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**The Political Cartoonist as Intellectual:
Cultural Hegemony and Consensus in Crisis¹**

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Political cartoonists are frequently seen as independent figures whose humour and satirical commentaries spark controversy and trouble leaders across the globe (Danjoux 2007: 245). Humour, it is said, allows the author more freedom to address controversial issues from current events than, say, newspaper columnists. Hence, political humour has been read through different theories that have addressed it as a form of defiance, transgression, relief or even exorcism (Bobillo de la Peña 2013: 13). Without dismissing these unquestionable aspects of political cartooning, I would like to bring in this chapter this allegedly independence into question. In his book *La ilustración gráfica del siglo XIX en España*, Valeriano Bozal analysed the caricatures and political cartoons from that century in Spain to conclude that the rise of the graphic illustration in the country was tightly interwoven with the development of the Spanish bourgeoisie, who used it as a means to shape a bourgeois conception of the world (Bozal 1979: 11). Bozal thus understands the cartoonist as an intellectual who claims independence to make criticism of the political structures and institutions of absolutism and its social types, and thus legitimize with this activity the new *status quo* in a capitalist system that, in the nineteenth century, began to be hegemonic (16). It is worth noting here that, for the first time, this hegemony—and the ideology that legitimized it—was gained by consensus and not by hierarchy, as the Church and the State had hitherto done. The press was essential in this task. The nineteenth century saw, in fact, an unprecedented technological innovation in printing that permitted to improve the quality of the images and cut down reproduction costs, which helped the quick development of illustrated periodicals and humour magazines, especially in the second half of the century.

This chapter will look at a completely different period, but it will take a similar approach. Political cartoonists will be considered as intellectuals whose practice and humour are directed to shape, or to legitimize, a specific worldview, with its own set of values. Particular focus will be placed on the role of consensus in this battle for hegemony. I will look at two recent periods of the history of Spain: first, at the Transition period (1975–1982?), which laid the foundations of democracy around the idea of ‘consensus’; and, secondly, at the 15M or *indignados* movement (2011), which—I will argue—has brought into crisis such a ‘foundational myth’ and, with it, the hegemonic cultural paradigm that had prevailed until then in Spain. In order to explore and

compare these two periods, I will use as a thread the figure of the cartoonist Andrés Rábago, who, under the pseudonym of El Roto, has been drawing political cartoons in a number of publications from late Francoism to day. I will argue that, similarly to other cartoonists of that period, he was very critical with the way that the Transition to democracy was led. More recent cartoons show that he is now as bitterly critical with the idea of a 'politics of consensus' as he was then, especially when it comes to support the capitalist system.

The Political Cartoonist as an Intellectual

As I introduced above, I will understand the political cartoonist as an intellectual. I will follow the definition given by the Italian communist thinker Antonio Gramsci, who argues that the intellectual is such not by the intrinsic nature of his or her activities, but by the ensemble of social relations in which these intellectual activities take place; particularly by the function that he or she performs in society (Gramsci 1976: 8–9). Regarding the position of the intellectual to the hegemonic group, Gramsci introduces two types of intellectuals. On the one hand, he puts the traditional intellectuals, who are those already in existence before a social group attains power and who usually consider themselves as autonomous and independent of the hegemonic social group—yet, Gramsci points out, they perform that function responding to a specific arrangement of social relations. On the other hand, Gramsci places the organic intellectuals, who are created along by every social group. He argues that a social group that expects to gain hegemony needs to assimilate and conquer ideologically the traditional intellectuals, at the same time it produces its own 'organic intellectuals' (10). Gramsci defines hegemony as the provisional domination or leadership of a social group over another. In parliamentary democracies, such as Spain, hegemony is exercised, he argues, by the combination of force—exerted by the State apparatuses—and consensus. Nonetheless, through the organs of public opinion, 'the attempt is always made to ensure that force will appear to be based on the consent of the majority' (80).² Gramsci introduces men of letters, philosophers and artists as 'traditional intellectuals', that is, those who claim independence from the hegemonic group, but depend on the specific social relations that are created by that group. In this way, I will argue that political cartoonists do often pertain to this category.

In this way, intellectuals, and more specifically political cartoonists, can legitimize this consensus and, therefore, this hegemony through their role as opinion-makers, but they can also confront the hegemonic group, its values, its worldview and, more directly, unveil this alleged consensus as ideology. Ricardo Tejeiro Salguero and Teodoro León Gross have suggested that

the editorial cartoon can be compared to the opinion column, because it is ‘una excelente herramienta para el análisis crítico de la realidad’ [‘an excellent tool to critically analyse reality’] and, as such, contributes to ‘la construcción de la imagen de la realidad social y política que se realiza desde los periódicos’ [‘shaping the image of social and political reality conveyed by newspapers’] (Tejeiro Salguero and León Gross 2009: 3). However, they disagree that cartoons can be put on the same level as editorials, because they do not always fit the editorial line of the newspaper. In that regard, they argue that editorial cartoons are ‘un género utilizado por los diarios para reforzar la línea editorial con opiniones independientes de prestigio’ [‘a genre used by newspapers to strengthen their editorial line with prestigious, independent contributors’] (7). The negotiations and clashes between cartoonists and the media for which they draw are frequent, as I will show later, and represent this battle between intellectuals and social-economic groups that attempt to assimilate them.

CT or Cultura de la Transición

One year after the 15M movement emerged, in 2012, the book *CT o la Cultura de la Transición. Crítica a 35 años de cultura española*, edited by the journalist Guillem Martínez, coined and developed the concept of Cultura de la Transición, which was branded CT—after Martínez’s typically casual and anti-academic language. The concept can be defined, in a nutshell, as the hegemonic cultural paradigm that has prevailed in Spain since Franco’s death (Martínez 2012: 11). Culture is here understood in its broader sense, involving worldviews as well as ways of seeing, doing and thinking (Fernández-Savater 2012: 37). According to the authors of this book, and the scholars who have later adopted the concept, the problem with this cultural paradigm is that it establishes a very restrictive framework or ‘marco de sentido’ (Moreno-Caballud 2014: 16) which dictates ‘los límites de lo posible’ [‘bounds of the possible’] (Fernández-Savater 2012: 37). Guillem Martínez argues that the origins of this cultural paradigm are in the *Transición*, a period in which, for the sake of stability, culture was deactivated and depoliticized in the name of political consensus and social cohesion (15). According to Ignacio Echevarría, this period also attempted to cancel out history, through the political decision of *forgetting*, in the interest of a project of coexistence. He thus argues that CT can be understood as ‘la consecuencia natural del masivo alineamiento de la clase intelectual y cultural del país con ese proyecto’ [‘the natural consequence of the alignment of the country’s intellectual classes with that project’] (28–29). Cultural objects were, therefore, meant to be unproblematical, blunt and festive in order to adhere to, and not to make obstacles for, this political project. The relationship between culture and State became, according to Martínez, as follows: ‘la cultura no se mete en política—salvo

para darle la razón al Estado—y el Estado no se mete en cultura—salvo para subvencionarla, permearla o darle honores’ [‘culture does not meddle in politics—unless to support the State—and the State does not meddle in culture—unless to subsidize and give it honours’] (16). This ‘festivity’ or ‘celebratory character’ is indeed one of the characteristics that Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio associated to the use of culture made by the PSOE government in an article from 1984 eloquently titled ‘La cultura, ese invento del gobierno’.³ According to him, culture was diluting and getting replaced by its own advertising campaigns, becoming in this way the mere celebration of the cultural event. The festive character of this culture was promoted by the State which, through the Ministry of Culture, promoted refreshing, bland and unproblematic cultural objects (Sánchez Ferlosio 1984: 11–12).⁴

This cultural paradigm which was beginning to be hegemonic in the 1980s was based on the idea that culture should be consensual, that is, unproblematic. In this way, culture should not question Spain’s democracy and its party system, but neither should be critical with the economic system that Spain had embraced. Luis Moreno-Caballud thus notes that this consensus ‘incluía la incuestionabilidad de unas bases políticas y económicas fundamentales (el sistema de partidos y el capitalismo) y estaría acompañado de la tácita invitación a dejar esas cuestiones en manos de expertos’ [‘prevented the political and economic foundations (the party system and capitalism) to be questioned, tacitly suggesting that these issues should be managed by experts’] (2014: 13). Isidro López refers to the economic side of this consensus as ‘consensonomics’. This variant of the previously cited consensus supports the idea that every social or political conflict must be concealed, in order not to disturb the natural functioning of the market. The sphere of economics should therefore have no interference by politics, it only has to be administered as a science by experts, that is, a group of technocratic economists (López 2012: 77). López argues that this economic consensus was introduced by the *Pactos de la Moncloa* in 1977, which involved all the parties of the political spectrum and accepted that the State should not intervene in economy. He suggests that, nonetheless, the State always does to ultimately help the market obtain more benefits (83). Gramsci had precisely suggested that, although at first sight hegemony—and the battle to attain it—may seem purely political, its decisive nucleus is always economic, since the maintenance and development of hegemonic social groups always rest on economic factors (Gramsci 1976: 161). The 15M brought into question the very idea of consensus that was established in the *Transición*, criticizing the economic and political system that was created, and casted a doubt on the role of experts to manage what had become not only a financial, but also a political and social crisis.

Dissent vs consensus

In this section I will explore political cartoons from the *Transición* against the recent criticism that historians, scholars and activists have made of this period, which for many years was sold as a model for 'exemplary transition' by both the official and the academic narrative (Kornetis 2014: 83). I will argue that political cartoons contemporary to the *Transición*, especially in humour magazines such as *Hermano Lobo*, *Por Favor* and *El Pápus*, were very critical with the democratizing process. It is not surprising that a revision of the political cartoons from this period has taken place at the same time as the historical and political revision of the *Transición*. I will particularly focus on El Roto, who fiercely criticized in his cartoons how the democratizing process was led and the political and economic system that was then formed, but I will also cite the work of other cartoonists whose position towards the process can better be described as one of dissent.

Andrés Rábago began his career as a political cartoonist in the mid 1960s in publications such as *La Estafeta Literaria*, *La Codorniz* and *Triunfo*, where he signed as OPS. In these cartoons, Rábago alluded to the oppressive climate of those years with a surrealist and introspective style influenced by the French illustrator Roland Topor. El Roto made his first appearance in *Hermano Lobo*, a humour magazine more biting and aggressive than *La Codorniz*, in October 1972. Pablo García Ureña argues that the signature of El Roto appeared when the need for saying things more directly grew as the political climate became more tense and turbulent (2014a). El Roto presented thus a more direct and cutting approach to the political and social situation of the country, criticizing the stagnation of Francoism, the continuity of oligarchic and undemocratic structures, capitalism and US foreign policy (2014b). García Ureña also notes that his cartoons were very critical with the *Transición* and satirized the fact that the Francoist elite was leading the democratizing process. In this way, he compares the cartoons with recent criticism to the *Transición* made by historians such as Ferran Gallego and Bernat Muniesa who have denounced that this process was led from above and with the collaborationism of leftist parties, while the real process of democratization had been started by popular movements which were subsequently deactivated (2014b). García Ureña illustrates this position with two vertical cartoon strips published in March and May 1976. In the first one, a man in hat, representing the working class, says through four identical panels: '¡Qué maravilla con la derecha, oiga! Primero nos organizan la guerra./ Luego nos organizan la posguerra./ Y ahora nos quieren organizar la convivencia' [Figure 1]. In the second one, a man gets disfigured throughout four panels in which he exclaims: 'Yo era republicano./ Pero serví al franquismo por razones de supervivencia./ Y he

pactado con la monarquía por razones de pragmatismo./ Dicen que estoy muy cambiado, pero sigo siendo el mismo' [Figure 2].



Figure 1. El Roto, *Hermano Lobo*, 202, 20 March 1976, p. 14.

[‘How wonderful the Right! They first organized the war./ Then, they organized the postwar./ And now they want to organize coexistence.’]



Figure 2. El Roto, *Hermano Lobo*, 201, 22 May 1976, p. 6.

[‘I was a Republican./ However, to survive, I served Francoism./ I made a pact with the monarchy for practical reasons./ I’ve been told that I changed a lot, but I am always the same.’]

In *La Transición contada a nuestros padres*, Monedero suggests, similarly to Ferran Gallego, that the *Transición* was initiated by workers' protests calling for improvements in working conditions; by strikes in the universities; by people who kept fighting for a better Spain with the memory of the Second Republic, the war and the antifascist movement in mind; and, finally, by international pressure. The Transition began, he maintains, because those in power had to respond to this climate, not because of their generous will (2014: 50). Monedero's main point is that the *Transición* was not a period of consensus, but one of conflict. Indeed, for him it was conflict, which is the essence of politics, what brought democracy to Spain (136). He argues that, in fact, consensus was not reached until the 1981 failed *coup*, when fear arrived in the population, who resigned to what they had. This, added to the 1977 *Pactos de la Moncloa*—which, according to him, meant the final deactivation of popular movements in favour of the executives of the political parties—and the *memoricide* that was imposed—in order to conceal the liability of the political power in the Civil War and the repression that followed during the dictatorship—contributed to the failure of a truly democratic system in Spain.

It is symptomatic that Monedero uses political cartoons from the period to illustrate that consensus during those years was far from being a reality; it was, moreover, a period of deep conflict. He thus defends that humour publications such as *Hermano Lobo*, *La Codorniz*, *Por Favor*, *El Papis* and *El Jueves* can be very good tools to understand what happened in the *Transición*, especially because of the way that irony permitted to express what was happening (49). Throughout the book, cartoons by Ramón, El Roto, El Perich, Chumy Chúmez and Quesada, among others, challenge and contradict the 'foundational myth' of the *Transición* as told by the official narrative, which claims that democracy was achieved in Spain thanks to the efforts and sacrifices of some individuals (the King Juan Carlos I, Adolfo Suárez, Felipe González, Santiago Carrillo) who permitted to heal old wounds and paved the way to a peaceful coexistence under democracy. Monedero quotes many cartoons which show and criticize how the Francoist elite continuously suggested that people were not yet capable of deciding about their future and, therefore, the process should be led from above. In a cartoon by Ramón (Ramón Gutiérrez Díaz), an individual who represents the political elite claims: 'No hay que precipitarse... Aún no están preparados para elegirnos' (38). In another by El Perich (Jaume Perich Escala), a voice from outside the panel, representing power, says: 'No están ustedes preparados para la democracia'. From inside the panel, a man representing the-man-in-the-street asks: '¿Cómo lo saben?' 'Porque hemos dedicado a ello nuestros máximos esfuerzos', responds the voice (45). Other cartoons refer to the continuity of Francoist politicians in power and how they became democrats 'de un día para otro'. Chumy Chúmez illustrates this through a rich woman who tells

one of these Francoists-turned-democrats: ‘Por favor, procurad ganar las elecciones para que no tengáis que organizar otra guerra, ¿eh?’ (70) Ramón, in other cartoon, depicts another Francoist-turned-democrat in an armchair who says: ‘¡Pero hombre! Habernos dicho que la democracia era esto y habríamos venido mucho antes’ (97) [Figure 3].



Figure 3. Ramón, *Hermano Lobo*, 191, 3 January 1976, p. 4.

[‘Come on! Why didn’t anyone tell us that democracy was this? We would’ve come earlier’]

Finally, a cartoon by Ramón criticizes the very idea of consensus during the Transition. Two politicians—representing the men-in-power—tell three smaller men from the crowd: ‘Lo importante es que estemos de acuerdo. Ya les mandaremos en qué’ (133) [Figure 4]. This latter cartoon suggests thus not only the centrality of consensus in the foundation of the new political system, but also that consensus was imposed from above. It is especially poignant to recall another cartoon here from *Hermano Lobo*, since it connects to the current criticism to the figure of the expert and which, in this case, is tightly connected to the democratizing process being led from above. In this cartoon by Chumy Chúmez, a rich or man-in-power reprimands a regular man who claims he is hungry because the latter does not know about political economy [Figure 5].⁵



Figure 4. Ramón, *Hermano Lobo*, 202, 20 March 1976, p. 14.

[‘The most important thing is that we all agree./ We’ll tell you later with what’]



Figure 5. Chumy Chúmez, *Hermano Lobo*, 194, 24 January 1976, p. 3.

[‘I’m hungry! / But do you even know what political economy is?’]

Political cartooning in the *Transición* has attracted much attention, since it is widely considered the golden age of the political cartoon in Spain. A number of humour magazines were launched in the 1970s: *Hermano Lobo*, *Barrabás*, *El Papus*, *Por favor*, *Muchas gracias*, *El Cocodrilo Leopoldo*, *El Cuervo* and *El Jueves*, although only the latter survived beyond the 1980s. In 2013, the Biblioteca Nacional de España organized the exhibition *La Transición en tinta china*, which collected cartoons from the most important magazines of this period. This exhibition,

funded by the Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, was in many aspects a CT product. For example, the cover of the exhibition showed a ballot box with a smile, which obviously represented the triumph of democracy. The curator of the exhibition, Francisco Bobillo, recognized that cartoons from that period were sharper than the friendly image that has arrived to our days (Bobillo de la Peña 2013: 21), but he also argued—displacing the object of conflict—that consumerism was one of the main factors that helped to bring change, as well as the reception of political cartooning (16). However, the assistant curator of the exhibition, Jaime González Cela, realized that many elements from the political cartoons from these years had been overlooked, precisely because they did not fit the parameters of CT (he refers directly to the book *CT o la Cultura de la Transición*). In his text for the catalogue, he writes that, when he started to do research for the exhibition, he was shocked by ‘el marcado carácter crítico de las viñetas con el proceso, su politización, la falta de entusiasmo con la que muchos de los artistas veían el periodo que estaban viviendo, y que comenzaban a percibir como determinante para el devenir del país’ [‘the cartoons’ politicization, their critical stance towards the Transition process and their dissatisfaction with a period that, they began to realize, it would be decisive for the country’s future’]. González Cela adds that, although there is a multiplicity of political nuances among the cartoonists,

todos tienen como denominador común un acuciado espíritu crítico, pero no solo con la censura o con los gobernantes, como se suele explicar en los textos publicados sobre el tema hasta el momento, sino también con el proceso en sí, con los mismos referéndums que iban a determinar el fin del antiguo régimen y con las urnas, símbolo de la democracia y que no pocas veces aparecen retratadas como ataúdes [they all have in common a sharp, critical attitude not only towards censure and Francoist politicians—as publications on the topic often argue—but also towards referenda and ballot boxes, the very symbol of democracy, which in many cartoons are represented as coffins.] (González Cela 2013: 37).

He thus challenges the words of the curator, who defended that the icon of the exhibition was the ballot box, because: ‘más allá de simbolizar el derecho al voto, expresaba cierto ideal de libertades y democracia, compartido por la mayoría de la población’ [‘apart from symbolizing the right to vote, it represented the ideal of freedom and democracy shared by most of the population’] (21). Francisco Bobillo introduces the ballot box and the bunker as the two motifs that represent the opposite sides in the *Transición*: those who wanted democracy and those who did not. Or, in other words, the *inmovilistas* on one side and, on the other, the *aperturistas*—together with the democratic opposition. The problem with this binary opposition is that, as Monedero suggests, [a]l definir a una parte del franquismo como *inmovilista* o *búnker*, se está

haciendo necesariamente *buena* a la otra parte, los *aperturistas*, cuando apenas unos meses antes todos estaban en el mismo barco y defendían los mismos asuntos’ [‘by defining a part of Francoism as *inmovilista* or *bunker*, the other part (the *aperturistas*) is rendered positive, when a few months ago both were in the same boat and defended the same issues’] (Monedero 2014: 136). In that way, this discourse conceals the real actors of the democratization process by reducing the conflict to a binary opposition which barely represents the actual clashes held at the period. A similar problem can be found in the otherwise good and thorough study *Un país de chiste. El humor gráfico durante la Transición* by Francisco Segado Boj. Under an allegedly scientific neutrality, Segado Boj adopts for himself a *common sense* position in which, despite refraining from making personal statements, he clearly despises the *bunker* or *inmovilistas* and, more unconsciously, endorses those who defended the process, even if coming from Francoism. This position, first, overlooks the huge differences among those who wanted to democratize the country and, secondly, favours consensus in detriment of the sharp criticism made by cartoonists to this process. For example, some cartoons from Fandiño for the far-right *El Alcázar*—however despicable they may be—do express better the sudden transformation that some Francoist politicians undertook to become democrats than, say, those of Mingote (Ángel Antonio Mingote Barrachina) for *ABC* or Dátile (Emilio Dáneo Palacios) for *Ya*. In short, the cartoons referred to above show that, as many scholars have recently defended, ‘the very transition was built upon dissent’, although this dissent was later invisibilized and deproblematized (Sampedro and Lobera 2014: 71).

The crisis of traditional media

In his article about the current panorama of Spanish political satire, Manuel Barrero pays special attention to the consequences of the marketization of traditional media on political humour. He notes that those who take now decisions in Spanish media are not their ideologues, but their owners. Because of the enormous debt that these media contracted, the owners of these media are in most cases financial institutions. *El País*, for example, belongs to Banco Santander, Caixabank and HSBC and, therefore, has to respond firstly to these entities. This situation has obliged many media to, first, reduce production costs and, secondly, avoid controversial issues. Barrero focuses in his article on the crisis of the humour magazine *El Jueves* under the ownership of RBA Editores. He notes that, when RBA bought *El Jueves* in 2006, they reached an agreement with the cartoonists about the topics they could criticize and those they could not. Although cartoonists had a large room for action, they were told not to criticize their bosses—what is usually referred to as self-censorship. A first crisis came when the magazine decided not to

publish a cartoon by Edgar (Edgar Cantero) that made reference to the tax evasion of the CEO of RBA. A bigger crisis arrived in the issue 1,932. After King Juan Carlos I announced his abdication on 2 June 2014, the editorial board of *El Jueves* decided to publish a cover on this topic and depict Juan Carlos I passing a stinky crown to the new king, Felipe VI. However, a RBA executive manager ordered to stop the publication of the magazine, thus delaying the launch of the issue. The authors of the magazine denounced that RBA banned them to publish in subsequent issues the king of Spain in the cover and many of them left the magazine (Barrero 2014).

Although Ilan Danjoux focuses on editorial cartoonists in US newspapers, he points in an article written in 2007 at a similar reason to explain the decrease of political cartoonists in traditional media. He argues that the main reason has been the rise of corporate media conglomerates and the increasing power they gained. According to Danjoux, the 'need to keep a staff cartoonist on the payroll became less economically convincing' and the formula of 'cutting costs while avoiding controversy' proved much more appealing to the corporate-minded editor (2007: 247). Danjoux's conclusion, however, is that this decline has not affected the quality of the political satire, only the medium in which it is delivered, since editorial cartoons no longer depend on the printed press. For that reason, he argues that the future of political cartoons, especially in digital form, is brighter than ever. Barrero is less optimistic than Danjoux. His conclusion is that the situation of political satire today is very worrying; first and foremost because of media's great dependence on financial institutions, which makes independence very difficult and hence a critical and independent political satire. Nonetheless, Barrero applauds the emergence of a magazine such as *Mongolia* (launched in March 2012), which is financially independent from big publisher groups and financial institutions. This humour magazine exploits a very caustic, gaudy humour that resembles that of *El Pápus* during the *Transición* and recovers a type of humour that, Barrero argues, *El Jueves* lost in favour of a shallower and more *costumbrista* humour. There is a less optimistic example, which could be in turn connected to Danjoux's argument about the publication of cartoons in different media. The eighteen cartoonists who abandoned *El Jueves* founded the digital humour magazine *Orgullo y satisfacción* in June 2014. This monthly publication, however, had to close in December 2017 because, being totally independent from media publishers, relied only on the subscribers' fees and never reached the number they needed to keep the publication afloat. This example shows, in short, the difficulties of an independently political satire to survive in this environment.

The crisis of traditional media, therefore, has also brought along the emergence of alternative periodicals—although, as the latter example shows, their survival has proved really difficult. I want to argue that, along the politicization of the Spanish society in the 15M, there was also a re-

politicization of political cartooning. If the *indignados* looked back at the *Transición* to question the ‘foundational myths’ of Spanish democracy (Kornetis 2014: 87), political cartoonists have also looked back at that period. For example, the founders of *Mongolia*, to name one example, consider themselves heirs of publications such as *La Codorniz*, *Hermano Lobo* and *El Pápus* (Mariño 2012).

15M and the crisis of CT

Many authors have argued that the 15M looked back at the 1970s in order to contest the *Transición* as a failed and unfinished project; its emergence causing a disruption of a political culture which was based on hierarchies, depoliticization and consensus (Fernández 2017: 137; Sampedro and Lobera 2014: 62; Dapena 2015: 85). The 15M would have thus offered a different cultural paradigm to CT, one which is not centralized and opens up new fields for experimenting different ways of thinking and organizing life in common—which is how Fernández-Savater defines politics (Fernández-Savater 2012: 40). This new cultural paradigm consists, therefore, of ‘devolver a la cultura su capacidad de arma de destrucción masiva, de objeto problemático, parcial y combativo’ [‘giving back culture its power as a weapon, as a combative, activist and problematizing object’ (Martínez 2012: 22-23). In other words, 15M has brought the CT paradigm into crisis.

Almost every definition of crisis agrees that periods of crisis entail a time of change, unrest and instability—but, for the same reason, they also involve a reordering of ideas. In this way, what was taken for granted is no longer so. In the book *Aftermath: The Cultures of the Economic Crisis*, Manuel Castells, João Caraça and Gustavo Cardoso argue that every crisis and restructuring of the system brings with itself a new culture (Castells, Caraça, and Cardoso 2012: 4). They argue that in recent years the European Union has succumbed to the unregulated financial markets, which means a predominance of the financial over the political (12). In this way, these authors understand that people are entrenching themselves in the public squares in order to find—or create—places where the political might have supremacy (11). This argument has especial relevance in Spain, since—as we have seen—politics have been continuously negated in the name of consensus. Castells, Caraça and Cardoso understand crises and their conflicts as social processes. In this way, they argue that, when a system does not reproduce itself automatically, apart from attempts by some actors to restore the system to its former state, there are also attempts to reorganize a new system with a new set of interests and values (7). 15M is a response to such a crisis, as an attempt to bring forth a different way of doing politics.

El Roto welcomed from quite early on the 15M movement and its different way of doing politics. On 18 May 2011, he published a cartoon in which there is a mass of protesters with a large white flag and a balloon that reads ‘Los jóvenes salieron a la calle y súbitamente todos los partidos envejecieron...’ [‘Young people took to the streets and suddenly all political parties grew old’] [Figure 6] With only three days of existence, El Roto declared that this wave of protests had already changed politics in Spain. In fact, this cartoon soon became famous among the *indignados*, who hung it in the Cercanías train station in Sol. Other cartoons were also used in demonstrations as placards. Protesters thus assimilated his discourse as their own, making his cartoons take part in the struggle.



Figure 6. El Roto, *El País*, 18 May 2011.

In their reorganization of interests and values, the *indignados* put into question and reconsidered the model of democracy that came out from the *Transición*. Its political and economic foundations, which were unquestionable under the paradigm of the *Cultura de la Transición*, were therefore contested. Thus, along with a political critique—of corruption, an unfair electoral system, lack of real representation—there was also an economic critique—especially of the loss of sovereignty in favour of the market. The slogan of 15M not only called for ‘Real Democracy Now’, but also stated: ‘We are not commodities in hands of politicians and bankers’. The protests, therefore, started against the regulation of politics according to the principles of the market.

Consensonomics and its discontents

Consensonomics seems thus to have come to the fore in the discourse—and contestation—of consensus. If consensus during the *Transición* was sold as a reconciliation between different sides and political ideologies in order to gain democracy for ‘all of us’, consensus during the current financial crisis supports that we all have to make sacrifices to recover the country’s economy. As the Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy said in front of the PP National Executive Committee in April 2013: ‘Estamos todos en el mismo barco para iniciar la recuperación’ [‘We all should be in the same boat to stimulate economic recovery’]. This discourse, in fact, is not much different to the one defended by his predecessor José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero in the last years of his mandate. The cartoonist Manel Fontdevila devoted two similar cartoons to Zapatero and Rajoy on this issue. Both cartoons have a group of rich men carrying bags full of money in the background. In the first one, Zapatero addresses the reader and says: ‘26 medidas contra la crisis: un esfuerzo colectivo enorme, recortando aquí y allá... Todos nos ajustamos en lo posible, aportando nuestro granito de arena... Y así, poquito a poco, vamos levantando el país... ¡Es posible! ¡Podemos conseguirlo!’ [‘26 measures to combat the crisis: a massively collective effort, cutting here and there... Tightening where possible, making our little contribution... And thus, little by little, we are moving the country forward... It’s possible! We can do it!’] [Figure 7] In the second cartoon, published years later, Rajoy talks to a worker and shows him a blackboard where it is written: ‘Austeridad. Sacrificio. Responsabilidad’ [‘Austerity. Sacrifice. Responsibility’] The worker, nevertheless, is looking at the rich men behind the blackboard with money bags, so Rajoy exclaims: ‘Y siguiendo las directrices que... ¡Eh! ¡Eh! ¡Eh! ¡A-ver-si-a-ten-de-mos!’ [‘And following the rules that... Eh! Eh! Eh! Please-pay-at-ten-tion!’] [Figure 8]



Figure 7. Manel Fontdevila, *Público*, 11 April 2010.



Figure 8. Manel Fontdevila, *eldiario.es*, 14 January 2013.

One of the strategies used in order to reach economic—but also politic—consensus in this time of crisis is *Marca España*, a long-term state policy launched in 2012 that aims to improve the image of the country. This strategy is part of an international, broader trend in nation-branding and, therefore, it is not specifically Spanish. Nonetheless, its implementation in Spain has its own special features. Simon Anholt, one of the strongest promoters of the concept of ‘nation-branding’ or ‘Competitive Identities’ (CI), argues that it is very important that countries understand and are able to manage their own identity and image. For many years, countries have promoted this image through Foreign Affairs and tourism campaigns, but Anholt says that all these efforts must be coordinated. He maintains that, in a globalized world, countries must compete ‘for its share of the world’s consumers, tourists, investors, students, entrepreneurs, international sporting and cultural events, and for the attention and respect of the international media, of other governments, and the people of other countries’ (1). Anholt defends that a good management of the perception that the world has of one country, including its stereotypes, can bring many economic benefits. Countries need thus to manage their *brand image*, which is the perception that consumers have of the brand, in this case the reputation. Nevertheless, Anholt says that as important as the *brand image* is the *brand purpose*, which is the internal equivalent to the *brand image*. He argues that, in the same way as a company will not succeed if its workers and stockholders do not ‘live out the brand’, the same will happen in a country if nationals do not believe the brand and become their ambassadors. For that reason, Anholt says that ‘the first and

most important component of any national CI strategy is creating a spirit of benign nationalism amongst the populace, notwithstanding its cultural, social, ethnic, linguistic, economic, political, territorial and historical divisions' (16). In short, national identity must be market-driven and nationals should internalize and contribute to this marketization.

Marca España is therefore understood as a brand which has to compete with other countries. This branded image of Spain, however, should not be only sold outside, but also inside the national borders. In this way, the main goal of this policy seems to be the *brand purpose*, rather than the *brand image*. Pedro Ramiro, in his book *Marca España. ¿A quién beneficia?*, has similarly noticed that this nation branding does not target as much an international audience, as it does a local one (2014: 13). According to him, this strategy takes part of a broader narrative that attempts to raise trust and support in Spanish companies among Spanish citizens, because that is—it is said—for the common good. In this way, Ramiro argues, 'pretenden equipararse los intereses comunes de la mayoría de la ciudadanía con los negocios privados de la pequeña minoría que forman los grandes accionistas y directivos de las multinacionales españolas' ['the interests the 99% are sold as equal to big stockholders' and CEOs of Spanish multi-national corporations'] (8). It is no accident that the subhead of Marca España reads: 'We are all Marca España'. Apart from encouraging Spanish people to have more trust in Spanish companies, this strategy also compels them to control their own image—created by their behaviour, actions, expressions—as part of a bigger image or brand which is subjected to the principles of the market and, therefore, should disturb the correct and 'natural' functioning of the market as little as possible. For Ramiro, the aim is to 'impedir que puedan venirse abajo los pilares estructurales del actual modelo socioeconómico y, de esta manera, afianzar y ampliar el poder que tienen las grandes corporaciones en nuestra sociedad' 'prevent that the foundations of the current social-economic model collapse and, in this way, strengthen the power of big corporations in our society'] (12).



Figure 9. El Roto, *El País*, 16 January 2014.

Marca España has also become the target of many political cartoonists. El Roto, for example, devotes a very perceptive cartoon to scorn that, under this paradigm, national identities are driven by the market. In the panel, the front of a Civil Guard barracks holding a Spain flag reads ‘Todo por la marca’ [‘All for the brand’], instead of the usual ‘Todo por la patria’ [‘All for the fatherland’] [Figure 9]. The most repeated criticism, nonetheless, has focused on the gap between the idealized image projected by Marca España and reality. Eneko, for instance, has devoted a number of variations of the same cartoon to this topic. To symbols that represent Spain or its institutions—such as a bull, the letter ‘ñ’ or a crown—he added envelopes or *chorizos*, suggesting corruption, the silhouette of Panama or Switzerland’s flag, epitomizing tax evasion, or the hands of an immigrant on a prison’s iron bars, alluding to the inhuman nature of the Immigration Detention Centres existing in Spain. Other cartoonists have understood Marca España as yet another way of imposing consensus. A cartoon by Bernardo Vergara is illustrative of this trend. In the panel, there is a *falangista*, a corrupt businessman, two corrupt politicians—one of PSOE, the other of PP—a torturer and antiriot police—with blood in his nightstick—who are all over a piece of land filled with rests of dead people representing those dead in the Civil War. All these characters exclaim: ‘¡Señores jueces: dejen en paz la Marca España!’ [‘Judges, please leave alone Marca España!’] [Figure 10] Thus, according to Vergara, Marca España is

another excuse not to question those in power and, therefore, neither the history of Spain. Under the argument that any change promoted by citizens or even by Justice could damage the good image of the brand, the old consensus reached in the Transition must be respected at all times—now in the name of the market.



Figure 10. Bernardo Vergara, *eldiario.es*, 4 April 2013.

Conclusion

Throughout this article, I have given some examples of how political cartoonists have been particularly critical with the idea of consensus both during the *Transición* and in recent years. As a cartoonist who has lived and worked in these two periods, El Roto is an exemplary case in point to debunk the ideological construct of ‘consensus’ from the *Transición* to date. It has been recently pointed that *El País* newspaper was one of the most important actors in spreading and consolidating the idea of consensus during the Transition period and after. For example, in his book *El cura y los mandarines*, Gregorio Morán claims that it was one of the most important actors to shape the idea that the *Transición* was a period of consensus. He notes that the first canonization of this period can be found precisely in the pages of *El País* as soon as July 1977, in an article by Julián Marías entitled ‘La gratitud por el infortunio evitado’ (Morán 2014: 570). In it, Marías considers that Spain has already got full democracy, as if the process had been finished, and asks Spaniards to be grateful to the leaders (‘geniuses’) that made it possible (Marías 1977). Juan Carlos Monedero gives *El País* and his first director, Juan Luis Cebrián, even a most central

role, claiming that he ‘construyó el espejo donde se armó la versión oficial de la transición’ [‘gave the platform where the official discourse of the *Transición* was built’] (59).

Andrés Rábago did not join *El País* until the 1990s, after drawing for newspapers and magazines such as *Diario 16*, *Cambio 16*, *El Jueves* and *El Independiente*. His cartoons in many cases fitted the editorial line of the newspaper, but he also managed to create a room for his own wherefrom he could attack and disturb the powerful. As Tejeiro Salguero and León Gross argue, newspaper need prestigious independent authors to reinforce their editorial line, even if there are disagreements (7). It cannot be denied that *El País* represented for many years a platform that gave rise to some of the most progressive and critic voices in Spain. Said this, their defence of consensus ‘at any cost’ has been a constant feature, which has been pronounced in recent years.⁶ For the reasons mentioned above by Pablo Barrero, *El País* has become in recent years much more market-oriented and its idea for stability has shifted to one prescribed by the markets. El Roto, however, has kept publishing cartoons with a clearly anti-capitalist stance in which he has sharply criticized ‘the ideological narrative that claims that what is good for the market is good for everyone’ (Mourenza 2016: 85), as it can be seen in the following cartoon [Figure 11]. It thus seems that the disagreement between El Roto’s cartoons and the theses defended by *El País*, especially regarding economy, has become more and more obvious, and yet they have not broken their partnerships, unlike other columnists, such as Maruja Torres, who left the newspaper in May 2013.

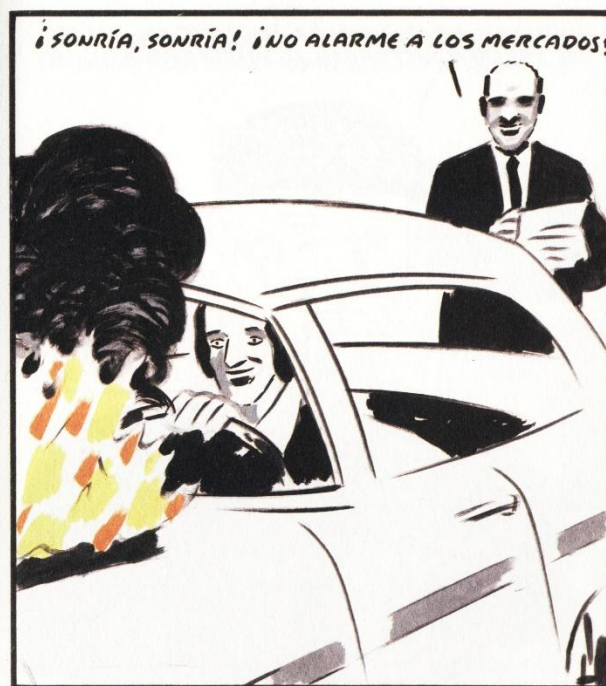


Figure 11. El Roto, *El País*, 14 September 2011.
[‘Smile, please! Don’t alarm the market!’]

As I suggested at the beginning of the chapter, the role of the political cartoonist as an intellectual is either to legitimize the hegemonic group in power or to create a new worldview, a new set of values and provide an alternative to counter contemporary hegemony. Andrés Rábago, El Roto, can be considered as a 'traditional intellectual', since he has created for himself a position of independence from political power. From this position, he has criticized the political system that emerged from the *Transición* and, especially, a society which is driven by the principles of the market. As I have shown above, the *indignados* soon embraced his ideas and took his cartoons as representative of their political claims. This raises however some questions. First, whether the social and political movements that emerged from 15M will be able to really assimilate El Roto, as a traditional intellectual, to their own side. And, secondly, whether it is possible that El Roto can produce a counter-hegemonic discourse from a medium such as *El País*, which, as we have seen, zealously defends consensus and, more importantly, belongs to big financial institutions. No answer will come without contradictions. But contradictions and conflicts are the basis of politics and that is precisely the muddy arena in which cartoonist create their work.

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2 In Italian *consenso* means both 'consent' and 'consensus'. The same fragment in its original Italian reads as follows: 'L'esercizio "normale" dell'egemonia nel terreno divenuto classico del regime parlamentare, è caratterizzato da una combinazione della forza e del consenso che si equilibrano, senza che la forza soverchi di troppo il consenso, anzi appaia appoggiata dal consenso della maggioranza espresso dai così detti organi dell'opinione pubblica' (Gramsci 1975: 59).

3 It is interesting to see how this short article has become so widely cited recently, not only by many of the authors of *CT o la Cultura de la Transición*, but also by Gregorio Morán in *El cura y los mandarines. (Historia no oficial del Bosque de los Letrados). Cultura y política en España 1962-1996*.

4 In the article, Sánchez Ferlosio makes a joke about the PSOE's approach to culture by turning out a famous sentence by Goebbels: 'En cuanto oigo la palabra *cultura* extiendo un cheque en blanco al portador' (Sánchez Ferlosio 1984: 11).

5 The 213 issues of *Hermano Lobo* which were published from May 1972 to June 1976 can be found online in *Hermano Lobo Digital*: <http://www.hermanolobodigital.com/bcombinada.php> (retrieved 31 January 2018).

6 See, for example, *El País*'s editorial from 4 September 2016 ('Ni Rajoy ni Sánchez'), in which they asked Mariano Rajoy and Pedro Sánchez to step back and forget their differences—that is, that the latter abstained in the parliamentary vote for electing a new PM, as it eventually occurred—because they should avoid at any cost the celebration of a third election in one year time; and the response by a former journalist of *El País*, Rosa María Artal, who, in an article in which she remembered some historical articles that had inspired her, claimed that *El País*—or what it meant for her—had died (Artal 2016).