

The notion of *homeland* in *Unidos Podemos* discourse (2016-2017): the articulation of a *constructive patriotism*

La noción de patria en el discurso de Unidos Podemos (2016-2017): la articulación de un patriotismo constructivo



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Abstract:

In the Spanish political language, the lexical selection used to refer to the concept of nation shows striking ideological differences: right-wing parties use the term *Spain* whereas progressive or nationalist parties favour the phrase *Spanish State*. Similarly, the term *homeland* is generally associated with conservative imagery. Since its appearance on the political scene in 2014, *Podemos* has tried to give a new meaning to the concept of *homeland*, articulating a constructive patriotism opposed to the blind patriotism of the conservatives. In order to do this, *Podemos* has tried to link the notion of homeland to the defense of people's rights and freedoms and to the Welfare State. This work aims to explain what the appropriation of the term has consisted of in the discourse of *Podemos* during its first two years of parliamentary career (2016-2017).

Keywords:

Constructive patriotism; political discourse; *Unidos Podemos*; homeland; frame.

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Resumen:

En el lenguaje político español, la selección léxica empleada para aludir a la nación revela diferencias ideológicas: mientras las formaciones de la derecha se refieren a España, los partidos de corte progresista o nacionalista hablan del Estado español. De igual modo, el término patria se asocia generalmente al imaginario conservador. Desde su irrupción en el panorama político en el año 2014, Podemos ha tratado de resignificar dicho concepto, articulando un patriotismo constructivo opuesto al patriotismo ciego de los conservadores. Para ello, ha intentado vincular la patria a la defensa de los derechos y libertades del pueblo y al estado del bienestar. Este trabajo pretende explicar en qué ha consistido la apropiación del término en el discurso de la formación durante sus dos primeros años de andadura parlamentaria (2016-2017).

Palabras clave:

Patriotismo constructivo; discurso político; Unidos Podemos; patria; marco conceptual.

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1. Introduction

In the Spanish political language, the term *Patria* (homeland) is a tainted word from the point of view of its connotations. Like national symbols, patriotism is commonly associated with the conservative vision of Spain. Progressive or regional nationalist parties generally avoid referring to *Spain*; instead they use expressions such as “the Spanish State”, “this country” or “our nation”.

This reluctance is not new; in the 1930s, regional nationalist parties set the term *Iberia* in vogue to avoid using the word *Spain* (García Santos, 1980: 514). This asymmetry is also present in the political discourse of “*la Transición*”, that is, the Spanish transition to democracy after Franco’s death; symbols such as the national anthem or the word *Patria* (homeland) were at that point in time exclusively used by the right-wing parties (De Santiago, 1992: 197). The constitutional flag is also contested by the progressive forces: on the one hand, because it too strongly evokes Franco’s dictatorship, since the colors and layout are the same, the only difference being the coat of arms; on the other hand, because Catalan, Basque and Galician nationalists feel more attached to their regional flags (Aguilera de Prat and Vernet Llobet, 1993: 150). Still today, almost a century after the end of the *Segunda República* (a democratic period between 1931 and 1936 when the Spanish Civil war began), a part of the progressive and nationalist spectrum vindicates the republican legacy and the republican flag, and rejects the official one, partly as a criticism of the “*la Transición*”.

For this ideological sector, the voices *homeland* or *Spain* are associated with the desire for a linguistic and cultural uniformity, and with the authoritarian aftertaste of Franco’s regime or of the Spanish Empire. This connection made by a part of the left of the Spanish nation with anti-democratic values explains why Spanish nationalism is seen as reactionary, in contrast to regional nationalisms, which are considered progressive movements that legitimately claim the recognition of their nation within the state. The left-wing party *Unidos Podemos* defends, for example, the *plurinationality* of the Spanish state while simultaneously criticizing the nationalist discourse of conservative parties such as *Partido Popular* or *Vox*.

The reasons for the association of the national symbols with the conservative side of the political spectrum are, therefore, twofold: on the one hand, the conscious abandonment by the left of symbols which are seen as reactionary; on the other, the appropriation by conservatives of voices such as *homeland* or of elements such as the flag, used, for example, in demonstrations against abortion or homosexual marriage.

The position of *Unidos Podemos* regarding the notions of Spanish *homeland* and *nation* has been ambiguous from the beginning. They have criticized the conservatives’ elaboration of a nationalist discourse or their attempt to cover up corruption scandals “wrapping themselves up in the flag”, but at the same time *Unidos Podemos* has also tried to redefine the patriotic discourse from a progressive perspective. In this sense, the strategy has consisted –in line with the postulates of cognitive linguistics– not so much in refuting the mental frame, but rather, as in trying to establish a new one (Lakoff, 2008a and 2008b).

Although the defense of the term *homeland* and of national symbols has traditionally been linked to the conservative forces, many progressive voices have asked for decades to redefine this setting and provide it with a social content, linked to the defense of the welfare state. During the “*la Transición*”, the socialist member of the Spanish Parliament Solé Tura –father of the 1978 Constitution– asked to get rid of the euphemism “Spanish State” and use *Spain* instead:

[Spain is not an invention; it is not a historical artifice; it is a reality forged by history (...) but Spain is there and we must end the euphemism of designating it with the term Spanish State. (...) Spain is a diverse reality, but it is a reality and it is everyone's task to ensure that even its own symbols are recognized as such" (cited in De Santiago, 1992: 199)].

In the same vein, Peces Barba –former member of Parliament of the socialist party and father of the Constitution– gave a similar opinion in an article published in *El País* in 2011 when he contrasted true patriotism, “the one that should adorn good citizens”, with stale and old-fashioned patriotism:

[The rancid and sentimental patriotism linked to thought of conservative and reactionary Spanish parties must be discarded, as well as the selective patriotism of a fragment of the State, such as that defended in Catalonia and the Basque Country by radical nationalists, who do not accept the idea of a founding and integrative Spain].

The distinction rests on the concepts proposed by Staub (1997): *blind patriotism* and *constructive patriotism*. The first is characterized by an unconditional support for the homeland and a superficial loyalty to the symbols of the nation; the second, on the other hand, emerges when there is a critical conscience and an identity feeling of belonging to a group that must be taken care of. In either case, the nation is conceived as an imagined community, in which the majority of the individuals do not know each other and never will, but in which they feel encompassed in the same collective project (Anderson, 1993). Blind patriotism, however, is more chauvinistic, it consists of an irrational exaltation of the symbols of the country and, in this sense, it comes closer to the traditional position of nationalism (Olloqui, 2016). Constructive patriotism, on the other hand, moves away from this idea, conceptualizing the community as an association of individuals whose rights and freedoms must be safeguarded (Huddy and Khatib, 2007).

In Spain, the attempt to articulate a constructive patriotism corresponds to *Unidos Podemos*. This party has tried to link the defense of the homeland with that of social rights and the welfare state. This strategy has produced a turn within the Spanish political tradition, where the semantic field was associated with the conservative discourse.

According to the analysis by Franzé (2017), the attempt to appropriate the notion of *homeland* appears already in 2014. The first stages of Podemos on the political scene (2014-2015) were characterized by a challenge to the political system inherited from the Constitution of 1978, associated with the oligarchies, the dictatorship, and a retrograde vision of the country. Emphasis was also placed on the dichotomy between higher and lower classes, and on the existence of a political and economic class –“la casta (the caste)”– that lives idly at the expense of the working class.

This discourse is toned down around 2015; the target of their criticism was no longer the 1978 constitutional text, but rather the neoliberal system that threatens social rights (Franzé, 2017: 231). Although the discourse that Unidos Podemos promotes is no longer so drastic, the defense of the homeland and the attempt to articulate an up-down axis are still present in their parliamentary journey at least during the first two years (2016-2017). Patriots are those who defend the social rights of the people; the unpatriotic, those who steal and are corrupt, those who privatize public services.

This paper is based on the hypothesis that the term *homeland* and its derivatives (*patriot*, *patriotism*, *unpatriotic*) have played a fundamental role in Podemos' discourse during the period 2016-2017. The objective is to define for what purpose

it has been used, what values these voices have been associated with and what has ultimately been the meaning of the resignification proposed by Unidos Podemos during the first two years of their presence in the Spanish Parliament.

2. Methodology

In this study, the Spanish political discourse of Unidos Podemos during the 2016-2017 period is analyzed from a qualitative point of view, establishing as a time frame August 30, 2016 to December 13, 2017. Based on the parliamentary debates, we will try to see how Unidos Podemos has used the conceptual framework of homeland and attempt to find out what connotations they have tried to link to this term.

To do so, our starting point will be a corpus made up of 240 parliamentary debates corresponding to the mentioned period. The sample is drawn from a selection of the most outstanding debates of the legislature. Therefore, it covers all the discussions of the plenary sessions that are relevant from a political point of view and excludes only those that do not present a discursive interest¹. This sample gives quite a good idea of the political language of Podemos. It includes speeches on various issues (economy, right to housing, ecology, feminism, territorial issues, etc.), as well as other more general debates such as the motion of censure presented by Unidos Podemos in June 2017 against the government of Rajoy, or the debate on the national budget.

Our main goal is to describe in which conceptual domains the term *homeland* is used and for what purposes. To this end, the focus will be on three issues: the Catalan conflict, where the plurinational character of the homeland has been claimed; the economic field, where corruption has been presented as unpatriotic behavior; and the populist discourse, where the homeland has served to shore up the elite-people dichotomy.

3. Analysis and results

The strategy of the Unidos Podemos has consisted in giving a new meaning to the concept of *homeland* and detaching it from its conservative connotations. Unidos Podemos has presented itself as the true guardian of the rights and freedoms of the people, against those who appeal to the homeland and the flag in their speeches but then rule against their compatriots. Real patriotism is about defending public services and protecting families whose members are unemployed. This defense of the welfare state is opposed by the blind patriotism of conservatives, who are busy extorting or criminalizing their rivals. While the Partido Popular calls the unit of the Ministry of the Interior that is in charge of spying on other political leaders “patriotic police”, Unidos Podemos calls for police forces that fight corruption and defend the “true homeland”:

¹ For example, debates about VAT in veterinary services or discussions about the use of social networks by adolescents are discarded, but all those that address in some way the economic and territorial issue, as well as those concerning civil rights and liberties (gender, LGTBI rights, historical memory, etc.).

[For you, patriotism has to do with spying, extorting, financing irregular police units, which leak false and unsigned reports to the media to criminalize democratic political parties, Catalan political parties, but also Spanish political parties. For us, patriotism is something else and we have explained it many times. For us, patriotism is to defend public services, to protect families in which everyone is unemployed, to defend the honor of the institutions by preventing them from becoming a war machine against political adversaries, because that is the only red line that separates the states where the law rules from those in which the elite rule. If you insist on talking about patriotic police, we must tell you that it seems to us a deeply unpatriotic behavior. The patriotic behavior of the police is demonstrated when they are capable of investigating corruption schemes, many allegedly linked to your party, despite your obstructions, or despite the protection given to Mr. Rodrigo Rato (Errejón Galván, DS, 27/09/2016, p. 50)].

[affirming that we want them to prosecute the corrupt people in your party and not people for their political ideas, and making clear that those who stain their name –as has been accredited in this Commission– creating vigilante structures that stain the name of the police forces of our country, they are unpatriotic, which is what you are, unpatriotic” (Montero Gil, DS, 09/21/2017, p. 25)].

[Mr. Rajoy, you are going to have us in front of you in this legislature basically because we love our homeland, we love Spain and we love the good things that exist in our country, because, indeed, in our country there are many good things despite you; and like us, many compatriots who are not members of Parliament, but who defend a public health system, who defend a public education system, who defend the right to housing, who defend civil rights ”(Iglesias Turrión, DS, 10/27/2016, p. 32)].

In the economic field, Unidos Podemos has presented the conservative forces as “unpatriotic”: those who exalt the country in their speeches are those who later act against the general interest. True patriots do not hand over the sovereignty of the nation to the European economic powers, nor do they put up with the harsh conditions that they impose, condemning countries like Spain to be the periphery of Europe. Although the discourse against the European oligarchies is no longer as present as it was at first, criticism continues towards the northern countries of the European Union for the sacrifices they demand from those of the south.

[The defenders of the homeland, ladies and gentlemen of the Partido Popular! In order to maintain this extractive economic model, you have had to act against the general interest, and also treat our Constitution as wastepaper (Montero Gil, DS, 06/13/2017, p. 11)].

[Why is it that when a Spanish citizen has a lawsuit against Google, do they have to sue under the rule of the North American courts? This amendment is very sensible, and we believe that you, patriots of the Partido Popular, should defend the sovereignty of our country (Díaz Pérez, DS, 06/20/2017, p. 40)].

[This is not the image of my homeland that I want to be known abroad, an image linked to platitudes and corruption, gentlemen of the PP. Finally, with regard to sovereignty –in this I agree with you– the right of the citizens of a country to decide about their own future, exactly the opposite of what you did when agreeing with this party to reform article 135 of the Constitution, that is, to surrender the sovereignty of our country (Iglesias Turrión, DS, 03/15/2017, p. 48)].

[The problem is that your corrupt political model works in the Spanish difference, conceiving our homeland as a periphery of Europe (Iglesias Turrión, DS, 06/13/2017, p. 61)].

[The economic crisis proved, Mr. Rajoy, that there was no transfer union, that there was no federalism, that Spanish interests are very different than German ones in the European Union; and that proves the failure of the political project of the European Union (Iglesias Turrión, DS, 03/15/2017, p. 15)]

Unidos Podemos also emphasizes that the economic and political elites have no homeland other than their money. Although in their speeches they extol the concept of Spain, their leaders have bank accounts in Switzerland or Panama. Faced with the *blind patriotism* of the conservatives, Unidos Podemos advocates a *constructive patriotism*, based on the redistribution of wealth and on the respect for the rights and freedoms of the citizens. Those who defend Spain in a chauvinist way –wearing bracelets with the Spanish flag in football stadiums– are not patriots. For Unidos Podemos, Spain is the working class, “the chamber maid who earns a pittance for each room she cleans”, the pensioner who can’t make ends meet or the young person who works in precarious conditions.

[When we talk about paying taxes, your homeland is not Spain; your homeland is Panama, ladies and gentlemen (Montero Gil, DS, 06/13/2017, p. 16)].

[It is not a motion against Spain, it is a motion for Spain and against the Partido Popular, which is the one who is looting this country and taking the money of the Spanish people to Switzerland, Andorra and Panama, which is the homeland that you like the most (Montero Gil, DS, 06/13/2017, p. 33)].

“What is Spain, ladies and gentlemen? Is Spain a brand? Is Spain the box on a football field where you see gentlemen wearing bracelets with the colors of the Spanish flag and whose bank accounts are in Switzerland? That is not Spain, ladies and gentlemen. Spain is their working people who get up early to provide for their families. Spain is a maid with back pain and who earns a pittance for each room she cleans (...) Spain is a tele-operator who earns 700 euros a month, a retired woman who stretches her pension to help her loved ones and who has to pay for her medicines because of you (Iglesias Turrión, DS, 06/13/2017, p. 39)].

Regarding the populist matter, the conceptual domain of *homeland* is useful to reinforce the opposition elite-working class. This dichotomy shows up in the discourse of Unidos Podemos during at least their first two years in the Spanish Parliament. Homeland is the feeling that “gentlemen” boast about; but those who really defend it are the workers. The economic elites are not characterized by a “patriotic spirit” but live at the expense of the state and citizens. The government held by the Partido Popular constitutes an “anti-patriotic plot” that deliberately favors the interests of large corporations which extort money from the people. The conservative wing demonstrates, therefore, an “anti-popular and patronizing” behavior when it makes social housing available to the vulture funds.

[I want to remind you of something mentioned in that book. Antonio Machado said it in the words of Juan de Mairena regarding the idea of homeland: Homeland is, in Spain, simply a popular feeling of which the upper class gentlemen tend to boast about (Iglesias Turrión, DS, 06/13/2017, p 65)].

[Ladies and gentlemen, the history of the Spanish elites is not a history of entrepreneurship, innovation, and patriotic spirit. Unfortunately, the history of the power elite in Spain is the history of how to benefit from the state and from the people (Iglesias Turrión, DS, 06/13/2017, p. 40)].

[You are the political fraction of a network of anti-patriotic, that is what you are. (Applause). Your economic policy, Mr. Hernando, had a name, Rodrigo Rato, an alleged criminal, and it has a symbol, Bankia; do not boast about economic policy in the context of the European Union (Iglesias Turrión, DS, 03/15/2017, p. 48)].

[The social problem we face is having, as we have in Spain, 30% of empty houses in Europe. The problem we have in this country is that the lords of the Partido Antipopular have been working on selling it to pieces. They are nothing but traitors who are selling our country to the vulture funds (...) They are doing it because it is a business for the vulture funds, and if that were not the case, explain to me what Blackstone and the like are doing in this country. Who is selling out this country: the traitors, the Anti Popular party” (Mayoral Perales, DS, 09/20/2017, p. 40)].

Homeland traitors are those who “wear the bracelet on their wrist” and then do not hesitate to plunder the country and privatize public resources. For Unidos Podemos, both the Partido Popular and Ciudadanos undertake labor reforms that harm the working class, legislate against the interests of the people and, therefore, are not entitled to exalt the term homeland in their speeches. As soon as they get a chance, they give the best of their homeland to billionaires like Sheldon Adelson to loot it and do business at the working class’ expense.

[And when faced with looting, an outrageous pillage, the Government of the Partido Popular, which call themselves patriots, which call themselves nationalists, said absolutely nothing, perhaps because they were busy privatizing other services and other public companies, such as AENA, or they were carrying out labor reforms, which are those that explain how wages have been falling every year in a systematic way, thus increasing the exploitation of the working class of our country (Garzón Espinosa, DS, 06/14/2017, pp. 22 and 23)].

[This is completely illegal and, of course, unconstitutional too; but I don’t see any patriots, the kind who wear the Spanish flag on their wrist and who have bank accounts in Switzerland, of course, crying out. And I think they should, because systematic non-compliance with the law and the Constitution does break Spain, it breaks it in half (Rodríguez Rodríguez, DS, 10/17/2017, p. 12)].

[In fact, your attitude and that of Ciudadanos remind me of that maxim said by a character whose name I don’t want to remember. That character said that, just when the country was on the edge of the abyss, we took a step forward. And this is what this non legislative motion means, a step forward to fall into the abyss (Domènech Sampere, DS, 09/19/2017, p. 39)].

[Wash your mouth before talking about patriotism, because you neither love this country nor do you work for its people. And now that you have removed your mask and that your orange crutch has also removed it, you can say it clearly: social rights are an inconvenience for you; you don’t care about the more than two million long-term unemployed people in our country, and neither do you about half of the unemployed people in our country who have no income (Franco Carmona, DS, 09/28/2017, p. 18)].

[But that is not being patriots, ladies and gentlemen, that is selling the country! (Applause). I will give you an example. One of the clearest examples was Eurovegas, which your colleague Ignacio González –currently in jail– promised to Sheldon Adelson (Montero Gil, DS, 06/13/2017, p. 12)].

The constant references to the homeland reinforce the populist discourse of Podemos. They present themselves as the only political party committed to the people, as the only one capable of defending their interests. Some expressions such as “to be bound to the honor of the homeland” are quite surprising. Unidos Podemos set themselves up as the protectors of the oppressed citizens, forgotten by their rulers: loving the homeland is “taking care of the people”.

[Thank you, Madam President, I am concluding. Let me tell you that I owe myself to the honor of my homeland and to that gave the citizens of my country, not to the honor of this House. (Protests. –Applause). It will be fun if after my speech some members of this Parliament demand their turn to speak for personal references after talking about potential criminals (Iglesias Turrión, DS, 10/27/2016, p. 23)].

[Today you are not going to get away with it. Today, in front of the Government of the Partido Popular, we are going to show what patriotism is and we are going to defend our people (Franco Carmona, DS, 28/09/2017, p. 18)].

[These people, whom you are not protecting, are my homeland, and that is the Spain that is breaking down (Franco Carmona, DS, 10/19/2017, p. 11)].

[Stop being bracelet patriots, be patriots at heart, work to solve the problems of our country. To work for Spain is to work for those who have the least and to love the country is to take care of our people” (Franco Carmona, DS, 10/19/2017, p. 12)].

Along the same lines, references to compatriots are common. Whenever they are appealed to, it is done to denounce that they live in precarious conditions, that they “have fallen” from the middle class, that they have had to go into exile due to lack of employment or that they are affected by the impoverishment that neoliberal policies entail. It is used, therefore, in a more restrictive way than in the discourse of conservatives: not so much to elaborate a nationalist discourse that encompasses all Spaniards, but to create a top-down dichotomy that opposes the people –the true homeland– to the elite.

[Since austerity policies have been applied in Spain, three million compatriots have fallen out of the middle class. And now are you going to tell us that this Government, led by Mariano Rajoy, is going to take a different path? (Iglesias Turrión, DS, 10/27/2016, p. 22)].

[How outrageous it is that in our country former presidents and former ministers sit on the boards of directors of strategic companies that continue to cut off the electricity and heating for our compatriots!” (Iglesias Turrión, DS, 11/23/2016, p. 40)].

[To be an example in the world is to take care of our compatriots who have been forced to leave the country and encourage their return so that they create wealth in our land (Iglesias Turrión, DS, 06/13/2017, p. 60)].

[There was a huge economic crisis that called into question the European social model, based on neoliberal policies, which resulted in the suffering of many of our compatriots, in the impoverishment of the working class, in the loss of expectations of the middle class, in evictions, unemployment, in poverty and in migration (Iglesias Turrión, DS, 12/12/2017, p. 14)].

In the territorial question, the concept of *homeland* is also commonly used. The conservative parties normally elaborate a nationalist discourse to underline the indivisibility of the Spanish state and to accuse the pro-independence forces of wanting to divide it or break it. Likewise, they attack progressive parties for not being loyal to the nation and for allying with separatist forces.

The strategy of Unidos Podemos consists of giving a new meaning to the idea of homeland in accordance with their political interests. The Spanish homeland is not one or indivisible but made up of different sovereign peoples who have the right to decide whether they are part of it or not. Any political force that considers itself patriotic must assume the plurinationality of the state. Faced with the uniform concept of nation proposed by the conservative parties, Unidos Podemos vindicate the plurinational richness of Spain and the right of all the nations that make it up to decide whether or not they want to consider and rule themselves as states.

["We want a tax reform so that not only the working class have to tighten their belts but also the ruling class. We want democratic solutions to the problems posed by the plurinational nature of our country. We are very different." (Iglesias Turrión, DS, 27/10/2017, p. 34)].

[The ruling experience of the Spanish right wing during the 19th and 20th centuries, from the Restoration, through the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, through the Black Biennium or Franco's dictatorship, until the two terms of president Aznar, configured a narrow and predominantly authoritarian vision of the Spanish reality in which they have always denied something evident, the plurinationality of our country (Iglesias Turrión, DS, 06/13/2017, p. 54)].

[This is not only the history of Catalonia, this is the history of Spain, and a patriot cannot deny the history of their homeland, they must know it, ladies and gentlemen (Iglesias Turrión, DS, 06/13/2017, p. 55)].

[In the same way that you are Basque, patriotic and proud of it, I am Spanish, and a democrat and I am proud of my homeland. I assure you that this is a great country that is going to change, that it is going to move forward against corruption and that it will succeed in opening a path to recognize a fundamental thing about our country: plurinationality. I am convinced that we will be able to find ways of mutual understanding, but you should understand that the same love you have for your country I have for mine (Iglesias Turrión, DS, 06/13/2017, p. 92)].

In addition to the economic and territorial issue, constructive patriotism is transferred to other areas and it is associated with the protection of national wealth: in ecology, to be a patriot is to safeguard the natural heritage; in culture, it consists of protecting the artistic legacy; in the business world, it means standing up for industrializing the country so that it does not depend exclusively on tourism; and in the feminist question, it is to defend equality between the two sexes. The term homeland has been meaningless until Unidos Podemos gave it a new meaning in accordance with their political project. The task of a patriot—Irene Montero states during the motion of censure—is to expel the government of the Partido Popular.

[In the last few weeks, we have seen and heard a lot of patriotism of the kind of wrapping up in flags and so on. I believe that there is a real patriotism which is that of those who are defending, with great difficulties, our natural heritage (López de Uralde Garmendia, DS, 11/07/2017, p. 25)].

[I imagine you already know, but we are the third country in the world in number of cultural assets considered World Heritage by Unesco and it is surprising the love and protection that our heritage deserves given that you are so patriotic (García Sempere, DS, 22 / 11/2017, p. 42)].

[so that our country can boast of having one of the most advanced industries in Europe, and not be the country that can exclusively offer low wages and sun and beaches to the European middle classes? To be a patriot is to stand up for innovation and for a strong production model (Iglesias Turrión, DS, 06/13/2017, p. 50)].

[On March 8, Spain, Spanish women showed that our country is at the forefront of feminism (Iglesias Turrión, DS, 06/26/2018, p. 6)].

[understand that what a patriot should do, that what a democrat should do, is work tirelessly to kick you out (Montero Gil, DS, 06/13/2017, p. 8)].

Homeland is not a timeless concept that is built up from the present. Unidos Podemos has tried to give it a historical background, linking it with the values of the Spanish Second Republic and with the anti-fascist struggle of the 1930s. Hence, terms related to this semantic field emerge when referring to the International Brigades or when speaking of the political resistance that fought European fascism.

[The 80th anniversary of the arrival of the International Brigades in our homeland is commemorated these days. To the few who remain alive and to those who have kept the flame of their memory burning, thank you for coming to our homeland to fight fascism (Iglesias Turrión, DS, 10/27/2016, p. 19)].

[We are in a time when the 1930s should be remembered, when the European liberal systems entered into crisis and when the threat of fascisms was only overcome by a response that was called European antifascism, an alliance between organizations of the working class, liberal political forces and also by patriotic political forces (Iglesias Turrión, DS, 03/15/2017, p. 15)].

Throughout this work we have argued that the main task of the Unidos Podemos has been to articulate a *constructive patriotism* that opposes the *blind nationalism* of the conservatives. However, in the speech of Unidos Podemos there are also exaltations to the homeland that are closer to chauvinism than *social patriotism*. On several occasions, the members of Parliament use expressions such as “loving the country” or “having faith in it”. These statements seek to consolidate the new conceptual framework, but, at the same time, they are very close to the *blind patriotism* that they try to fight and run the risk of being confused with the traditional nationalism that they try to eradicate.

[Excuse me, ladies and gentlemen, for I have been too long diving into our history. I know it is quite unusual, but I think that if you love your country you must know its history, because in order to change things you have to know our history and our reality (Iglesias Turrión, DS, 06/13/2017, p. 44)].

[He said about Cánovas that he caused great damage to the nation. It made him lose the faith that he had in the present and in the future. Few crimes are less excusable than that of the man who is at the head of a government without faith in his homeland. Cánovas was that kind of a politician: reluctant to act and much less to think about the future (Iglesias Turrión, DS, 06/13/2017, p. 41)].

[Have some democratic shame, why don't you? and may you feel the same as the Spanish people feel, what Spanish men and women feel, that love their homeland, when we see you do what you do (Montero Gil, DS, 09/21/2017, p. 26)].

After all the above, it is worth wondering if these attempts to appropriate the conceptual framework of homeland can bear fruit or not. There are reasons to think so, since the only way to change the mentality of voters in the long term is to establish new mental frames that offer an alternative perception of reality. There are also reasons to believe that it will not happen, due to the ingrained national symbolism in the conservative worldview and the reluctance of the progressive electorate to take on the nationalist discourse.

4. Conclusions

This article has analyzed the speech of Unidos Podemos throughout their first two years in the Spanish Parliament. Unidos Podemos has tried to give a new meaning to the concept of *homeland*, dissociating it from the conservative connotations that it has accumulated up to now. According to this approach, the true patriots are not those who elaborate a nationalist discourse, but those who defend the public services of the welfare state and the rights and freedoms of the citizens.

This notion is used in various debates and for different purposes: in the economic field, to accuse the oligarchic elites of their conduct and of their double standards regarding the homeland; in the territorial question, to defend the plurinational richness of the state and the right to self-determination of the nations that comprise it; in the populist view, to reinforce the opposition between the people, who embody the true values of the country, and “those from above”, those who betray it. Likewise, it is also used to criticize the corruption of the Partido Popular and the espionage maneuvers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, or to make allegations in favor of the cultural and ecological heritage.

Although in most cases Unidos Podemos displays a *constructive patriotism* –that is, full of social content– in other cases the homeland exaltations are rather superficial or chauvinistic. They have attempted to differentiate their defense of the homeland from the conservative discourse by all means. Only time will tell if this appropriation has managed to establish a new conceptual framework or if patriotism continues to be understood as the political heritage of the Spanish right.

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