Social movements in the political transition: inheritances, singularities, and transformations of social mobilisation in the 1970s

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this article is to analyse the characteristics of social mobilisation during the democratic transition in Spain in the late 1970s. Beyond the unequal silence that regarding the roles played by different social movements in shaping the configuration of the political and social system at that time, the recovery of some viewpoints that provide visibility to the contribution of social movements to political and social change, is also valuable. Specifically, the transmission of heritage, the processes of relief among activists, and the peculiarities of these activities, which have had several consequences lasting many decades. Secondary sources and the testimonies of numerous anti-nuclear, feminist, nationalist, linguistic, pacifist, and neighbourhood activists from various research projects were used. Far from a nostalgic review, the results reveal the complex relationships between political parties—especially those on the left—and social movements. The most visible traces of these connexions are those that put an end to the silence manufactured by the Francoist regime, that led the collective effervescence into the streets and public spaces, enabled diversification, specialisation, and socialisation of a new generation of activists, and produced relative deradicalisation and professionalisation which brought about legal reforms and further social change, as well as the institutionalisation of social movements.

Keywords: social movements, political transition, social change, collective effervescence.

PROTEST AND COLLECTIVE ACTION IN EXCEPTIONAL TIMES

Various theoretical and methodological tools are available for the analysis of social mobilisation in established democracies. The most frequent is, firstly, to turn to one of the versions of the theory of resource mobilisation (be it human, financial, organisational, or ideological) to understand how social movements capture and manage these resources in order to achieve their objectives (McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Jenkins, 1983; Zald and McCarthy, 1987). Secondly, this knowledge could then be deepened by using the theory of collective identity to prioritise elements which facilitate the construction of a system of action that guides collective practices and decisions (Melucci, 1989; 1996). Thirdly, both these approaches can be complemented by the different dimensions of the political context in which changing political

opportunities open new perspectives for contentious [legal] action. Although this theory has developed a lot in recent years, it has retained its common core based on the relevance of three variables: the institutional structure, informal procedures, and dominant strategies required to face challengers, and the configuration of power in the system of parties and interested associations (Kriesi, 1992; Tarrow, 1998).[1]

One could also look at other concepts such as the cycle of protests in order to recognise and understand protest as an action that "spreads to various sectors of the population, is highly organised and is widely used as the instrument to present demands" (Tarrow, 1989, p. 14–15). But, from my point of view, this would obscure too many elements among a sea of subjective interpretations about the good or bad use of resources, opportunities, and results. This is not the objective of this article, nor do I consider that this topic can be adequately addressed in such a limited space. Instead, I propose approaching this subject from a more eclectic perspective, combining some of these concepts, expanding them with others such as the idea of structural tension or conductivity which comes from the collective behaviour theory of Smelser (1963) and that of mass behaviour by Kornhauser (1959), as well as more recent ones related to submerged networks or symbolic challenges (Melucci, 1996).

The information presented and discussed here essentially comes from several extensive pieces of work which investigated the recent history of social mobilisation throughout Spain, as well as in different geographical areas, which have been characterised by very heterogeneous degrees of collective action. There has also been a re-reading of the extensive documentation that formed part of four of my papers (Tejerina, 1992; 2001; 2010; Tejerina, Fernández-Sobrado and Aierdi, 1995). I decided not to quantify the mobilisation, a task that requires an arduous search and systematisation and resignification of sources

and testimonies, which is not always easy because of their diversity and dispersion. Instead, I chose to prioritise activists' testimonies and documents and well-founded interpretations from different actors.

The article is divided into three sections. The first deals with the characteristics of social mobilisation during the Franco era, [in the context of] its completely closed political structure, growing accumulated structural tension, and in which fierce repression and the law of silence prevailed in the public space. The second characterises a moment of social exceptionality—in Durkheim's terms, of collective effervescence—and of a general demand for democracy after almost forty years of dictatorial rule. Here we stop to reflect upon the characteristics of the mobilisation inherited from the pre-democratic times and their transformations. In the third and last section, we return to the idea of exceptionality and possible interpretations in the light of the different theoretical approaches available.

SOCIAL MOBILISATION DURING FRANCO'S REGIME: THE LAW OF SILENCE

There are two main images of social mobilisation that remain in the memory of its longest-lived witnesses and in the yellowed pages of the press published at the time: (a) large masses of impassioned people filling squares to exalt the regime and accompany the parades or large celebratory anniversaries the authorities would periodically stage; (b) the silence about the group of opposition to the dictatorship and the repression of those who dared to challenge the social control imposed upon the public space. Both images may lead one to think that the opposition social movements were weak, scarce, and even non-existent during the long periods of the dictatorship. It cannot be denied that the social control exercised through violence and repression for decades had an accumulated effect on the consciousness of people who wanted to change things. However, this does not nullify the presence of numerous groups and collectives that, sometimes acting clandestinely and other times

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1   There are several versions of the political context approach, but one that I find particularly interesting can be found in Kriesi (2004).

through interposed associations, maintained a constant and progressively increasing opposition activity. Let us briefly review the attempts to challenge the 'reduction to silence'.

The groups of a more political nature, which were officially excluded and banned, were subjected to constant police persecution. Their kingdom was that of absolute secrecy and on numerous occasions they were doomed to exile. Along with these groups, a series of disgruntled and aggrieved collectives also formed, and these (timidly at first and later more openly) made it possible for the collective life circumscribed to 'underground networks' to emerge into the public space (Melucci, 1982, p. 79 onwards). Some groups and certain spaces lent themselves more to the construction of this reticular, diffuse, and weakly structured form of mobilisation, for example the worlds of workers and factories and that of students and universities. From the late 1940s, workers' discontent had appeared on numerous occasions when they demanded better wages and working conditions. Workers' Commissions originate in the forms of spontaneous workers' organisation that were appearing here and there with the negotiation of specific labour problems, and especially, with the agreements and wage increases made outside official trade unionism (Ruíz, 1994). What I want to highlight here is that this discontent was acquiring a growing role and gaining visibility through social mobilisation around conflicts in factories, in industrial productive sectors, with strikes, and the demand for improved living conditions for workers. In spite of the constant arrests and the processes of illegalisation, the trade union movement played an important part in the process of channelling the social and political discontent against the Franco regime.

From 1956, and above all, from the mid-1960s, the spaces and social life of university campuses became places of exchange, discussion, and the generation of proposals that sought more autonomy for universities, as well as freedom and democracy for the country. There were dozens of confinements, strikes, and riots linked to student activism, and in response to campus mobilisation—which was acquiring a greater public presence from the end of the 1960s—there were arrests, delays to the start of courses, and university closures. As Sartorius and Sabio point out, "according to the *National Public Order White paper* from November 1975, the police estimated the presence of 2,500 'fully subversive students' throughout Spain" (2007, p. 156).

Although the percentage of permanent activists within universities did not represent more than 1% of their students, a significant percentage of students had a greater awareness [about these issues], and this had the capacity to condition university life. This space was very relevant to the political drift of the transition, because it facilitated political socialisation by a generation that, having come from bourgeois circles, embraced socialist and communist beliefs and led the opposition to the continuing trends of the Franco regime. A good part of the cadres and leaders of the left (and right-wing) parties who played leading roles during the process of the transition and consolidation of democracy had learned their skills on university campuses.[2]

A third space of mobilisation that opened fissures in the structure of the dictatorship was the growing prominence acquired by family and neighbour associations — especially relevant in the popular neighbourhoods of large urban centres. The associations (of family heads) of neighbours became spokespeople for the needs of the wide social sectors that were not being taken care of by the municipal or provincial Francoist institutions. The most frequent requests were cultural, sports, health, and social facilities. The central characteristic of these groups was to combine the function of interlocution between citizens at the municipal level and the promotion of popular demands about the housing problem, land speculation, and administrative corruption by mobilising on the street. But the space of autonomy that these associations were building ended up overflowing the narrow limits imposed by the official legality.

2 For a historical analysis of the student mobilisations, see González (2005), and for an analysis of the political dissent of this sector of the population during the Franco regime, see Maravall (1978).

Many women played an important role in these movements, [and used them] to emerge from their invisibility, silence, and secondary roles that the dominant ideology had reserved for them during the Franco regime. While during the dictatorship women had played an important role in the labour, student, neighbourhood, and political mobilisations, feminist demands had been relegated, on numerous occasions, to the background; it always seemed more urgent to end the dictatorship and achieve a democratic system, the freedom of political prisoners, and amnesty or the legalisation of political organisations. Halfway through 1976, the *Movimiento Democrático de Mujeres* (MDM; Women's Democratic Movement) emerged as one of the main protagonists of the mobilisation and rallies to end the discrimination suffered by women, but this should not overshadow their previous political work. There were pioneering groups in different cities and provinces, at least from 1964 onwards, which were joined by a new generation of feminist women who, influenced by the currents of thought coming from Europe, contributed to the feminist ideas and gave more presence to the other more political demands: combatting repression and the lack of freedoms.[3]

Moreover, during the last two decades of the Franco regime, other agrarian and peasant-type, anti-militarist, pacifist and anti-nuclear, social movements as well as various autonomist and nationalist movements were building opposition and resistance spaces in a secrecy that, increasingly, challenged the official silence [which had been] violently imposed onto public spaces.[4]

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3   For more on the processes of the construction of the gender identities of Spanish women, consult Casado (2002), and on the identity and processes of change within the feminist movement, see Martínez (2015).

4   If we omit some paradigmatic examples of the role of repression on the dynamics of specific social movements, the different approaches—and especially those closest to the political context—did not develop a systematic vision of their influence, because they were conceived within societies in which democratic processes had already become partially consolidated. For a more detailed analysis of different cases, see Davenport, Johnston, and Mueller (2004) and Johnston (2012).

THE DEMOCRATISING FEVER AND COLLECTIVE EFFERVESCENCE

The social movements that had been forming underground or in the shadow of official organisations (the Spanish Trade Union Organisation, commonly known as the *Sindicato Vertical* or the Vertical Labour Union, the Spanish University Union, professional associations of students, and associations of family heads), which had maintained an underground social fabric during this time, emerged upon the death of the dictator and soon reached a sought-after visibility. From that moment, social mobilisation acquired new characteristics: (1) the street as a privileged space for ideals; (2) the reinvention (metamorphosis) of some collectives that had served as hidden cover for the political opposition; (3) the progressive diversification and specialisation of each movement; (4) generational change and ideological deradicalisation; (5) the gradual professionalisation of organisations and, in some cases, their institutionalisation; and (6) legal changes, social reforms, and cultural transformation. The following sections delve into the various aspects of each of these elements that make up the differential structure of a short period of collective effervescence, which have not always been recognised as key contributions by social movements to the democratic transition.

The street as a privileged space for making social demands

The visibility of the opposition to the Franco regime had been slowly increasing through the creation of a social fabric that constituted a society parallel to the placidity of official daily life. The authorities were aware of this situation, since the funds of the government's Ministry of the Interior, and the annual reports by civil governments form part of the *Archivo General de la Administración* (AGA; General Archive of the Administration) in Alcalá de Henares (Spain), and their in-depth analysis by Sartorius and Sabio (2007), give a detailed account of the intense life of opposition movements. We will mention two small examples of this knowledge:

> The feeling of discontent in neighbourhoods is being skilfully exploited by communist organisations that are prepared to capitalise on

all the frustration and grievance felt by broad social sectors in order to further their ideas (AGA, 1976, p. 4).

It is an undeniable fact that lately the subversion has been showing signs of audacity with the consequent unrest in the country's air. This disorder is the goal pursued by the university agitators [...]. [These agitators] drag along the majority of students, from their healthy and naive [state], into an orgy of anarchy and nihilism (A.H.P., 1976, p. 6)

To these should be added the transversal role played by the women who subsequently organised around the MDM:

The three areas upon which the Women's Democratic Movement projected its activity: the first, and the one that would serve as a platform for the other two was solidarity, supporting the prisoners and their families and denouncing the repressive policy of the Franco regime. The second space was eminently political since the priority objective for many activists of the MDM, and of course the Communist Party of Spain, was to erode the Franco regime by transferring the social conflicts to the working class neighbourhoods. [...] Finally, a very significant part of the leadership of the MDM embarked on the search for a third space, the feminist [one], based on a discourse that made the specific demands of women compatible with the anti-Franco struggle (MDM CyL, 2015).

With the end of the Franco regime, what had remained as a 'secret collective' came into the light. The first years of post-Francoism were characterised by the emergence of new discourses—new for the majority of citizens—that occupied the walls and streets of many cities and became hegemonic in certain territorial contexts. Remember that one of Francoism's characteristics was the denial of any definition of reality that did not agree with the official [one]. The worker, neighbourhood, feminist, or nationalist demands had been denied and, faced with the threat and exercise of physical repression, they had

no choice but to keep them in the space of shared privacy, sporadically allowing them discontinuous appearances in the public space. A major change in the world of social movements occurred when, from the mid-1970s, these circles became increasingly visible, and extended their demands and petitions through various forms of activism: strikes, occupations, sit-ins, awareness days, manifestos, collection of signatures, solidarity campaigns, complaints, legal moves, and demonstrations. Such was the accumulation of motives for protest and forms of making them visible, that a glance at the press and reports from the time conveys a certain feeling of overflow of the situation, especially when compared with the typical environment from the time before.

The metamorphosis and renovation of underground networks
The activities of opposition and resistance had been maintained thanks to a wide network of groups, collectives, and associations (cultural, social, religious, folk, leisure, etc.) that had adopted a dual function: their own specific activity and providing refuge for ideas contrary to the political regime. A paradigmatic case was that of activities developed in languages other than Spanish. The closure of public spaces for the expression of political, social, or cultural ideas contrary to those advocated by Franco had forced [people] to seek refuge in other institutions in order to keep them alive. Different entities under the protection of some religious orders played an important role in the maintenance of cultural production in the Catalan, Basque, or Galician languages. Between 1938 and 1945 a series of orders, decrees, and laws were promulgated that tried to 'Castilian-ise' Spanish life, and this marginalised and repressed the use of other languages. The result was that the public use of these other languages decreased, where it progressively became protected in private and family life. However, these difficulties pushed the [social] conscience to do something to support some languages that were threatened and discriminated against. At least in the cases of Catalan and Basque, the contribution of seminary students and a large section of the clergy to the maintenance of their cultural manifestations is well known (Pérez-Agote, 1984; 1987; Johnston, 1991).

The preservation and reproduction of nationalist identity and beliefs also benefited from significant support from a part of the clergy in territories where feelings of this type existed. Despite their practically non-existent public presence, or the symbolic nature of their demonstrations, diverse organisations and groups, forced to act in semi-secrecy, maintained and reproduced the nationalist-identity discourse. In the same way, numerous groups of workers, neighbours, artists and women relied on the use of parish premises and spaces for their meetings and debates. The special status the Catholic church had throughout the Franco regime also served as a shelter for the opposition and resistance activities of many collectives. These activities and practices were covert, but in times of conflict these spaces served as a place of [self-imposed] confinements or for the manifestation of multiple discontents.[5]

Numerous cultural, folkloric, and civic groups, as well as sports, leisure, and recreational associations, among others, played a double role: they overtly stated what at first appeared to be the object of their constitution, and yet maintained and reproduced structures to facilitate interaction between its members and partners with political content or social activism, in a non-visible way. During these meetings, activities, or outings, the social and political situation was discussed, and so this became a semi-private space where politics came to the fore. The majority—and in certain areas all—of the groups that comprised the social movements during the period when neither the political nor trade union organisations could affect the regime ([because they were] were forbidden) sought to maintain this functional duality: nothing was what it seemed. During the years following Franco's death, the pressure exerted by these groups prompted first their acceptance, and then their legalisation, and thus, they conquered spaces of freedom that had previously been forbidden to them or [to which their use had] simply been condemned to secrecy.

The more organised political groups with democratic or leftist ideologies acted in the purest secrecy, under the watchful eye of the security forces and bodies, but the growing proliferation of collectives with all kinds of demands —especially sectoral and specific ones— ended up overcoming the narrow limits that, ironically, had been imposed on organised collective action. With the subsequent legalisation of political organisations:

> the political parties took over the prominence of political life after the June 1977 elections. Even more so after the municipal elections of April 1979, when many neighbourhood leaders made the leap from associations to politics and councils (Sartorius and Sabio, 2007, p. 209).

To the eyes of an observer today, the degree of collective effervescence reached by the political sphere in the five-year period between the last months of Franco's life and the constitution of the new democratic city councils after the municipal elections of 1979, is surprising. During this time, when the civic, political, and social spheres could not be distinguished, and with their respective demands and overlaps on the one hand, and resistance and attempts to regress to the old and increasingly delegitimised political institutions on the other, the so-called Spanish political transition process was forged. Many of their achievements were thanks to the grassroots drive and encouragement that, through all those years, did not stop mobilising in favour of their long-delayed demands.

Diversification and specialisation of social movements
From 1970, the street became established as an authentic space for political expression and this combined with the politicisation of social organisations during the Franco era. The moments of collective effervescence experienced during the transition were followed by a process of demobilisation, which some authors have identified with the process of privatisation of

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5   The press of the time frequently reported on the numerous acts, assemblies, sit-ins, and hunger strikes that used churches and parishes as refuges. A dramatic example is that of the assault and eviction, carried out by armed police, of striking workers assembled in the church of San Francisco de Asís, in the Zaramaga neighbourhood of Vitoria-Gasteiz on 3 March 1976, which resulted in the death of five people and left more than 150 wounded by shots.

life (Habermas, 1975). This generated a feeling of energy loss from the intersubjective framework that had been consolidated at the end of Francoism. This feeling was fuelled by the decrease in the intensity of interactive and associative life, or by the reduction in the political projection of these associations, or by both (Pérez-Agote, 1987, p. 91).

The political opening, although timid and extremely limited by the old legal framework, gave rise to a context in which secrecy, at least for the most part, was transformed into underground networks where demands, pressure strategies, confrontational tactics, and possible alliances were discussed, negotiated, and approved. At the same time, the more power-oriented political organisations started to functionally differentiate from social movements that were more accurately identifying specific demands. Although the coexistence between both types —at least during a good part of the Franco regime— had already borne its best results, a particular political culture was generated during the transition that would be characterised by distrust and suspicion between social movements and political organisations (Fishman, 2012).[6]

The lack of communication channels between social movements and governmental authorities converted each demand, we will not yet say each division, into a permanent refusal to recognise their opposers and their legitimacy to make proposals on behalf of the affected groups. The few spaces in which these claims could be expressed and manifested had to be conquered and uprooted by publicly mobilising visible discontent. The most frequent response from the authorities —and with decreasing legitimacy— was the social control of the protests and refusal to negotiate. At first,

some political organisations tried to channel these protests by incorporating them into their programs, integrating numerous activists into their candidacies, and lending support to interlocution and delegated negotiation. Other organisations linked their destiny to the evolution of social movements, preferably by popular mobilisation actions. This caused the first break between the majoritarian parties and extra-parliamentary left, and these differences would deepen in the following decades.

Social movements learned to use all the legal means and legal loopholes possible to expand their scope of action by denouncing the legislation of the time, deadline breaches, requests for protection, etc. However, the arena in which they preferred to defend the demands of social movements was media debate, their presence in published opinion pieces, and visibility in the public space. Some examples [of bodies] that proposed social changes in society as a whole and increased the visibility and weight [behind the need to] construct and institutionalise a mobilisation space include: (a) the neighbourhood movement, with its proposals for an urbanism closer to the needs of citizens and for improving neighbourhood living conditions; (b) the anti-nuclear movement which opposed the risks of atomic energy and its consequences for the population's health; (c) the feminist movement with its demands for equality between men and women and [women's] right to make decisions about their own bodies; (d) the conscientious objection movement against compulsory military service and in favour of pacifist values; and (e) the labour movement which fought for labour rights by organising strikes and collective bargaining.

A key element that [helped encourage these types of change] was the renewal of political life to political parties, the progressive constitution of well-structured political organisations, and the growing autonomy or differentiation of the political sphere (institutionalisation). As the new political institutions were being built (with their municipal, provincial, national—and later, autonomic—decision-making bodies), and a process of political normalisation started, new spaces opened up for the progressive specialisation of social movements.

6 An ample bibliography about the transition from dictatorial and authoritarian regimes to democratic political systems is available, which I will not reproduce here. However, it is worth remembering that other authors have pointed out the peculiarity of the Spanish transition and the particular configuration of a political culture full of mistrust and suspicion between the elites of political parties and organisations close to social movements (Maravall, 1982; O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986; Linz and Stepan, 1996; Colomer, 1998; Laraña, 2011).

Generational change and ideological deradicalisation

As Offe points out, the so-called new social movements try to politicise a sphere of action which is public but not institutionalised and which is halfway between the strictly private and the public. Both during the Franco period and throughout the transition, this distinction did not make much sense from the activist's point of view because the public dimension occupied all the useful space. However, with the passage of time, these relationships between the public and private became more complex. For many of the activists, the search for personal fulfilment and self-realisation at the private level led them to make a public commitment in order to try to contribute one more small contribution to the collective transformation of society; in the words of an environmental activist, personal coherence demands public action:

> I believe that things must change and they have to be transformed, and we have to make things better than they are now and, at least, I contribute my grain of sand in [terms of] what I know how to do. At least that I have very clear. What I know how to do and what I believe can be done. This doesn't change anything? Well, nothing changes then, what are we going to do! But, that's it, you've contributed. Not to change, because we know that despite what we do, it doesn't change much, but [we must] try, for consistency with oneself (Tejerina, 2010, p. 261).

These social changes were introducing important modifications to the concept of total commitment. However, for other activists there is a clear separation between their private life and activism which is difficult to reconcile. For example, as an environmental activist refers to the recovery of his private life, when their mobilisation had previously absorbed all their energy and effort:

> Now we have our life, I think that we have recovered. It is a part of your personal life: if you like to go to the movies, you like to read, you like to go out somewhere, you like to hang out with other people, [but] not only [with] your [people from your] group, if not it would be..., yes, this would be really boring (Cavia et al., 2005, p. 63).

The deep involvement in activism can completely change one's personal life, through the transformation of certain lifestyles and patterns of behaviour. In this case, action in the public sphere leads to a transformation in the private sphere. There are already known examples, such as participation in closed religious groups or clandestine organisations, but there are also many examples among ecologists or, even more clearly, in the field of feminist mobilisation. Put another way: the public–private dichotomy has its counterpart in another dichotomy that works as an equivalence between the political and personal (non-political).

This element is key to understanding a transformation that has taken place in the militancy of social movements between, on the one hand, the generation that became socialised during the Franco regime and the transition and, on the other hand, those that came afterwards. In later generations of activists more people felt that, while public politics is 'non-privatisable' and not susceptible to personal appropriation, the personal is apolitical and not susceptible to collective publication: an area protected from the interference of the public and politics. The private is what lays beyond the reach of public scrutiny and of attempts to make the public visible: the opaqueness of one's life in front of that of others. But it is visible to oneself in terms of awareness of one's way of life and of things that can be done (personal coherence) and the daily struggle in one's personal life (personal transformation).

For the generation who lived through the transition, the militancy had an extra commitment, a total bond, possibly marked by an over-ideological or radical conception of 'being militant', understood as a total and exclusive commitment. Exclusivity refers more to the subordination of other spheres of one's personal life than it does to belonging to a single organisation, because, in fact, belonging to several collectives at the same time was frequent—especially (though not exclusively) among feminist and union activists. However, there are some particular cases where the opposite of the above is true: a trajectory from the personal to the public. For example, the

activism of certain young feminists went through a process of self-consciousness and analysis of their behaviour, trying to understand the practices in which they were immersed; thus, the politics started to be undertaken in the personal area, that of intimate knowledge:

> In the beginning, it is always a process that the groups of women that organise themselves live through. There is a process of self-awareness in the groups in which you are doing therapy: What is happening to me? What is it that I feel? What are my experiences? And, through this, get it out to society already, you've gone with issues denouncing and claiming certain things (Tejerina, 2010, p. 262).

It is impossible to establish a radical separation between the public and private; their multiple relationships have a contingent historical connection that, depending on the contexts, can take on diverse experiences and serve as a field for new forms and projects, as in the case of some feminist groups, the social centres created by the autonomous and occupation movements, and various forms of resistance that come together in the alter-globalisation movement. The transition constituted a historical moment that shaped a particular conception of activism —the one characterised by a strong and complete commitment to the ideological over-radicalisation present in numerous collectives. Beginning in the mid-1980s, the process of change to this conception— whose decline had already begun—accelerated.

Institutionalisation and organisational professionalisation

The legalisation of political parties and the implementation of new democratic procedures for the delegation of popular representation resulted in the progressive institutionalisation of the political sphere. As Tilly and Wood (2013) point out, the institutionalisation of Western societies was accompanied by increasing rationalisation and professionalisation of social movements —initially gently so, but subsequently forced— to act as spokespersons for civil society before the opinion of the public and of authorities.

In the context of the transition, the emergence, or resurgence, of certain social movements brought about the re-politicisation of civil society, insofar as new or old themes again appeared or arose. These issues —including feminism, environmentalism, and pacifism— became the subject of public discussion and reflection (among a certain type of relatively aware public) because neither the state nor society had sufficiently promoted them. Sometimes these also became a matter of concern, by private choice; that is, they were privatised in the sense that private actors appropriated them, for example, the decriminalisation of certain behaviours, as in the case of gay and lesbian [sexual orientations]. In both cases, the problem that arose was the participation of social actors in matters of general interest (Tejerina, 2010, p. 208).

The progressive institutionalisation of social movements had paradoxical elements: achievements and social changes as a result of mobilisation, cooptation of militants by political parties, the transfer of demands to political organisations and public institutions, and fatigue and disenchantment with the consequent demobilisation. The coexistence between these entities was anything but peaceful and collaborative, and the conflicts were overwhelming. I am not sure if I can state that this was the golden age of mobilisation, but it has undoubtedly left a very deep imprint in the Spanish political culture that can clearly be identified even in the so-called 15-M Movement starting on 15 May 2011 as well as in the present day.

Both during the Franco regime, for the reasons already discussed, and during the transition, participation took different organisational forms—although these were almost always little formalised, with assemblyism predominating in decision making, and with scarce economic resources mostly derived from self-financing. The internal structure was characterised by its high degree of fragmentation and splintering, and mostly informal leadership (Tejerina et al., 1995, p. 75 onwards). Subsequently, their search for results and

effectiveness [in achieving] their demands led to a relative and gradual increase in professionalisation, although it significantly varied from one place to another and according to the ideological approach adopted by each organisation. These characteristics of the Spanish social movements strongly contrast with those of other European countries and the USA, where professionalisation had already been incorporated (McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Zald and McCarthy, 1987).

Legal changes, social reforms, and cultural transformation

It is not easy to measure the success of social movements, and this task becomes more complex when it is limited to a short period of time. On occasion, the mobilisation of collective action results in a radical transformation of the social order, but more often these processes of change are difficult to observe and measure because their action only produces visible consequences after a prolonged period of time. A stone that falls in a pond produces a series of waves whose intensity weakens as they move away from the impact site and approach the edges. This may be an appropriate metaphor to describe the effect of collective action on societal change. The closer to the site of contact between the water and the stone, the greater the effect and the higher its visibility, but both reduce as we move away from it (Tejerina, 2010, p. 240).

On numerous occasions attention has been drawn to the need to devote more energy to studying the social changes produced by mobilisation, after having realised that it has fallen by the way (Burstein et al., 1995, p. 276; Giugni, 1999: XV; Giugni, 2004, p. 489; Neidhart and Rucht, 1991; McAdam, McCarthy and Zald, 1988, p. 727; Tarrow, 1993; Tilly, 1998, p. 27; Whittier, 2004). To operationalise the repercussions of the mobilisation, several classifications have been elaborated: Gamson (1990) differentiates between acceptance of the movement's organisation as a legitimate spokesperson and the specific gains in favour of its members or beneficiaries; Schumaker (1975) emphasises the influence of the social movement in the process of adopting public policies; and Burstein

et al. (1995) differentiate six types of results: access, agenda, policy, legislative, reform, and structural.[7] The common component of all these formulations is that they centre their basic and preferential analysis on the political sphere. Other authors have focused on public policies.[8]

The added complexity of applying certain interpretative schemes to try to evaluate these impacts rests on the fact that, in general, they were created for societies where the political and administrative structure is already very strong or stable. In a context of widespread political, economic and social fragility —as was the case during the transition— identifying the relationship between mobilisation and external procedural, substantive, and structural repercussions (Giugni, 1995) is more than problematic. As Rucht (1992) points out, the task of differentiating between internal aspects (such as ideological coherence, member benefits, organisational stability, and growth of the militancy) and external ones (including changes in attitudes, behaviours, opinions, public discourse, policy, and power relations), is no less difficult.

We must recognise that many social reforms, including the improvement of working conditions for workers, conquest and advancement of equal rights for women, increase in anti-nuclear and environmental awareness, antimilitarist sensitivity, and recognition of territorial and linguistic diversity, would not have become so relevant [now] if not for this persistent social mobilisation. The

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7   The dimensions that they mention are: (a) the permeability of the political system and the state authorities towards social movements and their demands (access); (b) the incorporation of an issue into the public or governmental agenda (agenda); (c) the adoption of certain legislation (policy); (d) the application and implementation of a specific legislation (legislative results); (e) the improvement or substantial reform of the existing situation (reform impact); and (f) the transformation of the social or political order (structural results).

8   A paradigmatic example, among many, of this type of analysis can be found in *Social Protest and Policy Change* by M. Giugni (2004); this research is a comparative study of the ecologist, anti-nuclear, and pacifist movements in the USA, Italy, and Switzerland from 1975 to 1999, and tries to analyse the impact [of these movements] on public policies as a way to determine their political consequences.

1978 Spanish Constitution protected some of these rights, although from the perspective of social movements, others were left out. Many of the legal reforms that later came along, including the 'state of the autonomies', tried to respond to the multiple demands that had arisen at the heart of civil society and which had crystallised in broad social sectors. The question we must ask is this: would the changes in the following years have been the same without the presence of social mobilisation? Let us pause for a moment to consider some consequences of the collective effervescence present at this exceptional moment.

THE EXCEPTIONAL NATURE OF MOBILISATIONS DURING THE DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

Let us look at some of the characteristics of this exceptionality. The extraordinary mobilisation that took place in the 1970s, and especially after Franco's death, reinforced student, worker, neighbourhood, anti-nuclear, feminist, and nationalist movements to became permanent and consolidated. During these years, most organisations were self-financing and, despite the difficulties, were able to attract a constant, albeit variable, flow of resources that allowed them to stay mobilised both during this period and in subsequent years.

Although it is not easy to quantitatively and qualitatively reconstruct the effective degree of mobilisation, we can say, without a doubt, that its social significance contrasts both with previous difficulties and hardships and with the subsequent stage of disenchantment and demobilisation. The exceptional nature of this moment turned the street into the preferred space for making visible the long-silenced and repressed. It could be argued that the social movements and opponents of the Franco regime knew how to use the changing opportunities arising from the political structure at the time of the transition in their favour, taking advantage of the weaknesses and contradictions between the authorities and the coalition of power. However, this interpretation does not marry well with the authorities' constant and permanent resort

to the use of all kinds of means (legal and illegal) to control and repress protest demonstrations and social demands; unless we also recognise the strength and capacity of social mobilisations to resist and push back, both in material terms and through social de-legitimisation.

Beyond the public perception of social movements with an image of a certain unanimity, the truth is that under the generic banner of feminist, worker, neighbour, or student movements, there was a huge mixture of names, groups, and collectives with very diverse ideals and highly differentiated strategies and means of action. This fragmentation supposed a certain weakness when it came to making demands, but it made it possible to maintain activists from a very broad political spectrum. An important consequence of this plurality of groups was that this dense mesh of associations functioned as a network of interacting structures which facilitated the political socialisation of a new generation of activists, and they went on to actively participate in the transition and to lead the mobilisations of the 1980s, serving as a bridge between the generation of Francoism and those of later decades. Thus, what could be classified as a weakness, in practice, turned out to be a great strength. In fact, some organisationally strong social movements had serious problems in adapting during and after the transition, as evidenced by their internal conflicts and subsequent organisational fragmentation.

As we pointed out in the previous section, it is also very difficult to determine the degree to which these movements achieved their objectives. When such objectives are easily identifiable (operationalised), for example, the non-completion of a public work or withdrawal of a law considered to be inappropriate, they do not present an insurmountable difficulty. The issue is complicated when the objectives are more abstract or are formulated in more general terms, as is the case of most social movements during the transition. On the one hand, it is important to differentiate between the momentary success of the collective action of a movement in a given conflict—which usually happens with some assiduity—and the

transformation of the social definition of the dominant reality through the extension of an alternative vision. Although a succession or the sum of the former can act as a catalyst for the latter, they are different phenomena. Momentary successes are usually easy to assess: changes in legislation or in the decisions of public or private agents. They involve a process of transforming an idea of rejection, summarising it into a specific fact, its normalisation, and then regulating it. Virtually all the social movements mentioned achieved this kind of success. On the other hand, the changes induced by collective mobilisation can be seen as a process of transformation of the social reality that occurs as a result of successive reforms, as in the case of the feminist, worker, antinuclear, nationalist, neighbour, and to a certain extent, student movements.

There are, however, chains of mobilisation whose results accumulate over time, and which only emerge in relation to a specific conflict and which leave a very deep imprint in the consciousness of society and end up being institutionalised in different ways. Think of the sequence of the conscientious objection movement, the referendum on NATO, refusal to carry out compulsory military service but its substitution with the provision of social services, rallies against the Iraq war, etc. Although demarcation lines can be established in each of the aforementioned moments of mobilisation, one can also identify and follow the trail of people, groups, interacting structures, socialisation processes, discourse framing, and agreed objectives in which these interspersed elements come to belong to a common collective (Tejerina, 2010, p. 239 onwards).

In addition, an analysis of documents and testimonies from social movement activists shows their enormous capacity to turn a subject—their demands—into an object of political discussion which eventually influences public opinion. When analysing the discourse of political organisations during the transition, it becomes clear that the supposed consensus was, rather, a deep ideological conflict, and that the supposed moderation was also an unexpected result that was subsequently legitimised. As [various work]

investigating this period has pointed out, the political discourse of the transition focused more on the points of agreement, and forgot its costs:

> the apathy and demobilisation of large sectors of the population when they realised that the ways of deciding had not changed qualitatively with respect to the dictatorship [...] [and] that popular initiative had been lost. [This situation ended up producing a] crisis in the function of the political parties that, from being vehicles for catalysing initiatives or mediating institutions between the State and society, were continually overwhelmed or 'bridged' by the society to which they were increasingly incapable of representing [because of] their [internal] conflicts (Águila and Montoro, 1984, p. 250–251).

But, undoubtedly, the most important achievement of these movements was that they attained a high degree of legitimacy as interlocutors between civil society and the authorities and were consequently accepted as an integral part of the institutional order. Another way to measure the social success of a social movement is to determine its degree of institutionalisation. However, the organisational plurality and diversity of positions and ideologies in any given social movement makes this factor difficult to quantify. Complete institutionalisation is infrequent, except in situations of revolutionary change or where it is incorporated into the exercise of power, and the process of institutionalisation tends to produce internal conflicts, demobilisation, and radicalisation among followers. A common outcome from the interaction between associations, economic agents, political parties, authority strategists, and the coalitions and alliances between the agents that constitute the *politeia* [the conditions and rights of the citizen, or citizenship], is the redefinition of the political spaces they occupy (Funes, 1995).

From a more limited perspective, such as the resolution of a conflict, the process of building the success of a social movement depends on the ability to make or convert a small social opinion into a majority [demand]. In this process, the discursive construction and mobilisation of collective action are fundamental

factors in transforming a mere possible or imagined idea, into reality. As Eder pointed out, institutionalisation does not necessarily mean the end of social movements, it means their consolidation or stabilisation and, when they come into conflict with the logic of political institutions, "social movements are capable of becoming a permanent and dynamic factor of social life" (Eder, 1998, p. 357). If we take into account the elements we have examined throughout this article, we should discard a unilateral explanation for the complete conditioning of the transition political structure based on the dynamics of social mobilisation. Instead, we must consider other more complex interpretations in the vein of the de-structuring and re-structuring the political context because to the multiple impacts of the action of social movements.

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