

# Podemos Party Origin: From Social Protest to Spanish Parliament

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**Abstract**—This paper analyzes the institutionalization of social protest in Spain. In the current crisis Podemos party seems to represent the political positions of the most affected citizens by the economic situation. It studies using quantitative techniques (statistical bivariate analysis), focusing on the exploitation of several bases of statistics data from the Center for Sociological and Research of Spanish Government, 15M movement characterization to its institutionalization in the Podemos party. Making a comparison between the participant's profile by the 15M and the social bases of Podemos votes. Data on the transformation of the socio-demographic profile of the fans, connoisseurs and 15M participants and voters are given.

**Keywords**—Collective action, emerging parties, political parties, social protest.

## I. SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AS A CATALYST FOR THE PROTEST: CONCEPTS, TRANSFORMATIONS AND CURRENT SITUATION

TO be operational, we will consider the definition of social movement [29] as an organization with varying degrees of structuring, which develops a cross-talk on one or more issues, and whose performance stage is not conventional. Also, it is oriented towards institutional power, advocating for change and/or confrontation. Usually it uses the strategy of conflict and has the basic resources to achieve its objectives popular mobilization and/or media actions. Social movements against political parties are conceptualized, the definition starts from-using the criteria previously used—a degree of strong and stable structure, with the use of a global discourse and action in an institutional setting. Its orientation is to exercise power at a competitive strategy. The resources implemented are electoral support and the provision of institutional charges.

As we can see first, the application of the criteria is often diametrically opposed between political parties and social movements. It has even come to be said that for the consolidation of claims of a social movement [20], this has to give way to its natural replacement at the institutional level, the political party.

Social movements, because of its own idiosyncrasies, are political actors with a wide versatility, a dynamic structure and a very strong performance. In many cases, their existence is short and the desire to run their durability is against its own identity. It can be argued that its end is due to its failure (claims and proclamations do not find the expected social echo

and they go off rapidly) or success (favoring such a strong reaction of support, which are transformed into another kind of a higher degree of political institutionalization actor, as a lobby group or a political party).

The union between a valuation and cultural sphere that guides behavior and the existence of social movements is a fact, so that social movements build patterns of behavior and ways of understanding and interpreting the world. A clear example of this linkage would be the presence of post-materialist values in Western Europe since the 70s [12]. We shouldn't be confused between the creation and development of social movements and the field of the left, although there are historic examples leading to this statement, since they can also create and develop under claims of conservatism or even back to basics.

We appeal to the classical differentiation of new and old social movements by [21] to emphasize that in the current cases we can even talk about overcoming the defining characteristics of the new social movements [23], [24]. The emergence of Cyber Politics and new ways of virtual political participation [5] offer new fields of action for collective mobilization towards shared goals by groups, associations and individuals with mobilizers and mobilizing interests. The cyber-activism and the use of real and virtual political spaces are defining these new forms of mobilization.

The form of organization of social movements is based on the flexibility, fleeing in this case oligarchic, bureaucratic and centralizing excesses. Enforcing this way, a strong adaptive capacity, promoting horizontal participation and discarding corseted action formulas. The assembly form, direct participation, rotation in office and the voluntary dedication are the essences on the performance and organization of those stands, however, this type of structure and mode of operation makes the trend towards fragmentation and scattering difficult constants and even impossible to remove.

A thorough analysis of the conversion / transformation of a social movement like the environmentalist until its complete institutionalization and consolidation as a political party especially in Germany [5] can serve as a paradigm case of drift that some social movements may take, whose impact has been a strong success in the public, as in shaping the public agenda, to establish itself as recognized political actors at all levels, and whose action scenario are the institutional settings.

It is clear that the objectives of social movements are transversal and are limited to broad claims affecting the society in which they act in a comprehensive way. In the present case it would be a deepening of participatory processes of liberal democracies of an integrated country in the

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European Union as Spain (Real Democracy Now, we are not represented, 15-M Movement, etc.).

Considering the phenomenon of 15M respecting to the concepts of social movement in a wide sense, and its evolution to what is known as organized social movements [14] and its materialization into NGOs with current particular label for development (0.7% and more), until becoming action groups with sole or single-issue movements (Stop evictions). The context that served as a starting point to the 15M movement was defined as systemic crisis [30] as did match a series of crises in various parts of the social system (institutional, legitimacy, economic, social, employment, etc.), which seemed to lead to collapse if major changes are not produced.

## II. THE SOCIAL PROTEST AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE 15-M MOVEMENT: FROM INDIGNATION TO THE CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

In modern societies the growing presence of extra-institutional forms of non-violent collective action can be diagnosed, even in the most traditional political contexts, such as the dynamics of pre- and post-election protest periods. It should be noted that such forms of collective action undertaken by less institutionalized political actors (social movements and pressure groups, mainly) have a markedly democratic character, that is, within the rules and nonviolent [19], [26], [28]. Politics, as Aristotelian essence of zoompolitikon not only takes place in environments and institutional contexts, it has jumped into the arena of everyday life, and even if we consider the proclamation of the feminist movement, has succeeded in making items of inequality in the private sphere to become a preferred topic on the political agenda in the public sphere.

It does not seem unreasonable to say that the degree of politicization and therefore potential degree of protest to a given situation worsens in specific periods, which generate major social stress scenarios. In democratic societies, such as Spanish, normalization of the protest is taken, there are even channels and ways for expression and development from the more formalized (authorized demonstrations) to others with less formal or legal obstacles, as the occupation of public spaces or civil disobedience. The various fields and forms of expression of protest are usually associated with achieving awareness or accession of the institutionalized political actors (political parties) of the claims presented [18].

"The emergence of the 15-M movement during the campaign for regional and municipal elections of 2011 added a new example of the increasing importance of the streets as a political scenario in modern democracies" [13]. The 15-M movement reaches to slow, at least temporarily, a phenomenon that seems to settle in current liberal democracies and pointing to a process of individualization of politics [7]. In a context of steady decline in levels of party affiliation, added to a strong deficit in the levels of public political participation in the broadest sense, and even associations in Spain [22] the climate of participation and sympathy through this movement was very important. We can't ignore the coverage and dissemination through the media of the actions of 15-M

contributed to its beginnings and expansion as a spectacle [8], but that does not mean that levels of empathy and solidarity with the movement's principles did reach citizens. In a society of liquid substance [1] a solid point, where citizens could wheeze in the maelstrom of uncertainty and lack of definition of postmodern political [15] was set. Thanks to this move institutionalized politics were partly connected with the fresh air that generated the phenomenon of extra-political protest, as Goldstone says that the connection between institutionalized political and extra-political areas now must achieve [10].

To end this part of the article, we gather some arguments on the criticism of political representation that occurred within the proposals of the 15-M movement from reviewing research notes of qualitative study Political representations and 15M conducted by CIS [4]. The representation is a concept that has been changing its appearance and procedure from its traditional appearance until today, because today there are technological channels -in particularly those provided by social networks and the Internet - favoring a new horizon in potential grades and intensity of participation. The possibility exists today to deepen the process of democratization of representation is a very present challenge. Democratic systems and the new demands of citizens' appeal to the launch of new channels of political participation that allow citizens to be part of public affairs, interacting with traditional institutionalized political actors.

## III. PODEMOS: POLITICAL PARTY HEIR TO THE 15-M MOVEMENT AND ITS EMERGENCE AS AN EMERGING PARTY

The political and social consequences that the 15-M movement has made new political actors arise (Podemos and Ciudadanos, although earlier in time as a result of these phenomena began their growth) are articulated. Both parties aim to consolidate the new political scenario. It has built a new terminology for grouping that forms part of the new policy (less structured parties, newly created, with no solid ideological references and with strong connections in the media field and virtual-parties- -media constant appeal to the CyberPolitics) and categorized as emerging parties. Not so much for his recent appearance, but rather because they have not yet had time to consolidate the party system, as they were the rest of their competitors. Emerging parties have emerged in a context where distrust of institutional policy areas and to the parties themselves is remarkable [16]; however, they have led to a phenomenon of some re-enchantment [25] on the policy in citizens, representing a powerful innovation phenomenon and possible change / transformation in the sclerotic world of Spanish traditional political parties.

The background and origin of Podemos [29] are of vital importance to understand the strength that emerged in the European elections in 2014. Podemos project began to take shape in the autumn of 2013 between Izquierda Anticapitalista and a small group of Political Science professors at the Complutense University of Madrid. Their goal was to use the existing context of crisis to provide a new political alternative within the democratic game.

We have shown that there is a strong synergy between the origin of Podemos and the 15M, but we do not hold that there is a direct relationship. "There is no organic connection between the two phenomena, but the 15-M opened political opportunities that the party led by Pablo Iglesias has been able to interpret and leverage, along with many of their members actively participated in these demonstrations"[25].

The stellar appearance of Podemos in the Spanish political scene was staged in the European elections in 2014. It is speculated the influence that generated television appearances in the various political gatherings of its leader, Pablo Iglesias. It is possible that one of the causes of the resounding entry in the political game can be an important spreading of his leader in different media. The system of multimedia communication and social networking connection, together with a time of widespread social unrest with growing discontent, disaffection towards the dynastic parties and institutions and outrage at the widespread phenomena of corruption in a crisis increasingly perceived as scams are elements that make public perceptions of Podemos as a valid alternative policy among citizens.

TV facilitates the dissemination of the image of the leader of the new party, it helps to know the new project and favors the creation of a charismatic image. However, we must recognize the pernicious effect of the constant media exposure. To be always in the spotlight today generates consequences such as burn-in and overexposure to criticism in areas of non-institutional debate and re-contextualized in the creation of the reality of the media. Not surprisingly, one of the most renowned political scientists to Spanish level has noted that "[...] So Leninism was Marxism of the imperialist age, Podemos is Leninism of the age of globalized telegenia" [6].

The emergence of Podemos in the European elections in 2014 has led to study the profile of voters [9] and its possible travel in the next electoral events, to assess whether the emergency is punctual or, conversely, it is a party with a long-distance path beyond reverbs of public outrage movement experienced in 2011 in our country.

#### IV.METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

To address the complex theoretical object of study of the institutionalization of social protest we have designed a methodology to obtain two different images of the phenomenon studied, in order to achieve through its comparison, the analysis of the process of institutionalization of social protest in Spain.

To measure the social basis of participation in the study of social protest CIS 2920 (post-election general election, 2011) is used. The 2920 study is a post-election survey panel type of 2011 general elections, which have included questions on participation in the 15M movement. The survey has a sample of 6,082 surveys and a sampling error of  $\pm 1.3$  points on the Spanish population over 18 years and of both sexes. The survey was conducted between 24 November 2011 and 25 January 2012. This study has measured the participation and sympathy of the Spanish population by the 15M movement. We have also used the review of the report *Political*

*representations and 15-Mmovement* (2011), conducted by the CIS and belonging to a qualitative study (Study 2921) composed a sample of eight focus groups and ten in-depth interviews of various social profiles.

In the second phase of research, we have used data from the CIS April Barometer, study No. 3080. This study is a survey of the Spanish population of both sexes and over 18 years in April 2015. It has a sample of 2,479 interviews which gives a sampling error of  $\pm 2$  points. The techniques used in data mining technique has been bivariate statistical analysis to establish the voters profile of people interested in 15M in 2012 and the current profile of Podemos voters in 2015.

#### V. DATA ANALYSIS

We begin by presenting a series of statistical tables to establish a socio-demographic profile of the supporters, who knows and are involved in the 15M movement along the Spanish geography. This will get us a fair idea of the social bases of the movement, to then establish appropriate comparisons with the demographic profile of Podemos voters, as heir institutionalized party claims and the principles of the movement. Also in this section we will include an argumentative discourse analysis generated around 15M.

TABLE I  
 KNOWLEDGE, INVOLVEMENT AND SYMPATHY FOR THE 15M MOVEMENT IN THE SPANISH POPULATION

	Knows 15M	Has participated in 15M	Average sympathy depending on belonging
Yes	89,4	10,9	7,72
No	10,5	88	4,92
Don't answer	0,1	1,1	

TABLE II  
 SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES OF 15M PARTICIPANTS IN 2012

Sex	Participate 15M	Does not participate 15M
Male	11	89
Female	11,1	88,9
Age		
18-35	17,2	82,8
36-47	10,3	89,7
48-62	9,9	90,1
63>	3,6	96,4
Habitat		
Rural	5,4	94,6
Rururban	7,4	92,6
Urban	12,6	87,4
Metropolitan	18	82
Training		
Primary	4	96
Secondary	10,2	89,8
Higher	17,1	82,9
Employment situation		
Work	13,6	86,4
Retired / Pensioner	4,7	95,3
Unemployed	12,1	87,9
Study / Housework / Another situation.	10,6	89,4

As shown in Table I in January 2012, 89.4% of the population knew the phenomenon of 15M and 11% of Spaniards claimed to have participated in the 15M movement by any of the forms of public participation that were developed as demonstrations, camping, marches or protests linked somehow.

The data show the following results regarding the profile of the participants in the 15M movement: equal participation about sex is observed, being very similar figures, a range of young age is also obtained, oscillating between 18 and 35 years, declining participation as it progresses the age of the respondents. Participants in the movement often live mainly in the metropolitan area, are in employment and have higher education.

#### VI. THE 15M MOVEMENT IN SPAIN: DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS AND SUBSEQUENT INSTITUTIONALIZATION

The 15M movement was born coinciding with heavy doses of distrust of parties [16] and denial of citizenship regarding institutional political channels. The use of resources such as 15M camp in the Plaza del Sol in Madrid and in other Spanish cities, the occupation of public spaces, the development of civil disobedience and even direct actions such as the call for "Surround Congress" serve to generate media coverage and widespread among the public in order to obtain the highest degree of sympathy and commitment on the part of the population which is not mobilized.

The essential definition of 15M and its own characterization emphasized democracy before the class antagonism, direct participation and consensus against partisanship, the centrality of an enriched citizens against conventional political lines of left and right notion. However, the 15-M also allowed many former activists disenchanted with the militant return to active politics.

The 15-M had a strong purposeful significance, generating comprehensive proposals to modify and transform what was denounced, which was a product of an unjust and unsustainable situation, achieving not only a critical movement. They could make the movement to be composed of people -from other affiliated associations, parties or pressure groups-that presented a lack of attachment of any kind (flags, acronyms or any symbol that identify them) beyond their own, integrating them on platforms such as "Real Democracy Now".

The 15M movement to achieve freedom from flags and partisan acronyms was characterized to be close to libertarian principles, as the essential glue of the participants was adhering to all or most of the proposals, and effective opportunities to participate and feel part what of what was brewing there. There was a boom of protest and mobilization phenomena brought about in part by mobilizing waves of 15M movement (multicolored tides on health, education and other areas, march for dignity, Platforms Affected by Mortgages and many others). Meanwhile, another nuclear argument in the 15M speech is that politicians have failed to put a solution to the problems of citizens with banks, and have also contributed to the debt with megalomaniac projects at the expense of the

public purse, which fleeced resources and the mortgaged public in the future. In this social context marked by disappointment, hopelessness, pessimism and insecurity a window of opportunity is generated by producing the crisis in a time when that change is inexcusable. However, distrust and lack of credibility of politicians prevent them being leaders in this new scenario, so there lies the strength of 15M, because, - as the generated discourse defended- the are the citizens who has to find the solution proposals that others are not able to do. The policy, understood through speech obtained in this investigation is related to the behavior of the ruling class, whose prestige is very undervalued, so that this situation makes arguments deployed with negative connotations and describe the image citizens have of themselves. Another line of argument that is extracted from the discourses generated by the 15M movement [4] comes to refer not only to the crisis and those responsible for it, but focuses on the criticism of the existing participation by offering ideas how to build a democracy where the channels of participation, that is, the very essence of democracy, are amplified in order to overcome the limitations provided by political parties and other institutions linked to public participation like, for example, suffrage.

In criticizing the limited existing participation mechanisms, 15M criticize that lack of control and supervision of the political action of political parties, suggesting that the parties do not encourage participation and are away from the public as they have occasion.

#### VII. PODEMOS AND INSTITUTIONALIZING PROTEST

Now, we describe and analyze the impact of Podemos as a political party in Spanish society by analyzing the mental comparisons of the voter between Podemos party and other parties, and how the social demographic profile has changed from participants of 15M to Podemos voters.

TABLE III  
 DIRECT VOTE INTENTION IN THE 2015 CONGRESS ELECTION [4]

Direct vote intention in the 2015 Congress election	Frequency	%
PSOE	383	15,4
Podemos	338	13,6
PP	335	13,5
Ciudadanos	249	10
IU (ICV in Cataluña)	78	3,1
UPyD	21	0,8

In Table III, we see that the PSOE is the first political party in direct intention to vote with 15.4%, followed by Podemos, which has become the second political force in direct intention to vote with 13.6% of votes, getting the same direct intention to vote than the PP with 13.5%.

In Table IV, we can extract the current demographic profile of Podemos voters, which shows that its electorate is masculinized, because its profile voter is male, 18 to 35, who live in large urban areas with higher education and is unemployed.

TABLE IV  
SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VOTE IN SPAIN [4]

	PSOE	Podemos	PP	CS
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	14,5	15,7	14	12,5
Female	16,3	11,7	13,1	7,8
<b>Age</b>				
18-35	13,6	22	8	11,2
36-47	10,9	13,9	10,7	13,1
48-62	18,3	12,6	11,2	9,7
63>	19,6	4,9	25,1	5,8
<b>Habitat</b>				
Rural	14,2	9,5	20,3	6,8
Rururban	17,7	12,7	12,5	8,6
Urban	14,9	15	13,3	10,5
Metropolitan	11,7	14,5	14	13,5
<b>Training</b>				
Primary	24,0	7,1	18,9	4,7
Secondary	16,3	15,5	12,3	9
Higher	8,1	15,6	11,9	15,3
<b>Employment situation</b>				
Work	11,5	14,9	11,6	13,1
Retired/Pensioner	20,9	6,7	22,3	5,8
Unemployed	19,3	17,3	5,7	9,2
Study/Housework/Other situation.	11,5	15,5	18,2	9,1
<b>Total</b>	15,4	13,6	13,5	10

TABLE V  
SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC BASES OF 15M AND FEATURES OF PODEMOS VOTE [4]

	15M 2011	Podemos 2015	Diference
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	11	15,7	+4,7
Female	11,1	11,7	+0,6
<b>Age</b>			
18-35	17,2	22	+4,8
36-47	10,3	13,9	+3,5
48-62	9,9	12,6	+2,7
63>	3,6	4,9	+1,3
<b>Habitat</b>			
Rural	5,4	9,5	+4
Rururban	7,4	12,7	+5,2
Urban	12,6	15	+2,5
Metropolitan	18	14,5	-3,5
<b>Training</b>			
Primary	4	7,1	+3,1
Secondary	10,2	15,5	+5,3
Higher	17,1	15,6	-1,5
<b>Employment situation</b>			
Works	13,6	14,9	+1,3
Retired/Pensioner	4,7	6,7	+2
Unemployed	12,1	17,3	+5,2
Study/Housework/Other situation	10,6	15,5	+4,9
<b>Total</b>	11,07	13,6	+2,6

By exploiting the new data, we can compare the level of civil participation in the 15M movement and its current process of political institutionalization in Podemos. Participant profile 15M is young people between 18-35 years of age (17.2), which belongs to metropolitan habitat (18), with studies of secondary school (10.2) and working (13.6).

Overall, it is argued that the configuration of the 15M movement into a political party has increased its direct intention to vote in 3 points from the civil participation in the protest, since it has risen from 11.7% of the population participated in 15M movement in January 2012, to 13.6% direct intention to vote in April 2015.

We note that while the 15M movement parity participation about sex was given, Podemos electorate has increased masculinized male intend to vote by 5 points compared to the extracted from 15M. Also, it has greatly increased the vote among young people aged 18 to 35 years and among people of 36-47 years, people with secondary education, rural habitats and rururban and among unemployed people.

#### VIII. DISCUSSION OF DATA

We will discuss about the data that have been obtained regarding the results and reflections of other authors. An element to consider would be the union of the real sphere with the virtual one in the demonstrations and protests [17] developed by the occupations and public events of 15M. Political protest is transmuted into moral protest, since corruption affected us all, the distance between politicians and citizens, the lack of real mechanisms of citizen political participation, etc. [3]. In the wave of demonstrations, protests, occupations and other peaceful and democratic actions generated by the 15-M the presence of people who until then had never had contact with political phenomena of protest highlighted, whose type is rare if not they cross certain characteristics in its proposals [31]. You need to quote shell [2] when speaking of constant wake-up call 15-M on democratic deficits and the deepening of participation in democracy today. As we know from long ago, the liberal democratic systems are not conducive to political participation, as the politicization of society is contrary to the institutional coordination based on party politics and reproduction of legitimacy is achieved by autopoiesis [11]. Those were the most eco proclamations were on citizens.

The movement of outraged – as the 15M movement was called by the media- has transformed the upset diffuse speech offered by public opinion and caused by the political and economic crisis into a democratizing speech, questioning the already existing consensus (party way of thinking, party democracy, market preference over democracy, etc.) on which the hegemony of the Spanish economic and social elites in recent decades was based. Within the movement of 15M it was possible to increase the mobilization potential thanks to its lack of party identifiable ideology, and it enhanced the decision to participate because it was not determined by political variables such as party affinity or ideology, while it can promote the participation of citizens who are not interested in politics, whose presence would be unthinkable in other protests.

The current democracy, and parties that represent it, do not allow the existence of real alternative government. If, as always the same parties govern (PSOE and Partido Popular) will continue repeating the same behavior that brought them to power. However, the high level of abstention and the high

degree of volatility in the vote suggest that the options put on the Table III are not entirely satisfactory for a significant group of the population. Thus, emerges a potentially flattering speech to alternative parties, whose characteristics and speech have nothing to do with the existing political system today. They could also have a considerable electoral support if it can mobilize potential supporters of these ideas, that is, new parties, a new discourse that make the participation prevail and offer renovated air to the tainted Spanish party system. At the same time, we have also obtained from this research a very succinct characterization of 15M, but that it would still be large enough to get an accurate idea of social representation and strong levels of sympathy. However, we should not be confused with the idea that sympathy levels obtained, have nothing to do with the sociological profile of those involved in this movement, which spread rapidly throughout the country. This profile is mainly young, but also included people of other age cohorts, thus providing the motion of a wider age range and thus to extend to all citizens. The participatory, and horizontal operation was always its trademark, along the assembly-logic prevailed from the outset. It also chose the peaceful claim and sharply not partisan, libertarian, as it was defined [27].

Its most basic aims were the creation of a more participatory and direct democracy, promoting proposals generated in meetings, contribute to social and political change certain aspects that were assessed as unfair (evictions, electoral system, popular legislative initiatives, oversight of the politics, etc.).

#### IX.CONCLUSIONS

The data indicates that the demographic profile of the participants in the 15M movement has been transformed during the process of changing the social protest movement 15M to its institutionalization, by creating Podemos, as concurrent political actor in the competitive election arena.

Podemos became party to exploit the emerging discourse of disenchantment and anger generated by the 15-M, and thus placed in a market niche with a lot of potential for growth. It occurs in all fields as a new party, with a regenerative spirit and a new discourse on the traditional parties.

The political party Podemos, has racked social discontent with corruption and political class into a discourse of institutional type with a deep concern for the welfare state, economic situation, or the state model. In this sense, the speech of 15M has given impetus to the development of the political agenda of Podemos.

In the process of guiding social protest and shaping the political agenda, Podemos have had a clear impact on the composition of the electorate regarding the participants of the original 15M movement. The electorate of Podemos has a greater volume of followers, as his speech has permeated other sectors of society that initially did not participate in the 15M protest movement. Podemos discourse has spread among people of different age cohorts and different sizes of habitats, which mainly are unemployed, are seriously concerned about

their future economic and labor, and privatization of the public service system.

The structuring of Podemos, as their party of substantive values defended by 15M movement, is confirming that the decision-making process is institutionalized, it is getting further from spontaneous form of social protest movement to set up a bureaucratic party structure in which it's hard to maintain the freshness of the democratic principles present in the 15M movement.

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