Activist political repertoire in Spain: a reflection based on civil society theory and on "horizontal" and "vertical" political logics

Abstract: Citizen participation in Spain has significantly increased and its repertoire has broadened as a result of the 15M Movement. From assemblies and *acampadas* (occupations) to the current proliferation of new political parties, passing through a wide range of techno-political actions, experimentation in the means and political tools used by civil society and activists has been constant. This paper aims to reflect on this complex, new political repertoire from a political theory approach. More specifically, this paper employs the theoretical framework of civil society, and the traditional theoretical axis that differentiates between horizontal and vertical forms of political participation.

Key words: civil society, Spain, political repertorie, political logics

Introduction: the importance of political repertoire

Since 15 May 2011, with the emergence of massive citizen protests, the crisis of traditional politics and its representative structures have been accompanied by the exercise of "civil society politics", "online" politics and the proliferation of new forms of citizen's political participation (Castañeda, 2012; Fuster Morell, 2012; Castells, 2012; Della Porta, 2013; Romanos, 2013 and 2014). The birth of what is now known as 15M (the 15th of May Movement), after the call-out on 15 May 2011, has changed the current Spanish political scenario, expressed through the proliferation of multiple citizen initiatives, demonstrations, actions to halt home evictions, *escraches*, self-management initiatives, hacktivism, boycotts, peaceful sieges on Parliament, citizen legislative initiatives, the formation of new political parties, among many other kinds of action. The emergence of 15M was a turning point in how citizens and activists

conceive politics. Since May 2011, political experimentation has become a common trend for civil society, and is active in a political and economic crisis context (Kaldor & Selchow, 2013, 88; Pianta, 2013; Charnock, Purcell & Ribera-Fumaz, 2011, Cabal, 2011).

The proliferation of plural and complex political repertoire is a challenge for theoretical approaches that intend to make sense of movements such as 15M. The political repertoire is a key matter for fields of political science and political theory since both fields deal with the study of such citizens´ mobilisations from either an empirical or analytical approach.

In the empirical work field, relevant studies are conducted by The World Values Survey and The European Value Study. These studies consider it possible to measure civil societies´ level of political participation by analysing a basic repertoire of citizens' political involvement (Quaranta, 2013, 458, Dalton, van Sickle & Weldon, 2010). More specifically, these studies ask population samples about five key indicators: 1) signing a petition; 2) joining in boycotts; 3) attending lawful demonstrations; 4) joining in non-official strikes; and 5) occupying buildings or factories. Such categorisation of five ways of political action enables pioneer empiric projects, made to measure the degree of participation in a large number of countries. Among those projects, it is worth highlighting the studies by authors such as Inglehart (1990) or Norris (2002). In the field of quantitative studies, proposals arise which worry about the effectiveness of these kinds of questionnaires, given the heterogeneity of existing political repertories according to different countries (van Deth, 2014; Hooghe, Hosch-Dayican & van Deth, 2014).

The political repertory issue is also relevant to the fields of political theory and philosophy, especially in those projects where a subject delves deeper and reflects in

detail upon the different strategies believed adequate to achieve political transformation. In various studies and approaches on behalf of civil society, this issue arises in models labeled –following Ehrenberg classification– as neo-Tocquevillians, a theory which gained light at the end of the twentieth century to list ways in which movements, associations, groups and non-governmental actors could be politically active within democratic systems (Ehrenberg, 1999). On the other hand, the reflection upon different ways of political participation has also been –and still is– a key issue in the classical theoretic debate that draws a line between horizontal and vertical logics followed by social movements, in the sense that each of these lines (logics) entails a series of political actions (Robinson & Tormey, 2005; Flesher Fomiyana, 2013; Flesher Fomiyana, 2007: 336-339; Juris, 2005).

The importance of citizens' repertoire actions for political theory

The above theoretical approaches offer key analytical and normative elements. This paper aims to analyse the ability of such theoretical frameworks to understand the complex political repertory associated with 15M. To achieve that, we will start by providing a theoretical introduction that goes deeper into the role of the political repertory.

"Vertical" and "horizontal" logics of citizen participation

The distinction between 'vertical' and 'horizontal' political logics is a familiar axis for activists and scholars to reflect on heterogeneous political movements or perspectives that might share a common goal ('real democracy'), but which disagree on the views of

how this can be achieved (Robinson & Tormey, 2005; Flesher Fomiyana, 2013: 115; Flesher Fomiyana, 2007: 336-339; Juris, 2005). Hence any theoretical approach on the political repertoire of a citizen's movement, such as 15M, cannot ignore this basic distinction between horizontal and vertical political logics.

On the one hand, verticalist approaches are infused with the idea of the importance of building parties and gaining power. It is a political premise on the need to develop a programme, to build a party to win supporters for the programme, and to capture power to put the programme into practice. The objective is to capture power in order to implement the vision or to reshape the environment in accordance with Spanish activists´ understanding of real or true democracy. The verticalist approach is based on "an image of power as a macrosocial resource which one can possess" (Robinson &Tormey, 2007, 128). There is, thus, a "centre" of power that can be occupied and which, once occupied, provides the power holder with the basis for moulding society in a particular image. In this sense, the quest for effectiveness is made desirable, and under certain conditions, necessitates the production of vertical political structures. In the group of theorists who advocate these forms of participation, we can include, among others, Zizek (2001 and 2010).

On the other hand, the horizontals logics indicates the desirability for a generation of spaces in which people can interact to obtain mutual benefit. Those who defend the horizontal logics seek to undermine the hegemony of existing political forces, while prefiguring new kinds of social, economic and political relationships. This entails seeking to promote "an activist rhizomatics –a way in which networks can coalesce, develop, multiply and re-multiply" (Robinson & Tormey, 2005, 213). Horizontals claim that there is no need for a programme and a political party. What it needs are zones of encounter, shared learning, solidarity, affiliation, coalescence

4

provided by networks of support, and the ability to mobilise together and place pressure on the logics of the system until it falls. It is the generalisation of the alternative practices and "revolution in everyday life" that will lead to real democracy in Spain (Robinson & Tormey, 2007, 129; Flesher Fomiyana, 2007). Within this theoretical framework, we find authors like Day (2008), Holloway (2002) and Graeber (2008).

The theoretical distinction between ideal types of political logics allows the identification of the types of political actions corresponding to both these logics. On the one hand, the organisation of manifestos, strikes and legal proposals and the promotion of political parties form part of vertical logics. On the other hand, within the horizontal logics we find actions such as demonstrations, civil disobedience actions and the promotion of alternative collective projects.

Another key differentiator element between the two logics is their predisposition to negotiate, or not, with representative institutions (and actors). On the one hand, the vertical model calls for mobilisation, which ultimately intends to negotiate with and place pressure on representative institutions. On the other hand, the commitment of the horizontal model is linked to the denial of representatives´ structures as a tool that can foster social transformation.

Table 1 Ideal-typical differences between the autonomous (horizontal) and institutional left (vertical) political models

	Institutional left	Autonomous
Organisational structure	Vertical with clear division of labour and authority	Horizontal, rarely permanent delegations of responsibility
Decision making	Votes, negotiations between representatives	Consensus, assembly is sovereign
Subject	*Unitary (worker/citizen)*	*Multiple identities*
Political arena	*Public/government*	*Public (streets, public spaces) and private (personal relations, daily life)*
Typical repertoire of intervention	Manifestos, protest marches, strikes, legal reforms	Protest demonstrations, direct action, civil disobedience, alternative self-managed collective projects (e.g. social centres)

Social transformation comes through ...	Institutions	Creating alternatives, cultural resistance
Organisation is...	Permanent	Contingent, open to continual critical reflection and dissolution

Source: **Flesher Fominaya, Cristina (2007) "Autonomous Movements and The Institutional Left: Two Approaches in Tension in Madrid´s Anti-globalisation Network,** *South European Society and Politics,* **12, 3, 338**

In short, the "horizontal" and "vertical" political logics can be differentiated by the political repertoire they foster and by their contrary predisposition towards representative structures. Later on in the paper, whether this theoretical distinction is fruitful or not for understanding the Spanish political context will be discussed. At this point, it is necessary to introduce some civil society theory and the role of political repertoire into this thinking.

Civil society's neo-Tocquevillian interpretations and political repertoire

Some authors stand out in the complex, abundant reflection on polysemic civil society who, in Western Europe, have recovered this term from progressive perspectives used in the last decades of the 20th century (Kaldor, 2003, 586; Hall, 1995). They aimed to devise forms of political transformation in which citizens were policitically active and capable, and the State was a type of guarantor frame of rights. Among these thinkers, Habermas, Kaldor, Keane, Barber, Cohen and Arato are highlighted who, despite defending different civil society normative models, shared basic aspects as far as the possibilities and roles they assigned it are concerned (Ehrenberg, 1999; Edwards, 2004, 8; Encarnación, 2003, 16-17; Seligman, 1992).

Such proposals understand civil society as a network in which citizens express themselves in a politically active manner to claim settlements, reforms or amendments

within the legal framework. Civil society is understood as citizen-based pressure groups which demand realignment or common debate on set rules. Habermas expresses the corrective task of civil service quite graphically when he points out that civil society is characterised by exercising "a siege-type" influence on a systemic world for the purpose of avoiding its colonist abuse (Habermas, 1996, 487). Keane considers similarly when he claims the need for a civil society that monitors political representatives to be consolidated, and for it to be consolidated as if it were "a thorn permanently in the political power's side" in order to advance in principles of equality and political freedom (Keane, 1988, 15).

This interpretation of civil society stresses its democratising role in the political system and its structure (Barber, 2003). The purpose of civil society is to reform these structures by applying external pressure. In parallel, the self-limiting nature of its work is defended because, according to Habermas, "directly, it can only transform itself, and indirectly, it can work on self-transforming the political system that is structured in 'rule of law' terms" (Habermas, 1996, 490).

This self-limiting condition associated with civil society is, in turn, accompanied by demand as far as the political system is concerned, and remains receptive to feedback and civil society's influence. In other words, it remains permable to outside claims so that they can be seriously assessed in decision-making processes. In this sense, the correcting or reforming role is only possible if this interrelation between civil society and the political system actually exists. Besides, the political system is considered to only be capable of remaining close to civil society if it manages to understand, channel and assess the proposals that it presents it with (Cohen & Arato, 2000, 593).

Therefore, the visions of civil society put forward by authors like Habermas, Cohen, Arato, Keane and Barber confer paramount importance to the interrelation

between civil society and the political system. At this point, the characteristics and list of actions of civil society's political repertoire become relevant. Civil society is associated with the civic network that employs a large number of non-violent actions to impact the political scenario. Civil society is characterised as being non-violent, with the intregration of a wide range of actors –NGOs, social movements, resident associations, consumer associations, etc.– shared by different neo-Tocquevillian versions (Ehrenberg, 1999). These versions are also aware that the actions performed by civil society can be heterogeneous and plural insofar as its belief that no single pattern exists.

In relation to specific political forms, Habermas, Cohen and Arato's have particularly dealt with what the limit actually is by considering civil disobedience to be the last resort of civil society's contribution in its strive towards political change in certain circumstances (Cohen & Arato, 2000, 660-673). Along these lines, they point out that "the last means for obtaining more of a hearing and greater media influence for oppositional arguments are acts of civil disobedience" (Habermas, 1996, 383). Such political action is defined as "acts of nonviolent, symbolic rule violation" (Habermas, 1996, 383), which can be used only exceptionally when actors "protest against binding decisions, their legality notwithstanding, the actors consider illegitimate in the light of valid constitutional principles" (Habermas, 1996, 384). Cohen, Arato and Habermas all indicate that such actions are a last resort, which is to be applied when all other means have been exhausted, in situations of crisis, and when there is no choice but to opt for conflict (Habermas, 1996; Cohen & Arato, 2000). The theses are shared by the neo-Tocquevillian authors of civil society, who acknowledge that civil society's political repertoire must be adapted to a series of rules and limits (Kaldor, Anheier & Glasius, 2003; Keane, 2003).

Thus civil society's neo-Tocquevillian views particularly consider the framework that must define the relation between the political system and civil society in advanced democratic systems. These views do so by understanding the political system and constitutions as dynamic and permeable elements that are receptive to the demands that civil society makes. Within this framework, the political repertoire is also assumed plural, non-violence is the basic principle, and civil disobedience is the last resort in its attempts to influence the political centre.

Having looked at the theoretical approaches that distinguish between the "vertical" and "horizontal" political logics and understood civil society, it is worth looking to what extent they can help comprehend the many forms of actions that have been consolidated in Spain since 2011. Does either of the logics (vertical and horizontal) predominate in the recent activism of 15M? Do civil society's neo-Tocquevillian views help explain and understand 15M? Is civil disobedience a central element of this citizen movement as a last resort? Are the civil society self-limiting character and the political system openness (towards civil society claims) key elements of the current Spanish political system? To answer these questions, we now go into some of the most relevant forms of participation that have been recently consolidated in more detail.

Towards the differentiation of 15M's political repertoire

The plural, changing nature of 15M makes it difficult to provide an explanation that completely covers this movement's complexity. Therefore, the objective of this point that of attempting to take an approach to 15M's broad political repertoire, must be considered cautiously. Besides, it is worth remembering that any description of this complex movement does not avoid simplification problems (Weber, 1978).

Nevertheless, 15M has its characteristic aspects, which are fundamental. The outburst of an original political repertoire that has altered the way citizens act in politics stands out, and it amends the means and ways employed to transform politics from 2011 to the present-day. This repertoire also presents two basic elements:

1) Participants employ the potential that both digital and analogical spaces offers

2) The evolution that the political repertoire undergoes according to the context and collective learning

Among the heterogeneous forms of participation presented below, we will see the close connection between the online and offline forms of participating, and this theme has been extensively studied (Postill, 2013; Toret, 2013). Although this matter is not the focal point of the present paper, it is worth bearing in mind that 15M's political repertoire mixes analogical and digital participation elements. In the following delineation of political repertoire, the chronological component is taken into account.

Online announcements and demonstrations without traditional intermediate structures (trade unions and political parties)

The call for demonstrations by activists began to take place in social networks. Facebook was a key tool in the early stages, and Twitter, Youtube and Tuenti soon became central to spread messages for the 15M rally, and for all subsequent events. ICT tools enabled the interconnection between heterogeneous groups of activists and citizens (Postill, 2013). Rapid expansion, diffusion and aggregation of supporters across ICTs took place and helping foster a cooperative dynamics to organise street demonstrations (Anduiza, Cristancho & Sabucedo, 2013). Finally on 15 May 2011, the first demonstration began with the slogan "We aren't merchandise in politicians and bankers' hands". Expressions of outrage (*indignados*) spread quickly through many

Spanish cities. The special feature of 15M irruption is that its organisation lacks traditional political structures (Della Porta, 2013). Trade unions and political parties are notably absent in the organisation of these new political expressions. This feature led to a creative explosion in the form of messages, symbols and claims (Castells, 2012). The mass media did not play a key role in the announcement and dissemination of the movement in its early stages. Nevertheless, with the growing presence of the *acampadas* (occupations), the media's attention significantly grew (Micó & Casero-Ripollés, 2013). In this initial phase of the 15M movement, anger was expressed as a general criticism of political system shortcomings and as a claim for "more democracy". Later on 15 October, the first global call of outrage was organised, which was extended to 1,051 cities in 90 countries. A little earlier on, September 17, Occupy Wall Street irrupted in the United States.

Acampadas and assemblies

A few hours after demonstrations started on 15 May, the option to continue with street protests, by establishing occupations in public squares, was raised. Images of Arab riots resonated in Spanish activists, who quickly decided to re-appropriate public spaces by organising *acampadas* (occupations) in over 55 cities (Kaldor & Selchow, 2013, 85; Della Porta, 2013, Taibo, 2013). The most relevant feature of these *acampadas* was linked to the emergence of an assembly decision-making model. Such occupation was divided into two key structures: the general assembly for adopting collective decisions; several committees (legal, action, communication, computing, medical care and infrastructure) were organised so that each participant could be involved in accordance with their interests. The committees involved a certain degree of specialisation in activists' actions, but all key decisions were debated in the general

11

assembly. Occupation lasted for approximately 4 weeks, during which time political activities and discussions were ongoing. The goal of these actions was to reach some consensus on a reformist agenda (Romanos, 2013). In this stage, more importance was attached to the dynamics of participation than to the result itself.

ICT tools and the development and spread of ideas

At the same time as *acampadas* were taking place, new communication tools were being used to not only organise protests and to promote online petitions, but to also develop and spread ideas that arose during assemblies. Collaborative tools (PADs) were used for developing manifestos, hacktivism actions were performed, hashtags were launched, etc. Collaborative processes favoured pressure on mass media and helped to introduce new themes into the public agenda (Author, 2012). These online dynamics reinforced the analogical dynamics and remained after the *acampadas* had been dismantled.

New monitory mechanism

Shortly after the 15M irruption, multiple platforms appeared which focused on monitoring and scrutinising centres of political (and economical) power in Spain. Thus, there was an irruption of initiatives where ordinary citizens become specialists in tracking politicians' actions, compiling information, drawing up reports, sharing information or transcribing information in open formats. Some initiatives are ongoing and are remarkably stable. *Qué hacen los diputados* (What do Members of Parliament do?), *Cuentas Claras* (Clear Accounts), *Civio.org*, or *Sueldos Públicos* (Public Salaries) are some examples. These platforms are characterised by their efficient use of digital tools and their concern about cases of abuse of power and corruption. Alongside these

platforms, sporadic and collaborative scrutiny actions also appear in which citizens exploit the potential of new communication tools to uncover possible abuses of power. A paradigmatic case of such initiatives is 15MpaRato (June 2012). This initiative brought together the possibilities offered by *crowdfunding* and *crowdsourcing* for collaborative work*,* and has helped to bring to justice in relation to both former IMF President Rodrigo Rato and board members of the Bankia IPO[1]. Specialised monitoring processes have, thus, been consolidated as a new political dynamics in Spain (Author, 2014).

Stopping evictions: PAH, Plataformas afectados por la hipoteca (Platforms of people affected by mortgages)

Among the plural groups linked to the 15M movement, PAH has developed the most relevant and heterogeneous political actions so far (Romanos, 2014). The following analyse some of these actions. The existence of PAH precedes the 15M movement, although its growing importance is linked to the movement's irruption in 2011 (Colau & Alemany, 2013). PAH is an organisation involved in the movement against evictions and to reform the Spanish law on mortgages. This network, which today has chapters in 145 cities, emerged in 2009 as a part of a broader social movement that has been campaigning for access to decent housing since 2003 (Romanos, 2014). PAH has not only been able to raise awareness among citizens about abusive clauses in many bank mortgages and the need for dation in payment, but has also managed to stop 1,135 evictions. This platform is characterised by promoting heterogeneous forms of political actions. Among these actions, stopping evictions is marked by its direct action character, during which activists block an eviction and demand the bank to re-negotiate the outstanding mortgage debt. These activities are

enabled by a sound organisation and begin with notices on the platform blog, which subsequently spread through messages on social networks. Ultimately, these notices take the form of street mobilisations, wherein hundreds of activists create shields in front of threatened houses. Such actions have existed in Spain since 2009, although their proliferation started in 2011. Today more than 1,135 evictions have been blocked by activists.

Popular legislative initiatives developed by PAH

PAH's organisational skills and strength have been evident since it managed to take the debate on mortgages and payment to the Spanish Parliament in February 2013. To achieve this, the organisation led a popular legislative initiative that obtained 1.4 million signatures from supporters. This proposal required preparing a specific legal proposal as an alternative to existing law. The proceedings of this initiative through the Parliament needed the wide dissemination of the proposal and a large number of citizen signatures. The charismatic PAH spokesperson, Ada Colau, participated in a parliamentary committee to defend the legal reform of the mortgage system. This political initiative implied PAH´s decision to examine the chances of political transformation through representative channels and mechanisms (Colau & Alemany, 2013). However, the text was finally supplanted by another one once the popular legislative initiative was processed through the Spanish parliament, where the conservative Popular Party government has absolute majority (Romanos, 2014).

Escraches

Another form of political action that was carried out while the popular legislative initiative was being discussed in parliament is known in Spanish as

escraches. *Escraches*, as Romanos explains, "consisted in the visit of a group of activists to the home of politicians with the intention of better informing them about the social problems created by evictions and of inviting them to PAH's assemblies and activities" (2014, 299). During the course of the visit, activists put up stickers, chant and generally make some noise. Such political action originated in Argentina, where it was employed in the 1990s by human rights activists who denounced the impunity of the perpetrators of "los desaparecidos" ("the disappeared"). In Spain, these actions started in March 2013 by PAH activists who sought to pressurise politicians to approve the popular legislative initiative. There was some debate as to the legality of this method since it was employed in front of politicians' homes. However, this has been considered (even in relevant court cases) to be a non-violent, civil disobedience act where activists seek to raise awareness about the lack of attention paid to certain human rights. The goal of this kind of political actions is to foster political discussion among public opinion and to pressurise politicians to approve the oopular legislative initiative. The idea that representative institutions are still the places to reach political transformation is intrinsic to *escraches*.

Citizen waves against cuts

Citizen waves started in 2012 for the purpose of stopping austerity politics. These citizen waves have been expressed in the fields of health, education and culture, among others, and employ different colours to represent their political expressions; white, green and red, respectively. The novelty of such type lies in its hybridity inasmuch as traditional structures and news dynamics merge. Traditional strategies followed by trade unions are adopted by these citizen waves, but are self-organised, inclusive and horizontal in nature.

These actions have been supported by the involvement of different actors: experts, professionals, activists, citizens, users, etc. The halt in 2013 and 2014 of the privatisation of several hospitals in Madrid has been the greatest success achieved to date. The so-called white wave was able to prove power abuse and malpractices during this privatisation process. Demonstrations, assemblies, development of manifestos, negotiations with politicians, all form part of the repertoires used by different citizen waves.

Peaceful siege of Parliament

In the second half of 2012, demonstrations started to adopt a new nature. On 25 September, "Surround the Parliament" was organised in Madrid. This consisted in a symbolic siege of the most important representative institution, Parliament. This kind of action was later extended to other representative institutions, especially town and city halls. The peaceful siege of representative institutions involves concentrating the protest to focus on specific areas. These actions are followed live by the other citizens, who use digital media tools (are streamings especially relevant). With such actions, we appreciate radicalisation of the protest inasmuch as activists directly address those considered responsible for political unrest: politicians.

Blockades and occupation of institutions and megaprojects

A new type of political action that has been recently consolidated is blockades and occupations of institutions and urban projects. Blockades consist in actions in which the normal daily life of institutions is altered by activists for the purpose of publicly denouncing wrongdoing or injustice. Such actions have recently spread to banks and

town/city halls, and have involved groups like iai@flautas and PAH. To date "Toque a Bankia" ("Pulling up Bankia") has been the most influential campaign. This initiative, held in May 2013, blocked many Bankia bank branches all around the country to protest about the cash injection of 18,000 million euros of public funds. Among the blockades of megaprojects, the "Gamonal case" is the most prominent. This case started with neighbourhood protests about the construction of an 8-million euro boulevard in an economically depressed area of Burgos (north Spain). Controversy ended with the detention of the boulevard construction. This type of action has been extended to other places, such as the recent protest of a demolition of the Can Vives squatter house in Barcelona.

Irruption of citizen-based political parties

A more recent, and probably highly striking, trend has been the emergence of many new political parties promoted by 15M grassroot activists. Since 2011, the emergence of new parties has been constant, and includes the parties: EQUO (2011) Partido X (X Party; 2013), Podemos (We can; 2014) and Guanyem Barcelona (Let´s win Barcelona; 2014). Other parties that precede the 15M movement, such as CUP and Escaños en Blanco (Empty Seats), are also linked to this movement inasfar as their claims and members. These new political parties differ from traditional parties, not only in their demands, but also in the promotion of new dynamics (transparency and participation) within their own party structures. In addition, these initiatives conceived the party form as one tool for political participation. The whole idea is that citizen groups try to use the party form and participate in elections as one more strategy –they do not presume that it is the only one– to draw attention to democratic shortcomings and the need for effective change (Tormey, 2014). ICT have become a key aspect of these

parties since they are employed for internal organisation matters, for the growth of the party, and for promoting their proposals. In the 2014 European elections in May, Podemos obtained a historic result by obtaining 5 MEPs (over 1.2 million votes). These new political formations have irrupted into the Spanish electoral arena after years of "street politics". These parties include 15M claims, but the difference now being the goal of defending them in representative institutions. Ada Colau, PAH´s charismatic spokesperson for several years (2009-2014), is now the leading figure of Guanyem Barcelona, a political project born in Barcelona in 2014 for the purpose of winning the 2015 local elections.

15M's political repertoire before the vertical and horizontal theoretical axis

The plurality and evolution in the forms of participation that have been consolidated thanks to 15M enable us to observe some outstanding elements to help politically reflect on this movement. One particular aspect that stands out is how the repertoire elements we have identified in the vertical and horizontal theoretical axis have been combined or mixed, and the extent to which it is worth wondering about the suitability of such differentiation to understand recent activism in Spain.

The national and international importance and repercussion of the occupations and assemblies that have taken place might lead us to think *a priori* that the horizontal logics of citizen participation clearly predominate. It is conceivable that these forms of political expression did indeed predominate when 15M originated. Moreover, the analysis done of the political repertoire that has unfolded in recent years enables us to see how complex the matter actually is. The recent proliferation of new political parties

(with grassroot activists linked to 15M) also makes us think about a tendency towards political institutionalisation and, therefore, towards the vertical logics model.

In the above-described political repertoire, interesting combinations of vertical and horizontal forms of participation can also be seen in the hybridisation sense. In the evolution of the political repertorie aboved analysed, a consolidation of several forms of direct participation can be seen, which intend to seek solutions for specific problems. The mortgage law matter is dealt with by proposing a popular legal initiative, and it also entails pressurising and negotiating with representative institutions. That is, when "following" the vertical model, rules of the democratic game are followed to bring about a political change through Parliament. Yet such political action performed through "traditional" channels, with the collection and inclusion of over 1.4 million signatures, is accompanied by actions such as "occupations of banks" or *escraches,* characterised by acts of civil disobedience. Pressure-based acts, non-violence and defending universal rights, but on the fringe of unlawfulness, is where participants accept the possibility of being submitted to punishment by law. We observe how a platform like PAH employs elements of both vertical and horizontal logics, as long as its political demands are heard better and it accomplishes political change.

Citizen waves also combine heterogenous elements from horizontal and vertical models. On the one hand, these waves follow traditional trade union models that are oriented towards public bureaucracy and approach the representative structures that the vertical logics "expects". On the other hand, these citizen waves are characterised by having incorporated the new culture and codes that emerged from 15M, expressed by organising assemblies and open identities in which professionals, affected parties, mothers, fathers, students, etc., participate. These are institutionalised platforms that

develop manifiestos and attempt to negotiate with representative structures (vertical model). However, they are also openly understood as inclusive and distributed self-organisation spaces (horizontal model).

Finally, we look at what is perhaps the most novel aspect of the proliferation of new political parties created by grassroot activists. In the last few years, formation of political parties has been a constant phenomenon in Spain, and has coincided with traditional parties becoming less popular. New parties like Podemos, Partido X, CUP or Plataforma Guanyem Barcelona have been created by activists who, after having considered the alternatives through external pressure, have changed strategy and decided to participate with their own parties in representative elections. What they have done is to give way to institutionalised politics, with its structures, programmes and internal rules and, by following the steps of the most vertical logics, they believe it is impossible to escape from representation as an element to transform political reality (Tormey, 2014). Nonetheless, all these new parties demand the necessity to incorporate horizontal elements into their own structures in order to avoid the formation of elites in their own structures, and they remain open to civil society and grassroot activists. So what these new parties defend is that forms of participation, assemblies or groups can be incorporated into their internal dynamics. In fact, they are now facing the challenge of making this combination of horizontal and vertical elements possible and of keeping their identification with civil society alive.

In short, we can see how 15M has opened up a repertoire of complex, dynamic actions where horizontal and vertical elements are creatively combined. We can also see how the initial phase of 15M centred on "conquering" the public space by showing its interest in promoting forms of political participation that approached horizontal models.

Nevertheless, political repertoire evolution has revealed that it is more specialised in demands and actions. With time, some vertical model elements have been consolidated, at least in terms of institutionalising political practices, but without ignoring certain horizontal logics elements as references, which were previously experimented with. It is worth wondering at this point about the possible determining factors of this evolution. This takes us back to key theorists like Habermas, Keane, Cohen and Arato and their reflection of civil society.

Civil society in the poor state permeability context

The political repertoire described above now faces the challenge that 15M still plays a role in association with (or what is expected of) civil society, especially in two aspects: 1) its relation with the political system; 2) the means employed to accomplish political transformation. This, we will remember, is where civil disobedience is considered to be the last resort of civil society's contribution.

The reason why 15M appeared in 2011 can be explained by parts of the population feeling they need to claim reform and to ask for democratisation of the political system. In the beginning, the forms that the political expression took combined classic forms of participation –similarly to street protests– and some novel elements, like *acampadas* and assemblies. However, these forms of participation soon progressed to specialisation and institutionalisation, and took forms of action and protest. Suchs political repertoire evolution has also led to the profileration of acts of civil disobedience, expressed as *escraches,* blocking institutions and stopping major public projects (megaprojects). Indeed the "Habermasian metaphore", which contemplates the siege of a castle, although no conquest is intended, has been exemplified through the

"Surround the Parliament" initiative. While this political repertoire evolved, it is noteworthy that the institutional channel has also been used, and has even been perfected with the emergence of actors and monitoring platforms. Finally, political repertoire development has ended with the formation of new political parties. Thus, the evolution of new political forms has been expressed by a tendency towards not only civil disobedience, but also towards specialisation and institutionalisation of forms of action. It is worth wondering at this point about the reasons behind this evolution; remembering elements from the civil society theory applied to the citizen initiative case is particularly useful for this purpose.

The proposal to reform the law on mortgages is especially relevant, not only because of the various actions employed to promote it (preparing manifiestos, looking for support, political negotiation, *escraches*, etc.), but also because of the popular support it had, and the answer that the government gave it (Romanos, 2014). This proposal reached Parliament after more than 1.4 million signatures had been collected (Author, 2014). The governing party, PP, denied transmitting its discussion in Parliament, but gave in to pressure on 12 February 2013 after "the latest suicide to be provoked by evictions become known" (Romanos, 2013, 229). Although permission was given for it to be discussed, the citizen initiative had no chance of it being approved as PP had long since made its position against it quite clear. PP finally (2 April) voted no to the citizen initiative through a law that its own parliamentary group proposed. During the weeks that the citizen initiative lasted, and despite citizens' pressure being expressed through street protests and *escraches*, and this initiative receiving much popular support, the main demand of this law (the acceptance of assets in lieu of payment) was never the government's main point of interest. Once again, civil society's

external pressure came up against a political system that was barely amenable to outside claims.

Along these lines, it is worth remembering that although many claims made by 15M have become deeply rooted in the public domain –where matters such as reforming the electoral law, reforming the law on mortgages, promoting public transparency, democratisation and transforming key representative institutions, further promotion of citizen participation, reforming the Tribunal de Cuentas (Court of Auditors), etc., have emerged, calls for democratic regeneration seem to be far (beyond pure rhetoric) removed from the interest shown by the traditional parties dominating Spanish politics. Furthermore, laws like the 2013 Law on Public Safety (popularly known as the "gag law") the electoral reform of 2011 (that made more difficult to new parties to run for elections) and the 2013 Transparency law (very much discussed since its leaves out of reach key power institutions) have gone in the opposite direction that 15M demands have. This may lead to an understanding that the generalised way that citizens' forms of participation have progressed is related to lack of permeability in the political system. Non-compliance with the legal demands concealed behind civil society's various neo-Tocquevillian versions which, based on the understanding that the constitution is an unfinished project still to be reviewed, allows to theoretically frame the transformation that now addresses the specialisation of political action. It also explains the reasons for renouncing civil society's self-limiting nature to favour the "power conquest" option.

Conclussions

In Spain, analysing political repertoire demonstrates how we have gone from an initial stage in which 15M was erected as a civil society movement dedicated to consider generalised criticisms of the system to regenerating it in a new phase with commitment

23

to specialising and institutionalising political forms of action. As part of this tendency towards specialisation, it is stressed that the proliferation of many mechanisms and monitoring platforms is typical of monitored democratic models. Nonetheless, as permeability is lacking in the political system, this has led to numerous strategies which have, in turn, led to the proliferation of new political parties, erected by civil society actors who seem to renounce the self-limiting character as they opt to acquire power. Besides, this process is taking place in the delegitimisation context of traditional parties, and is becoming an outburst of new parties within representative structures. In October 2012, CUP obtained three seats in the Catalan Parliament elections, while Podemos obtained five Euro MPs in the European elections in May 2014 after having been officially registered only 3 months earlier.

The outburst of these new parties implies a change in strategy where vertical and horizontal elements are combined, and where people begin to consider that change is only possible from within representative institutions given the poor effect in Spain of the pressure placed by civil society from the fringes of politics.

To summarise, civil society's neo-Tocquevillian approaches insist on civil society's self-limiting nature and on the importance of a dynamic, open relationship between it and the political system. The case of Spain and the political repertoire evolution there demonstrate precisely the importance of this aspect, and also allow us to see how civil society extends strategies and political repertoire when the political system continues to be stubborn. It is precisely the fact that lack of connection and feedback between civil society and the political society, and its influence on these changes in the citizen participation strategy, now incorporates the partisan form, even among activists who have been traditionally more connected with horizontal aspects and logics. It remains to be seen in the near future if this evolution and transformation of

Spainsh civil society actors will foster a more democratic and permeable relation with the representative structures.

References

Anduiza, E., Cristancho, C. y Sabucedo, J.M. (2013). "Mobilization through online social networks: the political protest of the indignados in Spain. Information", *Communication and Society*, 1-15.

Arato, A. & Cohen, J (1992). *Sociedad civil y teoría política* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica).

Barber, B. (2004). *Democracia fuerte: política participativa para una nueva época* (Córdoba: Almuzara).

Barber, B. (2003). *Jihad Vs. McWorld. Terrorism challenge to democracy* (London: Corgi Books).

Cabal, F. (ed.) (2011). *Indignados 15M* (Madrid: Mandala Ediciones).

Castañeda, E. (2012). "The *Indignados* of Spain: A Precedent to Occupy Wall Street", *Social Movement Studies*, 11(3-4) 309-319.

Castells, M. (2012). *Networks of outrage and hope: Social movements in the Internet age* (Cambridge: Polity).

Charnock, G., Purcell, T. & Ribera-Fumaz (2011). "¡Indígnate!: the 2011 popular protest and the limits to democracy in Spain", *Capital and Class*, 31, 3-11.

Cohen, J. & Arato, A. (1992). *Sociedad civil y teoría política* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica).

Colau, A. & Alemany, A. (2012). *Vidas hipotecadas. De la burbuja inmobiliaria al derecho de la vivienda* (Barcelona: Angle Editorial).

Colau, A., & Alemany, A. (2013). *¡Sí se puede! Crónica de una pequeña gran victoria* (Barcelona: Destino).

Dalton, R., Van Sickle, A. and Weldon, S. (2010). "The Individual–Institutional Nexus of Protest Behaviour", *British Journal of Political Science*, 51-73.

Day, R. (2008). *Gramsci is Dead. Anarchist currents in the newest social movements* (London: Orient Longman).

Dean, J. (2009). *Democracy and other neoliberal fantasies: communicative capitalism & left politics* (Durham N.C: Duke University Press)

Della Porta, D. (2013). *Can Democracy Be Saved*? *Participation, Deliberation and Social Movements* (Cambridge: Polity).

Edwards, M. (2004). *Civil society* (Cambrdige: Polity Press).

Ehrenberg, J. (1999). *Civil society. The critical history of an idea* (New York: New York University Press).

Encarnación, O. G. (2003). *The myth of civil society. Social capital and democratic consolidation in Spain and Brazil* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan).

Flesher Fominaya, C. (2013). "Movement culture continuity: the British anti-roads movements as precursor to Global Justice Movement". In Flesher Fominaya, C. & Cox, L. *Understanding European Movement* (New York: Routledge), 109-124.

Flesher Fominaya, C. (2007). "Autonomous Movements and the Institutional Left: Two Approaches in Tension in Madrid's Anti-globalization Network", *South European Society and Politics*, 12(3) 335 – 358.

Fuster Morell, M. (2012) "The Free Culture and 15M Movements in Spain: Composition, Social Networks and Synergies", *Social Movement Studies*, 11(3-4) 386-391.

Graeber, D. (2013). *The democracy project. A History. A Crisis. A Movement* (New York: Penguin).

Habermas, J. (1996). *Between Facts and Norms. Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy* (Cambridge: MIT Press).

Hall, J. A. (1995). *Civil society, theory, history, comparison*, (Cambridge: Polity Press).

Holloway, J. (2002). *Change the World Without Taking Power: The Meaning of Revolution Today,* (London: Pluto Press).

Hooghe, M., Hosch-Dayican, B. & van Deth, J. W. (2014). "Conceptualizing political participation", *Acta Politica*, 1-12.

Inglehart, R. (1990). *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society*, Princeton University Press.

Juris, J. S. (2005). "Social Forums and their Margins: Networking Logics and the Cultural Politics of Autonomous Space ephemera theory & politics in organization forum", *Ephemera,* 5 (2) 253-272.

Kaldor, M., Anheier H. & Glasius (eds.) (2003). *Global civil society,* Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Kaldor, M. (2003). "The idea of global civil society", *International Affairs*, 79(3), 583-593.

Kaldor, M. & Selchow, S (2013) "The 'Bubbling Up' of Subterranean Politics in Europe", *Journal of Civil Society*, 9(1), 78-99,

Keane, J. (1988). *Democracy and civil society* (London: Verso).

Keane, J. (2003). *Global civil society?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Micó, J. L., & Casero-Ripollés, A. (2013). "Political activism online: Organization and media relations in the case of 15M in Spain". *Information, Communication and Society*, 1-16.

Norris, P. (2002). *Democratic Phoenix: Reinventing Political Activism* (New York: Cambridge University Press).

Pianta, M. (2013). "Democracy Lost: The Financial Crisis in Europe and the Role of Civil Society", *Journal of Civil Society*, 9(2), 148,161.

Postill, J. (2013). "Democracy in an age of viral reality: A media epidemiography of Spain's indignados movement", *Ethnography*, 23, 1-19.

Quaranta M. (2003). "Measuring political protest in Western Europe: assessing cross-national equivalence", *European Political Science Review*, 5, 457-482.

Robinson, A. & Tormey, S. (2005) "Horizontals', 'Verticals' and the Conflicting Logics of Transformative Politics", in Hayden, P. & el-Ojeili, C. *Confronting Globalization*, Palgrave, 209-226.

Robinson, A. and Tormey, S. (2007). "Beyond Representation? A Rejoinder", *Parliamentary Affairs*, 60 (1) 127–137.

Romanos, E. (2013). "Collective learning processes within social movements: some insights into the Spanish 15-M/Indignados movement". In Flesher Fominaya C. & Cox, L. (eds)

Understanding European movements: new social movements, global justice struggles, anti-austerity protest (New York: Routledge), 203-219.

Romanos, E. (2014). "Evictions, Petitions and Escraches: Contentious Housing in Austerity Spain". *Social Movement Studies*, 13(2), 296-302.

Seligman, A. (1992). *The idea of civil society* (Princenton: Princeton University Press).

Taibo, C. (2013) "The Spanish *indignados*: A movement with two souls", *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 20, 155-158.

Tascón, M. & Quintana, Y. (2012). *Ciberactivismo. Las nuevas revoluciones de las multitudes conectadas* (Madrid: Catarata).

Toret, J. (2013). *Tecnopolítica: la potencia de las multitudes conectadas. El sistema red 15M, un nuevo paradigma de la política distribuida* (Barcelona: UOC).

Tormey, S. (2014) *Politics after Representation* (Cambridge: Polity).

van Deth, J. W (2014). "A conceptual map of political participation", *Acta Politica*, 1-14.

Zizek, S. (2001). Repeating Lenin. Available at: http://www.lacan.com/replenin.htm. (retrieved 22 November 2005)

Zizek, S., (2010). "From democracy to divine violence". In Agamben, G. (ed.), *Democracy in what state?* (New York: Columbia University Press).

Author 2012

Author 2014

---

[1] This initiative began gathering information on the case with the collaboration of Internet users; a legal court case eventually resulted. The case cost around 15,000€; an appeal through a *crowdfunding*

campaign raised 18,359€ in less than 24 hours from 965 donations and, within days, the complaint was filed (Tascón & Quintana 2012, 59-60).