, but a discourse structured by an anti-elitist approach, this discourse changes the classical frames and produces poles of new political identifications.

In contrast with what we pointed in the previous section, the discourse is here not understood as a weaving thread that sews what was previously separated, but as a seed from which a new model appears. Therefore, it is not so much a question of mending what was damaged through an alliance that incorporates the multiplicity of the reality expressed in demands and claims carried by different collectives. The goal is not to open yourself to the street, to fill the place of the Congress or to be porous to society. Podemos as a new political subject and a new identity in progress is not a blank sheet in which each group can write its claims on, it is not a petition or enumeration: «if this were the way to build the «people», there would be too much enumerations of social pains and the unity to convert the discontent and the deprivation in a political subject would be impossible» (Íñigo Errejón, 2016).

On the contrary, according to Íñigo Errejón’s point of view, the political identity embodied by Podemos is a structure of different sense that largely operates through discourse and aspires to represent the general interest. This is why the metaphor of the weaving thread is not worth it and it
is neither worth using a « street » transmission belt with its various discontents. To summarize, the key concept to understanding the current divergences in Podemos is the concept of interest that ultimately refers to a different relationship to Marxism and post-Marxism between Pablo Iglesias and Íñigo Errejón.
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