RESEARCH ARTICLE

BACK TO THE ORIGIN?
Popular Sovereignty From French Revolution to Current Anti-Corruption Movements: the Spanish Case in Historical Perspective.

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ABSTRACT: Analyses of the Spanish mobilization cycle between 2011 and 2013 concur with considering the critiques of corruption (and the growing discredit of traditional parties), one of the two key factors that has been determining in the emergence of the *15-M* movement (the *Indignados*), the other being the economic crisis. This article investigates the link between anti-corruption from below and the claim for popular sovereignty in the Spanish case. In Spain movements' requests and discourses have found a clear translation on the electoral plan. Podemos, a party founded in 2014, considers itself the electoral expression of 15-M. For these reasons, the analysis focuses on Podemos and its anti-corruption discourse as well. The analysis is conducted in a historical perspective. Popular sovereignty has been the fundamental claim of the first social movements born in Europe in the second half of the eighteenth century. A historical comparison is carried out between the anti-corruption frames of democratic movements between 1760 and 1848 and the present ones, giving particular attention to their nexus with the claim for popular sovereignty.

KEYWORDS: Indignados; anti-austerity movements; Podemos; French revolution; popular sovereignty.

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1. Introduction

Analyzes of the Spanish mobilization cycle between 2011 and 2013 (Antentas 2015, Portos 2016, Flesher Fominaya and Cox 2013, Calvo and Alvarez 2015, della Porta 2015, Perugorria and Tejerina 2013, Castaneda 2012, Peterson *et al* 2015), concur with considering the critique of corruption (and the discredit of traditional parties) one of the two key factors that have been determining for the emergence of the *15-M* movement (*Indignados*), the other being the economic crisis.

Corruption *stricto sensu*, as a set of scandals involving politicians, and corruption *latu sensu*, the corruption of democracy itself, have been at the core of the discourses elaborated by 15-M, but more in general by European anti-austerity movements (della Porta 2015) and the movement parties that in several European countries are trying to gather the demands of these movements on the electoral ground (della Porta et al 2017).

In these social and electoral mobilizations moral dimension, political issues and socio-economic claims are joined in one key polarization and two fundamental demands. The key polarization is citizens vs. elites (Gerbaudo 2017, Aslanidis 2016). The two fundamental demands are the claim for popular sovereignty and the construction of a new social contract (Peterson et al 2015, Antentas 2015).

This article investigates the link between anti-corruption from below, the cleavage of citizens vs. elites and the claim for popular sovereignty, focusing on the Spanish case, but considering more in general its connections with current social movements and new forms of electoral mobilisation. In Spain movements' claims and discourses have found a clear translation on the electoral plan. Podemos, an outsider left-wing party founded in 2014, adopted the main expressive styles and claims of the 2011-2013 Spanish movements. For these reasons, our analysis will also focus on this party.

The analysis will be conducted in a perspective that so far has not been followed in relation to anti-austerity movements. A historical comparison will be carried out between the anti-corruption discourses and rhetoric of current movements and democratic movements between 1760 and 1848. The claim for popular sovereignty and blaming the elites for being corrupt were indeed fundamental features of the first social movements born in Europe in the second half of the eighteenth century (Tilly 2004, Rudbeck 2012, Mann 1993, Hobsbawm 1962, Tilly 1995, Cash 2006, Rudè 1995, Calhoun 2012, Bendix 1961 and 1984).

Three major episodes of political mobilization in 1760-1848 period - the Wilkites movement, the French Revolution and Chartism - will be analyzed in this perspective. The article will investigate if and to what extent their discourses, rhetoric and claims

are comparable to those of current anti-corruption and anti-austerity movements. These dimensions will be investigated by inquiring: 1) If movements' discourses and rhetoric revolve around a fundamental claim and a key polarization; 2) How the "Us" and "Them" at the center of this polarization are defined; 3) What role is played by anti-corruption issues in defining the two opposing collective actors.

As we shall see, this comparison not only refers to political and electoral mobilisation in Spain. Rhetoric and claims of Indignados, anti-austerity movements and new movement parties such as Podemos are widespread in many other contemporary social movements, such as local and community movements (Caruso 2010, Piazza and Sorci in this issue) or the ones defending public services and common goods (Carrozza and Fantini 2016, Cini 2017). Moreover, the citizens/elites polarization and the claim for popular sovereignty – the both often labeled as 'populism' - are fundamental elements of political struggle and electoral competition in current societies (Moffitt and Tormey 2014, Anselmi 2017, Mastropaolo 2012, Stavrakakis 2014).

The article is organized as follows. After contextualizing the historical emergence of social movements in XIX century, in Section 2 the main anti-corruption rhetoric frameworks in the Wilkites movement, the French Revolution and Chartism will be summarized. Section 3 outlines the anti-corruption discourses and rhetoric of Spanish movements and the major civic organizations working on the issue of corruption. Section 4 deals with Podemos' anti-corruption discourse. In section 5 the empirical findings of sections 3 and 4 will be compared to the historical anti-corruption and democratic frames discussed in section 2, to investigate the *longue durée* of the nexus between anti-corruption and the popular sovereignty claim.

The empirical analysis of the Spanish case is based on nine semi-structured interviews with members of the main Spanish anti-corruption movements and civic organisations (*X-Net, Fundaciòn Civio, Fundaciòn Hay Derecho*, Catalan Citizen Group against Corruption, *15MpaRato*) together with privileged witnesses[1]. It also includes the analysis of documents produced by those organisations. The analysis of Podemos' anti-corruption discourse is based on secondary sources and the empirical analysis of the following material: a) the books written by the Podemos' founders; B) their articles on newspapers in the March 2015-June 2017 period; C) the main public speeches by the party's leader Pablo Iglesias during the electoral campaigns and in Parliament; D) the party's manifesto for general elections.

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[1] See, at the end of the article, the full list of the interviewed.

2. The origin of social movements, the French Revolution, and the democratic cleavage: anti-corruption and popular sovereignty between 1760 and 1848.

There is a general consensus in locating the origin of social movements in the latter half of the eighteenth century (Rudbeck 2012, Tilly 2004, Tarrow 1998, Calhoun 2012). During the 1760s, with the rise of the Boston Tea Party in Usa and the Wilkites' struggle for civil liberties in England, protests began to crystallize into a new form of popular politics (Tilly 2004).

A central dimension in the historical emergence of social movements is the transition from predominance of reactive to predominance of proactive forms of collective action (Tilly 2004, 1975). This transition has also been defined by distinguishing pre-industrial and industrial forms of popular protest (Rude 2005). In reactive actions, "some group lays claim to a resource currently under the control of another particular group, and the members of the second group resist the exercise of the claim" (Tilly 1975, p. 250). Reactive actions comprehend tax rebellions, food riots, movements against conscription, and land occupations. These were the prevailing forms of action until XIX Century. They involved a mixed population that was termed 'lower orders' in England and *menu people* in France. In proactive actions, "a group lays claim to a resource over which it did not previously exercise control. Normally the group making new claims is relatively large, formally organized, and specialized" (Tilly 1975, p. 268). The transition from reactive to proactive actions not only regards claims and objectives, but also organizational and scale dimensions. In the age of prevalence of proactive forms of action, structured mass organizations at the national level were invented (Breuilly 1992, Tilly 1986, Rude 2005).

The rise of social movements as a specific form of political action was closely linked to a new interpretation of sovereignty that emerged within the eighteenth century: the claim for popular sovereignty as the legitimate source of political power. Historical periodizations always imply elements of arbitrariness: historical processes are not homogeneous, and the emergence of new forms of action is not linear nor continuous in time and space. In the historical period we want to compare with the current one, riots, anti-tax, anti-conscription conflicts and reactive actions do not disappear. However, historical studies (Rudbeck 2012, Mann 1993, Hobsbawm 1962, Cash 2006, Rudè 1995, Cole 1956, Calhoun 2012, Chevalier 1979, Cobb 1979, Bendix 1961 and 1984) show that in 1760-1848 period: 1) In the major episodes of collective mobilization, such as the French Revolution, Chartism and the revolutions of 1848, the claim for popular sovereignty emerged as the main claim and the general symbolic framework of collective actions; 2) In that historical phase, food riots, anti-tax and anti-conscription

mobilizations, as well as labour disputes, significantly connected with the claim for popular sovereignty and democracy. The political dimension constituted the general framework of social conflicts. *Democracy* was the general 'prophetic' framework to which movements and revolutions referred.

For these reasons, the 1760-1848 age may be defined as the *age of the democratic cleavage*. A new model of the democratic nation rose that included the recognition of human rights and political participation of all citizens (Livesey 2001). In that age: 1) The main mobilizing polarization was the one dividing popular sovereignty and traditional oligarchies, the latter identified with corruption and privilege. This main polarization was articulated in dichotomies such as virtue/corruption, old/new, workers/parasites (Bendix 1984, Dann and Dinwiddy 1988, Ozuf 1970). 2) Collective identities were based on the foundation of new political entities: the citizen, the nation, the people and the general will. These entities and subjectivities were considered as 'totalities': they evoked the politicization of the whole society but the elites of the old regimes. The prevailing composition of collective actors was based on cross-class coalitions among workers, peasants, middle classes and the bourgeoisie. The citizen was the general figure to which action was referred (Skocpol 1979, Hunt 1984, Mann 1983, Ozuf 1970, Moore 1966). 3) Yet structured ideologies unifying collective actors were to be built. Social movements and the French Revolution, however, were the fundamental premise for the emergence of ideology as a determining element of political struggle in contemporary societies. Symbolic and cultural nuclei were elaborated that in the following decades developed into nationalism, socialism and democratic liberalism (Rudè 1995, Steadman Jones 1983).

The age of the democratic cleavage was followed by the age of class cleavage (Bartolini 2000, Hobsbawm 2015, Calhoun 1982, Abramson 1971, Foster 1974, Fulchler 1991). Also this phase can be delimited by two symbolic dates: 1848 (the date of transition from one phase to another) and 1980 (the beginning of the decade when the political hegemony of neoliberalism was sanctioned). Between these two dates, 1968 should be pinpointed as a date that marks the emergence of new social movements and the decline in the quasi-monopoly of class paradigm in collective action. The period should therefore be defined as follows: 1848-(1968)-1980.

In the class cleavage age, differently from the previous one, the social dimension prevailed over the political one: politics was socially founded. The processes and conflicts within the socio-economic dimension prevailed in defining ideologies, collective identities, and the position of political actors in the political space (Merimann 1979, Thompson 2013). The class cleavage was not the only cleavage on which the constitution of new party systems was based, but it was the main one (Lipset and Rokkan 1967,

Allardt and Littunen 1964, Thompson 2013, Abramson 1971, Meir 1997, Daalder and Mair 1983).

The citizen was no more the general figure to which action was referred. The general figure of subjectivity was the worker. Differently from the citizen, it was not a 'total' figure, but a partial one. Partiality prevailed on totality: it means that collective actors and conflicts no more used to legitimate their action evoking 'total' entities; their legitimation relied upon the partial identity of workers and their specific interests (Chevalier 1979, Thompson 1978, Merimann 1979, Mann 1973). The class cleavage consists of the polarization between workers and entrepreneurs, counter-posing two social actors constituted within production processes. This contrast was not based – on the side of workers' movements – on the appeal to general and universal interests and entities such as the people, citizens, the nation and homeland. Universalism was not a value in itself, but it descended from the partial point of view of workers' interests: 'what is good for workers is good for the whole society' was the typical socialist attitude on the relationship between partiality and universality (Calhoun 1982, Kendall 1975, Briggs and Saville 1977).

The fundamental claim was no more popular sovereignty, but equality. Equality was not detached from citizenship and it included the claim for popular sovereignty, but social equality functioned as the general framework for the political ones (Thompson 2013, Thompson 1984, Katznelson and Zolberg 1986).

Ideology became in that period the essential element of political struggle and a fundamental mobilizing factor in itself: socialism was the general 'prophetic' framework to which movements and revolutions referred (Rudè 1995, Steadman Jones 1983, Skocpol 1979, Calhoun 1982) .

The macro-features of these two historical phases of social conflicts can be summarized as in the following table.

TAB 1

	Democratic cleavage, 1768-1848	Class cleavage, 1848-(1968)-1980
Main polarization	People/Old elites. Conflict is oriented more towards public authorities than towards social counterparts within production processes.	Workers/Entrepreneurs. Conflict is oriented more towards social counterparts within production processes than towards public authorities.

Main claim	Popular sovereignty	Social equality
Relationship between political and social dimension	Prevalence of the political	Prevalence of the social
Symbolic dimension of collective identities	Totality; General will	Partiality; Class interests
Historical actor	The citizen	The worker
Ideology	Transition phase (on the base of republican and democratic theories)	Socialism

2.1. The Wilkites, the French Revolution, Chartism and the polarization citizens vs elites

We now outline the discourses and rhetoric of three major episodes of political mobilization between 1760 and 1848, to show clearer and deeplier what is summarized in the Table: the Wilkites movement, considered the first European social movement in history (Rudbeck 2012, Tilly 2004); the French Revolution, which constitutes the founding event of contemporary politics; the Chartist movement, that is the first great national workers' movement in Europe.

The Wilkites movement, launched by the deputy John Wilkes, promoted civil liberties to Englishmen of *all classes*. In 1768 silk-weavers, sailors, coal-heavers, watermen, coopers, hatters, glass-grinders, sawyers, tailors, and other members of lower classes began to mobilize behind John Wilkes' campaign for civil rights, through a sustained campaign involving demonstrations, strikes, petitions, public meetings, and other forms of contentious performances (Cash 2006). What was new about the Radicalism of the Wilkites, and what distinguished it from previous debates over popular sovereignty, was the attempt to exercise pressure on political authority through extra-parliamentary associations and collective action (Rudé 1995; Brewer 1981; Tilly 1995, Dickinson 2002). The rise of the movement marked the beginning of a new phase in British politics where the notion of sovereignty was recast to embrace the idea of popular sovereignty, and the notion of the people was to include members of all classes (Tilly 1995; Cash 2006; Dew 2009).

The main adversaries the Wilkites identified were the corruption of MPs and the existing political system as a whole (Rudbeck 2012). The claim for civil rights was tied to the issue of equality: civil rights should have been extended to the people of all classes. In Wilkites' rhetoric, the people was constituted by all classes but the privileged and the corrupt: "The liberty of all peers and gentlemen, and of all the middling and inferior set of people, who stand most in need of protection, is in my case this day to be finally decided upon: a question of such importance as to determine at once, whether English liberty as a reality or a shadow" (Wilkes' speech in 1767, quoted in Rudbeck 2012, p. 595).

The strength and endurance of mobilization relied on the link between political and social claims, with the political ones functioning as the general framework in which social claims were included. Workers started to link their struggle for employment and better wages to Wilkes' campaign for political freedom. In March 1768, weavers protesting wage cuts paraded down Piccadilly distributing pamphlets proclaiming "Wilkes and Liberty".

In the first European social movement, therefore, a germinal form of class cleavage was comprehended in the demand for civil rights and political freedom, through the claim for the extension of both the perimeters of the legitimate political action (beyond the dominion of Parliament), and the boundaries of the relationship between society and politics.

The radical transformation of the relationship between society and politics was also at the core of the discourses and rhetoric of the French Revolution, formulated first by the *philosophes* and later by the revolutionary clubs and the Jacobin leaders. These actors elaborated what has been defined as the 'ideology of pure democracy' (Livesey 2001, Ozuf 1970, Rosanvallon 2008). Such as in the Wilikites, the pre-existing principle of sovereignty (previously linked to monarchy) was appropriated and turned into the principle of popular sovereignty through the introduction of the true invention of the Revolution: the principle of legitimacy (Dan and Dinwiddy 1988).

Between 1789 and 1793 the Jacobins invested some words of a sacred values: people, nation, homeland, virtue, constitution, law, regeneration, surveillance (Hunt 1984). These 'sacred words' defined: a) the polarization between the revolutionaries and the Ancient regime; b) the historical actors to which the revolutionary process was referred (the citizens and the people); and c) the global transformation the revolution was supposed to imply (Doyle 1980, Rosanvallon 2008, Skocpol 1979, Blanchard 1980).

These words defined a «New Nation» that had to be found by a «New Man». Individuals as well as the national community should have been regenerated. The antagonists of this processes were the classes and groups that the revolutionaries considered

the opponents of the new Nation-People: the Ancient regime, the crown, the Versailles court, clergy, and aristocracy. Corruption, privilege and parasitism were the main words to which old powers and classes were associated (Ozuf 1970).

These were the fundamental dichotomies on which the Jacobin discourse was based: virtue against corruption; work against parasitism; the people against the corrupt circle of the Court and the Crown; the constitution, law and rights against the arbitrary power; the truth against superstition and falsehood; publicity and transparency against the opaqueness of corrupt plots by traditional elites; the new against the old (Blanchard 1980). On the one side the patriots, on the other the traitors of homeland. On the one side the New, on the other the dying and corrupt Old.

French revolutionaries multiplied the places, forms and meanings of politics, brushing against a pan-political conception of society. All spheres of collective and individual life should have been founded on moral principles and deeply subverted by this foundation (Doyle 1980, Arendt 1963, Cobb 1979). Despite this pan-political conception, the revolutionary mobilization arose from a deep distrust towards everything that was explicitly political. The term *anti-politics* was invented during the French revolution (Hunt 1984, Viola 1993 and 2000): it was for the first time used by the Jacobin club in Aix-en-Provence, the C*ercle des antipolitiques*. Revolutionary leaders never defined themselves as politicians and they thought professional politics was unnecessary. Jacobins thought representation and politics were necessary only in corrupt societies. If all men were virtuous a republic of virtue would have been built.

The French revolution was "a hypertrophy of principles against corruption" (Viola 2000: 159). It was divided between the utopia of a society free from politics on one hand and a hyper-political militant practice on the other. Jacobins appealed to an uncorrupted working people to re-found the rules of participation in the national community. Rulers and ruled had to be put in contact as much as possible. Corruption was so much rooted in the Ancient regime society that it had to be eradicated not only from government and the state, but also from everyday life. In this way politics, denied as a separate dimension of society, tended to expand to the whole society (Hunt 1994). The one between antipolitics and hyperpolitics was the first dialectical tension of Jacobin politics.

The second dialectical tension was the one between partiality and totality. Jacobins invented the germinal model for the contemporary forms of political organization – the mass party – but they strongly opposed partiality - that is factions - and the politicization of specific interests. They also opposed any kind of intermediation between the *Convention nationale* and «the people» (Rosanvallon 2008). The relationship between these two poles (representation and the whole citizenship) had to be direct, to avoid

that any intermediate body could lead to the dominion of factions that was typical of the Ancient regime (Mann 1993).

Jacobins' politics was a factionist politics, based on a 'spirit of scission' from traditional classes: it was therefore a form of partiality based on strong polarizations. For this reason, Hunt (1994) defines the Jacobin political discourse as a «class struggle discourse without class»: the revolutionary action wasn't attributed to a specific social class. Despite it was a form of politics based on partiality and a strong Us/Them opposition, Jacobins used to speak only in the name of Totalities: the people, the nation, homeland, and the community, all intended as undivided wholes (Ozuf 1970, Blanchard 1980). Nevertheless, the essence of the cleavage between New Nation and Old regime was anti-seigneurialism, the opposition to a specific class, aristocracy, and to what it represented, that is corruption and privilege. Moreover, the word *egalité* tended to define political equality as the premise for social equality (Rosanvallon 2008, Arendt 1963).

This link between the two dimensions of equality was then extended by social movements and revolutions in the following decades.

Let us move to discussing the third historical moment: Chartism. Chartism was a campaign for democratic rights which developed in England between 1830 and 1850. In 1842 the National Charter Association (NCA) had 50,000 members in 400 local clubs. Militants repeatedly brought out large demonstrations of between 4,000 and 70,000 persons in several cities at once. The 1842 strike was the largest and most general in nineteenth century Britain (Mann 1993). Chartism was a cross-class coalition, but the vast bulk were workers: shoemakers, carpenters, tailors, stonemasons, hatters, carvers, gilders, cotton spinners, dyers, construction workers, and engineers (Sykes 1982). In London, during the 1830s, almost all trade unions federated into Chartist organizations (Calhoun 1982).

Chartism was formed around a single issue, democracy for adult males, and a single document, the Charter. For this reason, it has been defined a mass platform for democratic change (Epstein and Thompson 1982), through which workers demanded an end to the concentration of political and economic power which denied them bargaining rights (Rogers 1987). The six points of the Charter demanded universal male suffrage, annual parliaments, a secret ballot, no property qualifications for MPs, equal parliamentary constituencies, and payment for MPs. Many Chartists also supported woman suffrage. All six points stated the end of MPs' corruption as one of their main arguments.

Chartism often stressed the *political* origin of oppression and at the same time did represent a critique of capitalism. Workers' strikes and actions of course originated

form socio-economic claims, but these claims were connected to the general framework of citizenship and popular sovereignty. Roberts (2001) defined the Chartist discourse as a populist appeal juxtaposing 'the people' (the productive classes) against the privileged minority monopolizing political power. Steadman Jones (1983) argues that the language of Chartism bound up more with the political terms 'represented' and 'unrepresented' than with class based terms such as 'employer' and 'employed'. The new entrepreneurial class was mainly located within the ambit of privilege as "millocrat", "cottonloard", and "steam aristocracy".

This univocal interpretation has been contested (Rogers 1987, Epstein and Thompson 1982, Roberts 2001). The 'populist' counterposition of 'the people' and 'the privileged' was a general framework including class claims and a germinal class rhetoric. The state was also intended by Chartists as a naked instrument of class oppression, and democracy was linked to a more forthright condemnation of employer exploitation. The movement urged progressive taxation, reform of the Poor Law, fewer local governments and police powers, a 'ten hours' act, and mutualist protection against 'wage slavery', including union organizing rights. Without defining themselves socialists, Chartist leaders "thundered against capitalist employers as traffickers in human blood and in infant gristle, and they divided society just in two classes – the rich oppressors and the poor oppressed" (Thompson 1984: 251). They railed both against "old corruption" and "class legislation", linking anti-corruption and anti-capitalist claims and rhetoric, and combining political objectives and mutualist economic goals.

In such outline of the rhetoric and claims of these three major episodes of 1760-1848 political mobilization, the following points emerge: 1) In that age, popular sovereignty was the main claim of social movements and political mobilizations; 2) The polarization on which this claim was based was citizens vs. old elites; social conflicts were widely referred to this key polarization; 3) The blaming of old elites for being corrupt played a fundamental role both as a mobilizing factor and as a basis for the symbolic elaboration of the Us/Them polarization.

Based on this historical outline, we can now proceed to compare current movements in Spain with the ones analyzed above.

3. Anti-corruption and popular sovereignty in Spanish movements and civic organizations

Since 2011, Spain has witnessed a long-lasting wave of anti-austerity protests. The *Indignados* became visible on 15th of May 2011 with demonstrations in about 58 cities

across the country. The Spanish cycle of mobilization continued in the following years with the *Mareas*, protests against the reduction of health and education sectors' public funding, and with the PAH, the Platform of People Affected by Mortgage, an anti-eviction movement founded in Barcelona in 2009.

The electoral outcomes of protests in Spain took various forms. At the national level, in January 2014 activists formed Podemos, a new outsider party. Podemos received 8% of votes in Europe elections, an average of 14% in 2015 regional elections, 20.7% in the December 2015 national elections, and 21.2% (in coalition with *Izquierda Unida*) in those of 2016. At the regional level, in 2015, different coalitions of grassroots political actors gave birth to new left-wing political coalitions such as *En Marea* in Galicia and *En Comù Podem* in Catalunya, that participated with Podemos in the 2015 regional elections; finally, and at the municipal level, between 2013 and 2015 activists created dozens of new political movements, around which they built successful electoral coalitions in cooperation with Podemos, that lead to the election of mayors and hundreds of municipal councilors in the main Spanish cities, such as Madrid and Barcelona.

Surveys and interviews with citizens taking part in 2011-2013 mobilizations single out political corruption as one of the main social problems that brought them into the streets (Calvo and Alvarez 2011). A relevant aspect was the emergence of several important corruption scandals. From 2010 the unfolding of corruption scandals led to a dramatic increase in the perception of corruption as being a generalized problem amongst political leaders (Anduiza et al 2014) who were also considered incapable of managing the economic crisis. The two elements combined functioned as a catalyst for mobilizations (Lobera 2015, Subirats 2015). According to recent surveys, Spanish citizens still consider corruption as the second major problem in their country, just preceded by unemployment (CIS 2017[2]).

The slogan "we are not commodities in the hands of politicians and bankers" was linked to the denunciation of the corruption of representative democracy (Perugorría and Tejerina 2014). This link was effective in the whole anti-austerity mobilization cycle. Della Porta (2015) argues that in anti-austerity movements the *corruption* of representative institutions is mainly to be blamed. Beginning with Iceland in 2008, and then in Egypt, Tunisia, Spain, Greece, and Portugal, outrage grew around the corruption of the political class, movements condemned bribes, called for the dismissal of corrupt people from public institutions, privileges granted to lobbies and collusion of interests between public institutions and economic (often financial) powers. Much of the re-

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[2] Avaliable at:
http://www.cis.es/cis/export/sites/default/Archivos/Marginales/3160_3179/3170/es3170mar.pdf

sponsibility for the economic crisis, and the inability to manage it, was attributed to these forms of corruption. These negative views on those in power are reflected by very low levels of trust in the institutions of representative democracy. The corruption of an entire political class is conceived as the mechanism through which the profits of the few prevailed over the need – the very human rights – of the many.

In Spain, the connections between politicians and bankers were at the center of the collective action frame that emerged during anti-austerity protests. This connection is traced by a former 15-M activist, now elected as a regional MP with Podemos:

> Within the 15M we have analyzed corruption as an economic and social phenomenon. Of course, we have also shown great adversity to political parties, but we especially stressed that corruption is linked to all major economic and social problems of Spain: the role of banks, real estate and land speculation (and thus, indirectly, the housing and evictions crises, linked precisely to the speculation of real estate companies and banks), the Spanish development model, and the relations between parties and economic centers of power (IS8).

15-M activists constituted in 2011 a thematic group concerning transparency and corruption. This group gathered information on the main national corruption scandals. Within this thematic group a sub-group, "15MpaRato" , was created and devoted to in-depth analysis of the scandal involving Bankia and Caja Madrid's former president, Rodrigo Rato[3]. In Spain common citizens and groups can directly call for judicial inquiries even if they are not directly affected by the denounced facts. The juridical device that makes these initiatives possible is called "*querella*". It is to this device itself that *15MpaRato* resorted, denouncing Rodrigo Rato to public authorities.

As it is clear in the following public statement, the collective action frames of *15-M PaRato* created a strong polarization between the political-financial elites and common people affected by the economic crisis, the latter defined as 'we the people' and 'those who live in the bottom':

> Banks are going on getting richer with our money, our work, our efforts.
> No one of those who has been governing us will demand Rato for the dispossessions he committed, while in the same moment there are people in jail just for having tried to escape form a life in slavery.

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[3] Caja Madrid is one of the major Spanish banks. Together with other banks in the country, it created in 2011 a new bank, Bankia. Bankia was immediately listed on the stock market. To make this possible the budget was falsified, and the national government had to financially support the new institute.

> But now we the people can demand for responsibilities, we now have the online in-struments to uncover their bank accounts, their dirty clothes, to discredit and pursue them until they have no more place to hide.
>
> In the war between those who live at the bottom and those who live at the top, fear has changed side. Now we point at the targets.[4]

Economic crisis, social crisis, real estate bubbles, deregulation in urban planning, pol-itics-business interlinks and opposition between a minority holding privileges and the majority living with difficulties: all these issues in the *15MpaRato* collective action frames are related to elites' corruption. The "We" to which action is referred is "we the people". The most important organization within *15MpaRato* and in several other anti-corruption actions throughout Spain is X-Net, an association based in Barcelona. Broad participation and the organization of actions directly carried out by ordinary citizens are the main aspects that characterize the X-Net collective action frame.

We must distinguish the anti-corruption frames elaborated in social movement con-texts and those elaborated by other civil society organizations, such as NGOs and Foundations. Among the latter, the most active in Spain are *Mas Democracia* (More Democracy), *Fundaciòn Civio*, *Fundacion Hay Derecho* (Foundation There is Law), and Transparency International-Spain. In the latter the link between corruption, economic and social issues is lacking or weakly developed. A manager of *Fundación Civio*, entre-preneur and former activist of 15-M in Madrid, summarizes this difference:

> In Spain, I would say that there are basically two frames related to the analysis of corrup-tion. The first might be called the "left-wing approach from below", like that of 15-M or Podemos. It mainly insists on the issue of inequality and tends to define corruption as a mechanism that comes from the fact that political power is subservient to economic power. I do not share this kind of analysis. The other approach could be defined as liber-al, as it identifies the problem in an amalgamation of political parties and public admin-istration, in other words, in the insufficient separation of powers and in the distortions found in market competition. According to this analysis, corruption can be opposed through public administration reforms, the liberalization of economic processes and the increase in competition among private actors (IS3).

According to a manager of *Fundación Hay Derecho*:

> In Spain, the main source of corruption is the patronage of traditional parties, with all the economic distortions that it causes, and the plots between parties and firms for the

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[4] Public note published on 15 May 2012. Available at: https://15mparato.wordpress.com.

assignment of public works and infrastructures. Political parties and particularly the two major parties of Spain, the PP and the PSOE, are the central problem of corruption (IS4).

The prevailing interpretation by social movement organizations is that there is a close relationship between corruption, social inequality, and the politics-economy interrelationship, considering the power of the private sphere on politics the main origin of corruption. On the contrary, the more liberal frame is limited to the legal-juridical dimensions of corruption, and it attributes the responsibilities of corruption cases more to political than to economic elites. These two approaches are symmetrically distributed among the two new national Spanish parties that gained electoral consent since 2014 by presenting themselves as anti-corruption forces aiming at regenerating Spanish democracy: the first type of frame was embraced by *Podemos*, while the liberal one by *Ciudadanos*[5].

Spanish anti-corruption movements and organizations resort to a wide range of repertoires and strategies: a) investigative reports and studies on single corruption episodes or on the phenomenon of corruption at the national level; b) the diffusion of these reports and studies through traditional and digital media; c) the support – from a juridical, media and strategic point of view - to single citizens and local groups who aim to denounce corruption cases; c) the direct launching of juridical inquiries; d) the interaction with left-wing local and regional governments to implement anti-corruption policies.

Organizations such as X-Net, the Catalonia's Citizen Group against Corruption (pursed and coordinated by X-Net itself, among others), and *Civio*, aim to be a point of reference for local groups and citizen organizations that attempt to denounce corruption episodes at the local, regional or national level, as this member of *Civio* claims:

> We want to make sure that institutions are transparent for citizens, so we want to be intermediaries between citizens and institutions, giving more power to citizens to obtain information on public action and to dauntlessly denounce what is not working in it. Up to this moment we have acted mainly as an information channel, requesting that certain information and processes become transparent to citizens, but now we also want to begin pursuing direct legal initiatives such as querellas (IS4).

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[5] Ciudadanos is a Catalan party founded in 2005 mainly by former members of the Popular Party. It acquired a national dimension just in 2014, with the explicit objective of contending to Podemos the monopoly of 'democratic regeneration' from a liberal perspective. Currently it supports in the national Parliament the right-wing government leaded by Mariano Rahoy.

Anti-corruption actions are therefore thought also as a form of prefigurative politics outlining a new form of participation of (all) citizens to the political community, and new forms of relationships between institutions and citizens.

> During the last three years, we have collected 1,800 issues raised by citizens, based on which we have asked the competent institutions: these were requests for information related in particular to specific public actions - above all calls for tenders and public announcements -, to the quality and correctness of public communication and to the relationship between public powers and private firms (IS4)

As it is stated by a neo-MP and former judge, these activities and approaches are also made possible thanks to the marked and widespread sensitivity to corruption that became pervasive in Spanish society since 2011:

> There are many organizations in Spain working on the issue of corruption. But this fact is much more transversal. The phenomenon affects many citizens in general, because corruption is still the central theme in Spanish politics, and citizens may take action alone or in small groups to make complaints, initiatives, or to report cases of corruption that happens in their local context. My phone rings all day, and they are just citizens who speak to me about the things I just said (IS6)

Social movement organizations and Foundations also establish relationships with public institutions and parties. Actors such as X-Net and 15MpaRato tend to favor relations with new political parties and movements born after the 2011-2013 protests cycle, as well as with local institutions guided by these new forces. Structured Foundations establish relationships with all political parties and mainly act at the national level, defining themselves as interest groups who put pressure on politicians by advancing legislative proposals on transparency and corruption.

As for the relationship with local institutions, social movement organizations also directly participate in formulation of public policies on corruption and transparency. This happens through the constitution of special forms of coordination between civil society organizations and institutional representatives. The most interesting case is that of Barcelona administration. In 2015, a leftist coalition constituted by Podemos and a Catalan political movement, led by the former spokeswoman of PAH Ada Colau, won Barcelona's local elections. The new administration constituted a specific administrative structure to work on corruption and transparency. It opened a direct channel of communication with citizens, trained public officials on these issues, and became responsible for the transparent management of calls for tenders and public announce-

ments. Moreover it created a register of all private companies working with the administration. As a part of this administrative structure, it set up a Consulting Council for Transparency including representatives of institutions and civil society organizations, that develops law proposals for the administration. This is a context of close cooperation between public institutions and social movement organizations.

Activists of anti-corruption organizations and movements consider that the main goal they have reached is a deep change in citizens' perception of corruption, and the effects this change has had on the political system at the local, regional and national level, enabling the birth of new political actors who eroded the consent of traditional parties. Some anti-corruption activists are critical toward these new political parties and fear they may limit the movements' autonomy. However, many former activists become party members and have been elected in city councils, regional parliaments and the National Congress.

4. Podemos, anti-corruption, and the claim for popular sovereignty

Together with social themes and economic issues, corruption plays a major role in Podemos' political discourse. To better focus on the anti-corruption stances of the party, the main elements of its general political discourse must be outlined.
Podemos aims at removing the cultural hegemony that the traditional Spanish parties – PP and PSOE – built by appropriating major signifiers such as homeland and democracy (Martin 2015). The party wants to establish a new meaning to these words by linking them to social rights, transparency and active participation. The party redefines the terms of political conflict along alternative lines to the right-left dichotomy: people-privileged minorities; low-high; democracy-oligarchy; social majority-elite; new politics-old politics; change-continuity (Sampedro 2015, Caruso 2017, Rodríguez-Teruel, Barrio, and Barberà 2016, Ramiro and Gomez 2016). All these antinomies refer to a border separating the ruled majority from the ruling minority, common people from power, workers from privilege, outlining two forms of representation and power management (new-old; change-continuity; democracy-oligarchy):

> *What we proposed when we were born was that we needed a political force which was not so concerned about etiquettes, neither left nor right, but by life and people's problems. When somebody's electricity is cut off they are not asked what party they vote for. When a person can bring their money to Panama in an offshore account, they are not asked whether they are right or left wing. The main problems of the country are best un-*

> *derstood on the basis of the logic of élite/common people and privileged people/workers* (I. Montero, interviewed by Huffington Post, 11/5/2017)[6]

Which actors do "Us" and "Them" refer to? "Them" is a wealthy, irresponsible and corrupt group within the elite. Spain's main problems are attributed to this elitist nucleus:

> The problem of this country is the caste, the institutionalized corruption, it is the companies of Ibex 35 which increase their profits by 67% and go to fiscal havens, while 1 out of 4 of our fellow citizens are poor, we are the European silver medal in children's malnutrition, workers' salaries have gone down by 10%, we have 6 million unemployed, 800.000 families do not receive any social service, while European parliamentarians travel in business class and earn 8000 euros. (Pablo Iglesias at European elections speech)[7].

The elites are blamed for the impoverishment of vast sectors of the population following the economic crisis, the social services' cut and the precarisation of labour. The minority of minorities, the 1% and its political allies (or executors), is therefore described as anti-systemic.

> They are the ones who are breaking Spain, they are anti-system. With their policies of cuts and austerity, it is them who divided Spain in two: those who get wealthier with the crisis and those who are impoverished by the crisis, those who are above and those who are below (P. Iglesias, public meeting in Puerta del Sol, 31-1-2015)

Podemos' anti-elite discourse also resorts to patriotism. The reference to homeland can be explained by the fracture lines which characterise the party's general discourse (low/high, majority/minority, people/elite). An antithesis is drawn between patriots and traitors. The first are those who can be assigned to the first side of the dichotomies (low-majority-common people) while the traitors are those against whom Podemos turns the accusation of being anti-system.

> The right to have schools and hospitals cannot be sold, sovereignty cannot be sold, our country is not a brand, our country is the people, they wanted to humiliate our country with austerity. Homeland is this community which assures that all citizens are protected, that respects national diversity, that ensures that all children, whatever be their skin colour, are well dressed and go to public school, that sick people are cured in the

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[6] *http://www.huffingtonpost.es/2016/05/10/entrevista-irene-montero-podemos_n_9882446.html).*
[7] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tyb4ovnwr4g

best hospitals with the best treatments . A country where nobody is left out, no one is left without heating, no one without a roof. [8]

This is a progressive interpretation of the idea of homeland, inspired by the Latin American model. Podemos, indeed, also constitutes an attempt to translate political experiences such as the ones of Chavez in Venezuela, Morales in Bolivia and Correa in Ecuador into the Spanish context (Schavelzon 2015). These three political trajectories share the precondition of intense, broad and long-lasting collective mobilization cycles, intervening in a crisis of state authority and contributing to accelerate and deepen it. According to the founders of Podemos (Errejon 2015), left-wing leaders of Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador have not won elections insisting on traditional dichotomies such as right/left and capital/labor, but by appropriating the symbolic value of signifiers such as 'homeland', 'the nation' and 'the people' in order to give representation to needs and demands regarding the majority of the population, through communication strategies aiming at redefining the frontiers of political antagonism on lines different from those characterizing traditional cleavages (Caruso 2017).

Homeland is identified with rights, the protection of citizens by the welfare state, the presence of universalistic public services and the community of citizens who need these to be guaranteed. According to Podemos it is possible to talk about homeland and democracy only if social rights are ensured to the entire population and the elites manage public policy with transparency (Rodríguez-Teruel, Barrio, and Barberà 2016). The elites that break this social pact with their population are not democratic and can be blamed as 'corrupt': "This is the problem of our country: an economic caste governing without participating in the elections. Corruption is this, it is a form of government" (P. Iglesias, public speech in Almeria, 17/5/2014).

In the speech[9] formulated by Podemos' leader Pablo Iglesias in Parliament during the failed process of investiture of PP Prime Minister Marano Rajoy, in August 2016, in explaining his vote against Rajoy, he stated: a) "We won't vote for you because you won't fight corruption, and you will not fight it because you *are* corruption"; b) " we won't vote for you because while thousands of people dropped out of the middle class because of your neoliberal politics, others became rich"; c) "We are not voting for you because Ibex 35[10] governs through you" ; d) "You speak of sovereignty, but you have handed 'the right to decide' over to Merkel and the financial powers". These four points are closely interconnected. The underlying question is towards which social actors

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[8] Full speech available at : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b4WoMdxJUwc
[9] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMHodFJgK7Q.
[10] Ibex 35 is the stock market index of Spanish companies with the highest capitalization.

elected government officials are considered to be responsible. That is, who forms their constituency and in front of whom do they aim at being accountable. This entails determining where political legitimacy resides:

> Some, even in the left, for a long time believed that respectability in politics was obtained when the powerful recognizes you. Surely, Mr. Rajoy, if today we voted for you the members of Ibex 35 would stop considering us like dangerous populists and would order us to receive a better treatment. But we are not like that. We cannot be bought; we cannot give in to the pressure of the powerful and their employees. To deserve the hate of those who poison the people is better than to deserve their honours. In politics, respectability is not earned by doing what pleases the rich, but by being able to look at one's people in the face and say "I am here thanks to you and for you" (P. Iglesias, speech in Parliament during the Mariano Rahoy's government failed investiture, 31-8-2016)[11]

Hence, corruption, democracy and inequality are fully coupled. The corrupt politicians, the corrupters bankers, financiers, rentiers, entrepreneurs, the rich people investing their money in tax havens: all these elites are fostering inequalities and are blamed by Podemos as anti-patriots, while patriots are all the people that do not count on big money to live. Consequently, as the manifesto Podemos presented in the 2015 and 2016 national elections establishes, the main anti-corruption proposals by Podemos do not concern only the legal dimension and the reform of political parties' internal functioning and funding, but the whole relationship between institutions and society, as well as a deep change in the economic and social policies.

At the end of 2016 Podemos began defining as "The Plot" (*La Trama*) the Spanish elites. In 2016 and 2017 the party developed a communication campaign and a political initiative on this topic. This campaign culminated in the motion of mistrust to government (*mociòn de censura*) submitted by Podemos in Parliament in June 2017. The use of the concept of *Trama* has further strengthened the weight attributed to private oligarchies in the processes of corruption of democracy:

> The plot is the power block, the set of relationships that explain who commands this country. After privatizing the public, they are selling what was left to foreign investment funds, continuing with a habitual practice that is parasitic to the state institutions. The plot is what allows parasitizing education, parasitizing health, parasitizing security forces, parasitizing the Bank of Spain, which are institutions that have to work in favor of citizens and are now perverted in favor of the interests of a minority. We are talking about those who command, in many cases, without running for election. There are forms of illegal

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[11] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMHodFJgK7Q.

corruption and forms of legal corruption (P. Iglesias, interview with cuartopoder.es, 20/4/2017[12]).

The issue of corruption, that was crucial in the phase of Podemos' irruption into Spanish political system, remains a core issue for the party in its consolidation phase as well.

5. Discussion: popular sovereignty in 1760-1848, current social movements and Podemos

We can now summarize the main elements emerging in the analysis of anti-corruption frames in Spanish movements and their main electoral expression, Podemos. This is possible by following the scheme set in the introduction: 1) The definition of a fundamental claim and a key polarization in movements' discourses and rhetoric; 2) The way in which the "We" and "Them" at the center of this polarization are defined; 3) The role played by anti-corruption issues in defining the two opposite coalitions.

1) Points 1 and 3 are strictly interwoven. According to Spanish movements and Podemos' discourse, corruption of democracy implies a substitution in source of political legitimacy: it moves from popular sovereignty to patronage networks, corporate and financial interests and eventually supranational powers.

The key issue is where sovereignty and legitimacy reside. Public powers are denounced as illegitimate for their subordination to non-democratic powers. The corruption of democracy consists of decoupling the political decision from public control, publicity and accountability, and in its unresponsiveness towards popular will and needs. The reconstruction of popular sovereignty through political reforms and in a more general view through completely renewed forms of relationship between politics and society, is the main claim of Spanish anti-corruption movements and Podemos.

The key polarization they establish is comprised of citizens vs. corrupt elites. The causal series of distortions and injustices attributed to the adversaries is the following: block of power-corruption and corruption of democracy-oligarchic dominion by the privileged-breaking of the social contract by the elites-illegitimacy of power-necessity

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[12] Available at: https://www.cuartopoder.es/espana/2017/04/20/iglesias-lo-que-ha-ocurrido-con-ignacio-gonzalez-es-la-perfecta-representacion-de-la-trama/

to reinvent politics by reaffirming popular sovereignty and building a new social contract.

Movements and Podemos' discourses on these issues strictly evoke the rhetoric of Wilkites, French revolutionaries and Chartism. The cleavage between "the people" (the citizens) and "the élites" becomes – as it was in the 1760-1848 period - the key polarization, currently setting the foundation for mass protest. The actors of protests attribute to themselves a substitutive and alternative legitimacy to that of public institutions and official political actors. They challenge their rivals' right to speak in the name of the general interest, legality, democracy, and the nation. To this end, fight against corruption of democracy is elaborated on a symbolic level by producing a set of polarizations: virtuous citizens/corrupt elite; democracy/oligarchy; below/above; new/old; producers/parasites; work/privilege. These polarizations are analogous to those emerged by highlighting the anti-corruption and democratic frameworks of the 1760-1848 movements: Spanish anti-corruption movements and Podemos rediscover the 'sacred words' of French Revolution, people, nation, homeland, transparency, regeneration, and surveillance.

Of course, the meaning of these concepts and principles does not remain unchanged during the centuries. However by analyzing the discourses, rhetoric and claims of 1760-1848 mobilizations and the current ones, we have been able to observe that the use collective actors make of these 'sacred words' is highly comparable: in both cases, *the people* is understood as all-the-citizens except for old elites; *nation* and *homeland* constitute the political entities that 'the people' is historically summoned to build through the acquisition of popular sovereignty; they also represent the domain in which the frontier Us/Them is established (members/enemies of the nation, patriots/traitors of homeland) and where solidarity ties and collective belongings are placed; *transparency*, *regeneration*, and *surveillance* are analogously inflected to define the terms of revolutionizing the relationship between politics and society, that is between all-the-citizens and deeply reformed institutions.

2) Who are "Them"? Corruption is ascribed to a unified elite including the traditional actors of the political system and their economic allies - big corporations, banks, and haute finance. This interconnection between public and private powers is summarized in the word 'elites' by movements and civic organizations and in the word '*Trama*' by Podemos.

Traditional parties, long-time political professionals, and big financial institutions currently play the same symbolic function that was played in 1760-1848 by the Crown, the Court, nobility and clergy. Corruption, privilege and parasitism are ascribed to cur-

rent elites in the same way they were attributed to the Ancient regime and traditional oligarchies in the age of the democratic cleavage.

This attitude towards the elites, and particularly the political ones, is generalizable beyond anti-corruption movements and organizations. They also concern all main Spanish movements since 2011 (Antentas 2015; Calvo 2013; Flesher Fominaya and Cox 2013a; Errejon 2015, Portos 2016), and the *Occupy* movements (Halvorsen 2012; Howard and Pratt-Boyden 2013). Even more in general, such attitudes are widespread in the main contemporary social movements, such as local and community movements fighting against big infrastructural projects (della Porta and Piazza 2008, Caruso 2010) or the ones defending public services and common goods (Carrozza and Fantini 2016; Caruso 2013; Cini 2017).

Who constitutes, on the other side, the "We"? Who is the historical actor to which action is attributed? Movements and Podemos refer their action to *the citizen*, the same historical actor of the 1760-1848 age. The new centrality of the figure of the *citoyen* deserves special attention. Once again, it doesn't concern only the movements and the party we are analyzing in this article.

The citizen – and in some cases, more extensively, the human being, similarly to the French Revolution period - is the figure which is most frequently evoked by most recent mobilizations. Since the explosion of the financial crisis in 2008, the emergence of a discourse of citizenship is at the core of anti-austerity movements in southern Europe (della Porta in this issue). Protesters mainly refer to themselves as 'citizens' and appeal to the totality of the citizenry to mobilise against political and economic elites, calling for more grassroots control on political institutions, through various forms of state-based direct democracy. Protesters have seen a central demand in citizenship unifying all the disparate demands raised by participants of this protest wave (Gerbaudo 2017). As it is said by a Spanish 15-M activist, "It was a citizen's call who had no one behind. It wanted to be a completely non-partisan and non-union, and just like something *coming out of the citizenry itself*. I think that was what excited people: this idea of true *citizen unity*" (quote form Gerbaudo, 2017, p. 8).

The same definition that Hunt (1984) gave to the French revolutionaries' discourse - "a class struggle discourse without class" - can be applied to anti-corruption movements and movement parties such as Podemos. It is a class discourse, because the polarizations on which it is based connect corruption of democracy and the increase in social inequalities. Moreover, the elites and *La Trama* are treated as opposing classes. But it is also a discourse without class, because claims are rarely referred to production processes, neither social groups are defined through their position in production and class relationships. Materialist issues are not framed as purely economic phenom-

ena, but rather read from a political standpoint, that is as the result of political decisions that reflect the contempt of political elites towards ordinary citizens and their subservience to financial power (Gerbaudo 2017).

The 15-M, anti-corruption Spanish movements and Podemos, demand an effective reintroduction of social issues, subordinate social groups, and their demands and needs in the political agenda. However, they appeal to a 'total' figure such as the citizen. They also often refer to total entities, such as homeland and the nation, adopting a catch-all rhetoric. Though the interconnection (or interdependence) of social and political protest is crucial in these actors, therefore, the political dimension prevails. The claim for popular sovereignty and a new form of politics constitutes the general framework in which other demands are included, as it occurred in the 1760-1848 period.

6. Conclusion

Spanish Movements that animate the struggle against corruption (of democracy) - and more generally the cycle of the *Indignados* and anti-austerity movements - are strongly comparable to the first column in the Table contained in section 2, that indicates the main movements' features in the democratic cleavage age. Current movements are more similar to the first social movements in history than to those of the class cleavage period. This emerged for all the dimension considered in the Table: the main polarization (citizens/elite); the main claim (popular sovereignty); the relationship between political and social dimension (prevalence of the first); the historical collective actor (the citizen); the symbolic dimension of identity (totality) and the approach to ideology (transition phase).

We have seen that in the 1760-1848 period strong and structured ideologies were still lacking, but the bases of the very existence of ideology were laid especially by the French Revolution, and principles of political culture were elaborated and subsequently developed by emancipatory ideologies. It was therefore a transition phase. The current period can be defined in similar terms. Ideologies of the class cleavage are weakened and in many ways in crisis. A new general framework (the citizens/elite polarization) have been developed by movements and new movement-parties such as Podemos. This consists of a set of cultural constructs characterized by an intentional absence of defined ideological references. At the same time, through a new language, these political actors nominate the fundamental themes of emancipatory ideologies: inequality, exclusion, rights, rebuilding of popular sovereignty and a new social contract. It is pos-

sible to hypothesize that we are living a new transition phase in which within the general citizens/elite cleavage a new configuration of emancipatory ideologies – adapted to XXI century - is in gestation and could develop over the next decades.

On the structural causes of such a close analogy between two very distant historical periods, and regarding its possible outcomes and consequences on the forms of political mobilization, further research and reflection are needed.

Appendix
List of Interviews

IS1 – X-Net founder
IS2 – X-Net activist
IS3 – Manager of *Fundaciòn Civio*
IS4 – Manager of *Fundaciòn Hay Derecho*
IS5 - Director of Juridical services and Transparency in the Barcelona administration
IS6 – Member of the National Parliament elected with Podemos; former judge
IS7 – Member of the Regional Parliament in Valencia, elected with Podemos
IS8 - Member of the Regional Parliament in Madrid, elected with Podemos; former activist in 15MpaRato
IS9 – Activist in the Catalan Citizen Group against Corruption

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