Frame construction in post-15M discourses[1]

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Abstract:

This paper offers an analysis of ideological discourse from a constructivist perspective, according to which reality is interpreted as the socially constructed product of different agents interacting on an individual, subjective basis in a particular socio-political context, and in relation to a specific social action. This theoretical and methodological approach also highlights the importance of the relationship between the field of discourse analysis and those of rhetoric and argumentation (and semiotics, where the discourse is multimodal), and complexity studies. The paper uses data from an ethnographic study of a social collective created a year before the 15M movement: the *Cooperativa Integral Catalana* ('Catalan Integral Cooperative'), an eco-social economic initiative based on a new form of self-managed cooperativism.

Keywords: Discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis, constructivism, constructivist rhetoric, complexity, argumentation, cognitive frame, post-15M discourse.

> 'Societies, both animal and human, might almost be regarded as huge cooperative nervous systems… From the warning cry of primitive man to the latest newsflash or scientific monograph, language is social. Cultural and intellectual cooperation is the great principle of *human* life. This is by no means an easy principle to accept or to understand…' (Hayakawa, 1973: 11, 14).

1. Introduction

Reflecting in the 1970s on the effect of neo-positivism on science, Umberto Eco (1976: 161) concluded that, although hard science had certainly flourished, the same could not be said of the human sciences. The dichotomy established between assertive and emotional discourses, between verifiable and pseudo-scientific assertions, between communicative and emotional expression, had led to the pre-eminence of discourses associated with the first category over those in the second, and the denigration of

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attempts to analyse the kind of everyday communication, and political, emotional, persuasive discourse that cannot be confined within the rigid parameters of physical verification.

Half a century later, this division of approaches is still present in the social sciences owing to the continuing influence of the rationalist epistemology on which it is based. Rationalism postulates the existence of a reality that exists independently of language: a remainder of truth (in the sense of that which may be verified) and a way of avoiding the kind of relativism that might lead to the manipulation of evidence (White, 1987: 94).

Today, there are increasingly strong calls from both humanistic (White, 1987, 2004, 2008) and theory of science studies (including complexity studies) for a constructivist approach to explain the relationship between knowledge and language.

In this paper I will focus on the revival of constructivism in discourse analysis, using data and analysis from the interdisciplinary analytical approach currently being developed by the RECDID research group, combining discourse analysis with rhetorical argumentation theory. The paper also takes into account the socio-cognitive dimension of discourse, analysing the constructivist arguments of authors working in the field of complexity studies. The analysis will use data from my own ethnographic research into a *post-15M* social collective: the *Cooperativa Integral Catalana*, or CIC ('Catalan Integral Cooperative').

2. Constructivism and ideological discourse analysis

This study is a reflection of how my interest in ideological discourse analysis has evolved over the years: from earlier research on the political discourse of parliament and election campaigns in Spain, the focus of my more recent work has shifted increasingly towards discourses of social change created by social groups as alternatives to the ideas offered by more traditional political parties (Morales-López, 2012, 2014a, 2016a; Pujante and Morales-Lopez, 2013; Montesano Montessori and Morales-López, 2015).[2]

Discourses of social change may be classed as political discourses because they activate *ideological proposals* used to construct a particular vision of the world. They appeal to the country's citizens in order to gain support for the speakers' ideological

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[2] For more information, see http://cei.udc.es

position, but also to government, key state bodies and other international institutions, in an effort to have their proposals adopted as policy (Morales-López, 2012, 2014a). My interest in these discourses falls into the category of discourse analysis known nowadays as *critical perspective*. This theoretical and methodological approach is not unique to discourse studies, but is in fact found in many areas of the social sciences (see Morales-López 2011), as the Portuguese sociologist Sousa Santos (2005) points out. Sousa Santos places his research perspective on a continuum with Max Horkheimer (1972) and the Frankfurt School, and he defines it as follows:

> 'By "critical theory" I mean the theory that does not reduce "reality" to what exists. Reality, however conceived it may be, is considered by critical theory as a field of possibilities, the task of critical theory being precisely to define and assess the degree of variation that exists beyond the empirically given. The critical analysis of what exists is based on the assumption that existence does not exhaust the possibilities of existence, and that there are, therefore, alternatives capable of overcoming what is criticisable in what exists. The discomfort, indignation and non-conformism *vis à vis* what exists inspire the impulse to theorise its overcoming.' (Sousa Santos 2005: 97-98).[3]

The view of reality as a context- and community-specific social construct includes the idea that our reality can be improved, firstly by exposing the forces ranged against building better social relations (Habermas, 1981); and, as Sousa Santos says, by creating alternatives to solve unresolved socio-political and/or socio-economic problems.

Interest in ideological discourse first emerged in the 1980s among members of the European critical discourse analysis (CDA) group (see, among others, Wodak *et al.*, 1999; Fairclough, 2001; Van Dijk, 2003; Chilton, 2004; Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012). The American discourse analysis tradition at that time was still more interested in exploring the relationship between discourse and socio-cultural constructions (Duranti, 1997; Scollon and Wong Scollon, 2001; see also Morales-López, 2004), although the influence of CDA also encouraged American discourse analysts to pay more specific attention to the relationship between discourse and ideology (Verschueren, 1999).

Decades of ideological discourse analysis later, the dominance of a rationalist-realistic approach in Europe (see Morales-López, 2011, 2013), contrasts with the

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[3] The English version of this citation is in 'On Oppositional Postmodernism', in *Critical Development Theory: Contributions to a New Paradigm*, by Ronaldo Munck, Denis O'Hearn (eds) (Zed Books: London / New York, 1999, p. 29).

constructivist influence found in American discourse analysis, led by American authors, such as Barlett, Bateson, Mead, Gumperz, Goffman and Hymes, and Russian constructivist authors, such as Bakhtin, Vygotsky and Voloshinov (Scollon and Wong Scollon, 2005; see also Pujante and Morales-López, 2013).

From a socio-cognitive point of view, reality does not exist independently of the individuals who reorganise it to fit their perception of the world. A person's world view is not constructed individually, but as a *continuum* of self and society; and is not separate from embodiment and emotions, as explained by Bateson (1972: 454, 461, 464; see also Harré, 1981). Language plays a crucial role in this process: not language as it was conceived by the Enlightenment –timeless, history-less and universal, 'governed everywhere by the same grammatical and syntactical rules' (White, 1987: 139); but language as it is developed in the praxis of the society in which this concept of reality is formed (op. cit. 117). From a constructivist perspective, the formal characteristics of a discourse also construct its meaning (as reflected in the title of White's *The Content of the Form*). For this reason, we cannot draw a precise distinction between discourses that use demonstrative discursive resources and those with a predominantly symbolic (pragmatic-rhetorical) structure. As Vico (1984 [1744]: 116) reminds us, poetic logic also contains knowledge and wisdom, even if that logic is not rational and abstract.

From this approach, discourse always occurs in a context in which additional forms and functions may also be acquired. The units of analysis themselves are not abstract linguistic units, but real forms that also require contextualisation (Blommaert, 2005: 14-15). The methodology best suited for this task is the ethnographic one, in which the researcher adopts the role of participant-observer and data are collected naturalistically in relation to communication events that are significant for the participants, and accounted for in this regard by the researcher; the analysis is qualitative, because what matters is the process; and the conveyed meaning is interpreted, heuristically and through the triangulation of data, in relation to the interactional (or discursive) context, the sociocultural or broader socio-political context, and the actions of the different social agents (Morales-López, 2014b; Scollon, 2001, 2008).

In contrast to other schools of discourse analysis, in which cognition is ignored, our analysis uses a complexity approach, highlighting the importance of the cognitive dimension (see, among others, Capra, 1996; Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008; Massip-Bonet, 2013). Complexity studies analyses all objects systemically (or

holistically, since the whole is always contained in the part) and in relation to the conditions in which they emerge. In the study of discourse, cognition is what connects meaning with one of the essential organs and processes of the human condition: the brain-mind. I do not agree, however, with the idea of cognition as separate and cut off from human life as a whole (modular or computational cognitive theories being an extreme example of this), but consider, in line with the Chilean biologists Maturana and Varela (1992; see also Maturana, 1996, 2006), that cognition cannot be separated from the individual because living itself is a process of cognition:

> 'All cognitive experience involves its subject in a personal way, rooted in his/her biological structure... We do not see the "space" of the world, we experience our visual field; we do not see the "colours" of the world, we experience the colour space around us... The phenomenon of knowing cannot be taken to mean that there are "facts" or objects out there that one can capture and put in one's head. The experience of anything from outside is validated in a special way by the human structure that makes the "thing" that arises in any description possible. This circularity... tells us *that every act of knowing puts a world into our hand...* Language is our starting point, our cognitive tool and our problem' (Maturana and Varela, 1992: 11-21).

In consequence of this link between the cognitive act and our biological and social being, all that we are is activated by knowledge. In this circularity of action and knowledge, language, or rather communicative action (*languaging*), plays a vital role. Language is a product of the richness of the human nervous system that generates new phenomena through new forms of structural coupling. One of these phenomena is the ability of self-consciousness; and the emergence of spaces for social engagement when self-conscious beings take part in recurrent interactions. In biological terms, communication does not involve the transmission of information, but the coordination of behaviours in a domain of structural coupling.

This view of human cognition as part of the communicative process takes into account the frames that individuals activate and co-construct in their interactions. In everyday communication, people often activate frames based on prior experiences, i.e. experiences that have been internalised as part of the process of socialisation (Goffman, 1974). In ideological discourse, frames are constructed for the purpose of obtaining citizens' support for the speaker's ideological position, thereby fulfilling a performative as well as a perlocutionary function. These frames have been identified by a number of authors with Voloshinov's (1929) *ideological signs*, which objectify the world symbolically (Berger and Luckmann, 1968); and defined elsewhere, variously, as

world-views (Bourdieu, 1990), *imaginaries* (Castoriadis, 1975), *narratives* or *narrativity* (Somers, 1994; Montesano Montessori and Morales-López, 2015), and cognitive frames (Lakoff, 2007; for more on Lakoff's frame theory, see Pujante and Morales-López, 2008; see also Salvador, 2014; and Filardo-Llamas, 2015, on conceptual spaces, after Werth, 1999). In the field of neurology, Damasio (2010) talks about the *images* that the brain constructs out of everything it perceives; while Vilarroya (2014) uses the term *experiences* to refer to the spatio-temporal units into which the cognitive system divides perception, emotion, etc. Almost all of these approaches reflect the attempt to overcome the idea of representation as a rule-based combination of symbols (units and subunits) (Morales-López, 2013, 2016b). The result is a more dynamic explanatory framework which does not merely represent an independent world, but actually causes it to emerge, as explained by Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008: 107-108). Larsen-Freeman and Cameron use the term *enactment* (borrowed from Maturana and Varela, 1987, and Varela *et al.* 1992: 174) for their analysis of the process of knowing: "Cognition is not the representation of a pre-given world by a pre-given mind but rather the enactment of a world and a mind on the basis of a history of the variety of actions that a being in the world performs" (Varela *et al.* 1992: 9; see also Ojeda, 2001). According to this view, enacting a world involves the relationship between mind and body and the conditions of emergence in which the social agent finds her/himself, in interaction with other individuals.

From this theoretical perspective, linguistic meaning is not a product (it is not 'given'), but a function of the overall system of communication: a process that emerges as part of the interaction (*languaging*), not in the mind or in a particular linguistic form.

White's (1987: 200) distinction between 'linguistic theory of text' and the 'semiotic conception' of discourse provides a useful framework. The first model of analysis uses specifically lexical and grammatical categories to establish a set of rules to differentiate between correct uses and incorrect uses. The second approach, based on the theory of language as a system of signs, allows us to test the reliability of a particular text as a witness to events, and to analyse its ideology as a process in which different types of meaning are produced and reproduced, with some systems of signs foregrounded and others obscured. This process occurs in scientific, political-legal and imaginary discourse. The formal differences between discourses are not confined to a simple change of style, therefore, but involve a dynamic process of (explicit or latent) code changing, which we recognise as metalinguistic cues. White (op. cit. 210-211) also

notes that a semiotic approach views the text as a complex mediation between different possible codes, concluding that the form of a text is also part of its ideological meaning.

Formal analysis is therefore an important part of discourse analysis, in which all relevant semiotic resources (that is pragmatic-discursive, rhetorical-argumentative and/or non-verbal resources) must be assessed in relation to their particular context. Discourse studies, therefore, needs to start breaking down the barriers between disciplines and move from interdisciplinarity towards a more fully transdisciplinary approach (Pujante and Morales-López, 2009; Morales-López, 2016b).

3. From theory to data

3.1. 15M and post-15M in context

In 2008, the international economy was rocked by financial crisis that followed the fall of Lehman Brothers. Countries on the periphery of Europe (Ireland, Greece, Portugal and Spain), and the fragile state of prosperity that had begun to emerge there with their entry into the European Union, were hit especially hard. In Spain, the collapse of the huge property bubble (created, in large part, by deregulation of the housing market under the right-wing government of J M Aznar and the conservative Popular Party) took with it much of the country's banking system, with disastrous consequences for ordinary Spanish people.[4] Unable to provide any solution to the collapse of the country's economic system, the Socialist Party, in power since 2004, suffered a dramatic decline in public support.

On 15 May 2011, inspired by the social movements of the Arab Spring and protests in Greece against massive cuts in social spending, different social groups took over the squares of the main cities in Spain and began a major citizen protest against the political *status quo*. Though originally referred to as the 'Outrage Movement' (*Movimiento de los indignados*, after Stéphane Hessel's 2010 essay, *Indignez-vous*, 'Time for Outrage'), or by the slogan 'Real Democracy Now' (*Democracia real ya*), the movement eventually became known by the shorter name of '15M' (in reference to the first day of protest in the main squares of Madrid and Barcelona). 15M failed to change the Spanish political system because in November 2011 the Socialist Party was voted out of power and a conservative government voted in its place, which over the ensuing

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[4] The Popular Party government was in office from 1996 to 2004.

four years has imposed unimaginable cuts on the working and middle classes in Spain (Pujante and Morales-López, 2013; and Montesano Montessori and Morales-López, 2015). However, the 15M discourse of social change has itself generated a new framework within which current political and media discourse may be interpreted. Discourse of change has therefore preceded the current, ongoing process of political change.

The Catalan Integral Cooperative (CIC) is a social collective that first appeared in Catalonia a year before the 15M movement, but grew in definition and support following the group's participation in the sit-in in Plaza de Cataluña in Barcelona as part of the 15M protests. Over the course of multiple assemblies held at various 15M sit-ins, information from which was distributed and co-distributed online, two lines of priority emerged. Some groups chose to promote political change by engaging in political action (as in the case of new parties and citizen platforms, such as *Podemos, Barcelona en Comú*, *En Marea*, etc., which have already begun to achieve electoral representation at municipal and regional level, in the wake of the recent elections in May of this year). Others opted for the creation of economic alternatives to capitalism, in order to demonstrate that an economy based on cooperativism, solidarity and environmental balance is possible. CIC falls into the second of these two groups. As well as being one of the most firmly established 'alternative economy' projects in the Spanish state, CIC is located in the social context of Catalonia, a region with a long tradition of associationism, making the initiative a real opportunity for socio-economic change.

The data for this study were collected in spring 2014 using the ethnographic methodology of participant observation of CIC activities and members. Over the course of several months, I attended assemblies and information sessions, and performed continuous monitoring of the numerous communications on the CIC website. I have used a similar methodology previously, as part of fieldwork carried out in 2009 to analyse discourses associated with the economic initiatives of a group of Ecuadorian women, aimed at tackling the chronic poverty of ordinary women in Ecuador (Morales-López, 2012, 2014a).

3.2. From (semantic) denotation to trope creation: Analysis of the data

Owing to the limitations of this study, the analysis here will focus on the data that are most representative of the proposed theoretical and methodological framework.

This preliminary description of the collected data will be completed in future publications.

One of the most important functions observed in CIC's construction of discourse in the various events in which I participated was the development of a new *framework* or *social imaginary*. This 'integral revolution', as it is known generally, is characterised by social ecology, integralism (CIC attempts to ensure the full exercise of human life in all its fundamental aspects) and post-capitalism. In addition, the collective prioritises horizontal, autonomous and creative relationships between different member groups, bound together on the basis of cooperation and solidarity.

The most important discourse features, based on an initial analysis of this new framework, are: a) use of lexical terminology to designate the new realities being constructed, and the re-definition or re-signification of other terms; b) construction of *image-schemas* using lexicalised metaphors; and c) use of additional, more creative tropes to explain other meanings:[5]

a) *Lexical creation and re-signification*

The first significant discursive feature is the creation and definition of different lexical terms, and the redefinition of existing everyday terms.

The concept of *frame semantics* which I will use for this analysis has been defined by Fillmore (1982: 111) as:

> 'a particular way of looking at word meanings, as well as a way of characterising principles for creating new words and phrases, for adding new meaning to words, and for assembling the meanings of elements in a text into the total meaning of the text. By the term "frame" I have in mind any system of concepts related in such a way that to understand any one of them you have to understand the whole structure in which it fits.'

Through the lexical creation and/or re-definition of many of its terms, CIC discourse demonstrates what Fillmore is describing in this passage: the creation of a semantic framework or system of interrelated concepts, co-built through its various communication activities (interactions and textual documents), whose meaning is always determined by consensus. This idea is illustrated by the following examples:

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[5] The examples are taken from the material distributed at information sessions held in May 2014. While most of the material is in Catalan, Spanish also features occasionally. CIC is conscious of the need to spread the message about what they are trying to do, and therefore most of their information (particularly on the website) is available in both Catalan and Spanish, as well as English.

(1) [CIC is] a project that practises economic and political self-management based on the egalitarian participation of its members.

(2) In the framework of integral revolution, three key interlinked concepts often recur: autonomy (the ability to make decisions without outside intervention), self-management (self-government) and self-sufficiency (the ability of a person or group to rely on its own resources and abilities).

(3) [CIC is a cooperative] because it is legally incorporated under this legal form. [However] it is not a cooperative in the business sense. It has been constituted as a cooperative as this was considered the best tool to protect its economic activities against the state.

(4) CIC does not function as a legal cooperative. It does not depend on real internal statutes, but on an assembly-based system... It is an open process. Participation is not limited to members of the cooperative...

(5) [CIC is] Catalan because it is organised and operates in the territory of Catalonia, although it does not reproduce the limitations of the border system established by the state.

Examples (1) and (2) use three key terms –autonomy, self-management and self-sufficiency – as well as providing a definition of what CIC is. The three key lexical forms are composed using the Greek prefix *auto-*, meaning 'what is done by oneself'. CIC is therefore a project for change, a plan also known as *integral revolution*, which is aimed, not at effecting general political change (in respect of the state, for example), but at developing the individuality of the people involved (*autonomy*). The other two terms (*self-management* and *self-sufficiency*) refer to how this objective will be realised: by promoting community management in which all members participate equally (*self-management*) in the development of economic resources, in order to avoid reliance on others (*self-sufficiency*).

In examples (3), (4) and (5), the definition of a cooperative is also significant. A distinction is made between the legal definition of a cooperative and how the cooperative defines itself, with the latter following the etymological meaning of the term: 'participate with others in work done in common' (Pompeu i Fabra, *Diccionari general de la llengua catalana*), or 'act together with another or others for the same purpose' (Royal Spanish Academy online dictionary). The legal definition is a practical operational solution to ensure legal protection from the state; the literal translation of the prepositional phrase used (*davant l'estat*) is 'against the state', which, in one of its semantic senses, may imply confrontation between the two. Therefore, while in its internal operations CIC is a project designed to build values of solidarity based on

cooperation and mutual support between its members, in its external institutional relationship, it is conceived in opposition to the apparatus of the state.

The definition of a cooperative also includes the fact that it is self-governing (example 4). CIC is regulated, not by mandatory statutes, but on a *de facto* assembly basis, with open participation by all assembly participants, not only members. The text refers explicitly to an 'open process', reflecting the participatory and dynamic nature of the project.

Another significant lexical form is the adjective 'Catalan', in example (5), together with an explanation of why the word is used in the name of the cooperative. For CIC, the meaning has a geographical sense: it refers only to the area or territory in which it operates legally, in contrast to the nationalistic sense of identity more usually associated with the term in the Catalonian context. Perhaps because of this, an adversarial argument is also included, establishing the cooperative's own position in this regard: that state border systems have limitations. In other examples in the data collected as part of this study, the territory of Catalonia is referred to as a *bio-region*.

This lexical description also illustrates effectively the general tendency for definitions to be presented in opposition to a parallel set of concepts, with recurrent use of an 'affirmative epistemic modality *versus* negative epistemic modality' structure: CIC *is*, in contrast to other things which *are not*. Vocabulary is thus used as a way of establishing a conceptual opposition between the cooperative and the capitalist economy it exists in explicit defiance of. By performing the semantic task of naming the new realities they are constructing, and/or re-signifying other existing lexical terms, CIC constructs a systematised ideological space divided according to two semantic extremes, with their own economic ideas standing in opposition to those of their ideological other.

b) *Lexicalised metaphors*

Another key resource in the creation of meaning is the use of lexicalised or creative metaphor (Molpeceres Arnáiz, 2014: Ch. 4). As early as the eighteenth century, Vico (1984 [1774]: 129) said that 'all the first tropes are corollaries of [this] poetic logic. The most luminous and therefore the most necessary and frequent is metaphor. It is most praised when it gives sense and passion to insensate things...' Later on, in the twentieth century, Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 3) highlighted the cognitive dimension of this first trope when they asserted that 'our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature'.

Metaphors, including some highly lexicalised forms, also feature in the ideological construction process in relation to CIC. The following excerpts provide a small sample:

(6) The *change of focus* [is to do with] transferring normal business dynamics to the common good. The social value of our projects is a clear reflection of this...

(7) The assembly involves working *horizontally*, not *vertically* (hierarchically); accepting participants' experience, commitment, involvement, active listening, transparency.

(8) The assembly shall have a common goal: to get out of capitalism. There must be common self-construction, therefore, with minimum shared values and strategies for how to achieve this...

The divided ideological space constructed through the lexicon is now defined as a *change of focus* (example 6), according to which the cooperative's proposal is identified with the visual action of moving the camera lens to a different space. The verb used is 'transfer', describing a movement away from the usual dynamics of business into a new space: the *common good*.

Metaphors are used in examples (7) and (8) to describe and define the cooperative's form of self-government: the assembly. The use of the *horizontal/vertical* opposition (example 7) to refer to the internal functioning of the organisation is an orientational metaphor (according to the classification used by Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 14) that identifies hierarchical relationships with an *up-down* spatial axis. The horizontal plane, in contrast, is equated with egalitarian relationships between individuals.

Finally, in (8), the purpose of the assembly is explained using another (ontological) metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 25-30): *sortir del capitalisme* ('get out of capitalism'). The use of this verbal lexeme identifies capitalism with a container or vessel inside of which all economic activity has been locked or become trapped, and from which one's only chance of escape is with the help of the group.

The three examples given illustrate the use of three very basic *image-schemas* (in the sense used by Langacker, 1987), which utilise spatial images iconically to project a conceptual meaning. The first schema is widely used in everyday speech; the second is more restricted to the realm of social movements; while the third scheme is also very common, though in non-ideological contexts, as in 'get out of drugs/alcohol'. In this last case, therefore, an additional analogy has been created, in which the effect of

capitalism is identified with the kind of negative situations caused by certain harmful substances.

c) *Creative figures*

The final discursive feature examined here is the creation and use of rhetorical tropes of thought. The following examples contain a comparison and two metaphors that equate and identify aspects of CIC with other domains, in order to explain some of the conceptual processes that form part of its ideology:

(9) The open assembly is important in order to ensure the practice and development of assembly experiences of this nature, a kind of training to restore a system of sovereign, subsidiary, assembly-based self-government to the imaginary of the open council, the sovereign popular assembly of people living in a particular municipality or territory.

(10) Units of local self-management also operate on an assembly basis. These groups work independently, through networks. [But they maintain] the fractal structure of CIC... The term *fractal* denotes that the whole is contained within the part. This structure is repeated in different aspects of life: e.g. acupuncture, plants, etc. It represents a challenge to the concept of hierarchy.

(11) CIC needs to decentralise from Barcelona. One way to do this is to get out and visit other *eco-xarxes*. Some call these *pilgrimages*, because at CIC we also believe in keeping things festive.

The first figure (in example 9) compares the government of CIC with the medieval open council structure: the traditional form of government in medieval towns in the Iberian peninsula, brought to an end by the unification of the kingdoms in the sixteenth century. Here, therefore, an analogy is drawn between two historical moments: post-15M Spain and Spain in the Middle Ages.

Example (10) refers to the territorial organisation of CIC, the *eco-xarxes* or local management groups scattered across Catalonia, in both urban and rural areas. The name *eco-xarxa* (literally 'eco-network') is an iconic compound term that combines the cooperative's purpose (concern for nature) and its form of collaboration (networks of nuclei in continuous interaction and collaboration with each other). The metaphor used to describe the internal organisation of the *eco-xarxa* is a fractal structure, explained here as a part or section of the cooperative which contains within it the whole of CIC, just as a fractal structure in nature would. The use of this metaphor also has an argumentative function, which culminates in the concluding reflection that, if so many

13

structures in nature are fractal (partial structures are always a replica of the whole), by analogy, the presence of hierarchies in social groups must be unnatural.

The example in (11) is a representative speech act in which the speaker addresses the difficulty of putting into practice the horizontal relationship between the centre of CIC's operations in Barcelona (located at the largest *eco-xarxa*, that of Barcelona) and all the other *eco-xarxes*. In describing the agreed solution to this problem (i.e. to hold general meetings in a different *eco-xarxa* each time), the speaker uses two more metaphors: visits made between groups (similar to traditional visits in local communities to see relatives and neighbours), and even pilgrimages (such as those made to this day in many rural communities in celebration of some local feast day).

These rhetorical resources create different analogies (historical, natural and socio-cultural) in order to build a framework in which CIC is associated with solutions that are more in harmony with nature and consistent with traditional local social group practices.

3.3. The functions of CIC discourse

One of the main ideological functions of CIC discourse construction, therefore, is to develop a new framework or social imaginary, referred to generally as *integral revolution*.

The cooperative is part of a broader process of socio-political change, which gained greater prominence and support following the emergence of the 15M movement. It maintains an ideology of self-government and self-management, and compares itself with international movements, such as the *Zapatistas* in Mexico. The *Zapatistas* are mentioned specifically as a model of autonomy and citizen participation which CIC would like to imitate. Even though the *Zapatistas* and their leader, *Subcomandante Marcos*, are no longer the object of media attention that they were, their influence has been and remains huge among social groups across Latin America. In a 2012 article, Meneses *et al.* (2012: 135) offers a profile of what has become known as *Zapatista* discourse: a postmodernist story that emerged on 1 January 1994 in Chiapas (Mexico) with the rise of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, but which has grown since then into a kind of shared imagined community of symbolic references and policies of social justice and opposition to the neoliberal capitalist model, with practices of self-management and self-government, and municipal autonomy.

CIC discourse thus forms part of this ideological tradition of autonomy and freedom of thought among social groups that present themselves as an alternative to the neoliberal model. It is in this context of political action that we must also frame the communicative function of the group's discourse. As mentioned earlier, from the socio-cognitive perspective, the primary function of CIC discourse appears to be the construction of a new (cognitive) framework of meaning to serve as an ideological point of reference for actions taking place internally within the group, and as an instrument of action to help spread the cooperative's way of thinking and build consensus against capitalism.

In terms of the social functions of ideological discourses identified by some CDA authors (see, for example, Van Dijk, 2003; Chilton, 2004), CIC discourse could be said to perform a (self-)legitimising function in relation to the group, and a delegitimizing role in relation to the capitalist economic system. Unlike institutionalised political discourse, however, this is not a struggle between agents aspiring to gain power. The speaker, therefore, does not need to try to win the people's trust (legitimisation) by representing the other in a negative light, using argumentative strategies that are often based on fallacy (delegitimisation). Instead, the cooperative's discourse attempts to persuade and/or convince its audience of the need for profound changes in the way its members think and act, in order to create socially conscious, self-managed institutions.

To understand these different discourse functions better, this paper examines one of the basic dimensions of classical and modern rhetoric, the *genera causarum*. According to the Aristotelian tradition (*Rhetoric*, Ch. 3), any cause may be made the object of laudation or censure (demonstrative or epideictic genre); of deliberation in an assembly about its future importance, aimed at convincing or dissuading the assembly (deliberative); and, finally, of a favourable or unfavourable judgement, also on the part of an assembly (judicial). The purpose of the first is to evoke an emotional response in relation to beauty or the lack thereof; the second, to persuade, convince or dissuade in relation to useful or harmful quantities; and the third, to persuade or convince in relation to right and wrong (Pujante, 2003: 83).

According to David Pujante (personal communication, 2015), the function of discourse in the first instance corresponds to an illocutionary act (to use Austin's terminology for speech acts), while the other two correspond to perlocutionary acts, since their success is dependent on their effect on the audience.

CIC discourse, like other discourses of social change, is not deliberative, although it does make proposals in relation to the future (the creation of an economic alternative); or legal, although it does formulate judgements on past events (the negative consequences of capitalism in our recent past). It is, in fact, a form of illocutionary discourse, because the successful performance of the speech acts it comprises (representative and expressive acts, to use Searle's (1969) classification) does not depend on their effect on the audience. It can, therefore, be classed within the demonstrative or epideictic genre (accepting that some updating of the standard classical definition may be required in order to accommodate it).

From an empirical point of view, this kind of discourse has a political function because it attempts to bring about significant social and political change, focusing on finding solutions to the issues affecting citizens which elected political powers have spent the past few decades failing or choosing not to deal with. In previous work, my co-author and I have termed these *discourses of social change* (Morales-López, 2012, 2014a, and Montesano Montessori and Morales-López, 2015). According to Salvador (2014), they also act as 'transmitters of public opinion', in the form of direct statements, or by attitudes expressed implicitly in relation to a particular topic. At the same time, these discourses are also an attempt to discredit the claims and attitudes of their ideological opponents. In the case of CIC, the adversary is always the neoliberal socio-economic model, and a large proportion of the pragmatic and rhetorical-argumentative resources used in its discourse are deployed to this end: to construct a coherent counterargument against the predations and exclusions of the capitalist economic system. CIC (like all discourses of social change) uses a range of discursive resources to construct this new image of an economy at the service of the common good, based on cooperation and solidarity (see also Morales-López, 2012, 2014a). The persuasive power of the image lies in the rhetorical-discursive process of construction, demonstrating White's (1987: 210-211) claim that discursive form is also part of the meaning, and, in the case of CIC, part of the construction of the group's ideology.

Finally, from the socio-political point of view, discourses such as those constructed by CIC, the *Zapatistas* and the women's group I encountered in Ecuador (Morales-López, 2012, 2014a), and discourses of social change generally, seek what Žižek (2009: 110) calls the re-politicisation of the economy, as a response to the postmodern neoliberal depoliticisation of society as a whole. As Žižek (2009: 26-27) explains, there is no 'rational discussion' here between multiple interests (in reference

16

to Habermas's well known theory of deliberative democracy): while neoliberalism is arguing the need for everyone and everything to get back to 'normal' and go back to where they belong, the *demos* is struggling to assert its right be heard and recognised as an equal partner in the discussion (the Polish workers at the time of Solidarity were another such *demos*, to cite Žižek's own example). CIC takes this right to the extreme in its conception of the post-capitalist individual as capable of living autonomously and independently of the state, provided that she or he lives and cooperates in solidarity with other like-minded individuals.

4. Conclusions

This paper brings together comprehensive systemic data from discourses used by social agents in their attempts to construct a solution to the problem of human life, and the transdisciplinary, constructivist theoretical framework used to analyse them. Complexity studies offers a valuable theoretical approach for the systemic study of any subject, exposing the need to breathe new life into constructivist studies; to bring back certain authors from the humanistic tradition, pushed out by the dominance of rationalist-positivist epistemologies; and to enrich the whole field of discourse analysis by utilising expertise from different disciplines (biology, neurology, etc.) and the growing support across all fields for non-linear approaches to research and analysis.

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