Don’t Vote for Them: The Effects of the Spanish Indignant Movement on Attitudes about Voting

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Abstract

This article investigates the recent so-called Spanish Revolution of 2011 with a view to understanding what it reveals about the current relationship between protest and electoral modes of participation. Theories of “disaffeccted radicalism” that grew up following the 1960s period of civil unrest strongly advocated the view that protest activity boosted electoral abstention. More recent work on protest, however, has pointed to its “normalization” and linkage to more conventional modes of participation. The Spanish case of 15M constitutes a useful new test of the two theories given that it mixed an explicit rejection of the choices voters faced with a criticism of political apathy. I examine the validity of each argument using a four-wave online panel survey and fixed-effects model to unravel how engagement in the 15M protest activity affected Spaniards’ attitudes towards voting. The results provide fresh support for the normalization argument about a convergence of electoral and non-electoral types of activity. What is more, protest here seems to have a socialization effect that leads people to look at elections in a more positive manner.

1. Introduction

Despite being two of the most important forms of political participation, studies that have examined the interaction of electoral behaviour and involvement in protest and social movements are rare (Brown et al., 2011; Cain et al., 2003; Guillion, 2009). For at least two decades after the protests emerged during the 1970s there were very few studies that considered protest to be linked with conventional participation or the political orientations that lead to it. Indeed the widely held view was that the two formed separate and non-interrelated spheres of action.

As time moved on and protest action became increasingly commonplace, interpretations of its relationship with institutionalized forms of participation relaxed and gave rise to the “normalization theory” which argued that protest had become part of everyday politics and was largely compatible with acts of conventional participation, including voting. Research on the interrelationship between these domains, however, remained limited. This gap, as McAdam and Tarrow (2010) argue, is unfortunate since there are clearly many ways in which social movements may affect the dynamics and outcomes of an election. For

instance, a social movement may itself become a political party. On a less dramatic note, it may introduce new forms of collective action that are mimicked by parties, or it may force parties to engage in electoral mobilization. Finally, such movements may affect how citizens view the merit and importance of elections and their willingness to become engaged. This last effect, however, is still to be proven.

Similarly, whether the "normalization" perspective still holds after the radical anti-globalization protest that took place at the turn of the millennium and continued with recent mobilizations triggered by the economic crisis is clearly a question for empirical study. This is particularly so given the anti-establishment outlook of these movements and their cynicism towards politicians and the electoral process. One likely challenger to the normalization thesis can be found in the case of the Spanish Indignant, also known as the 15M movement after its first massive demonstration that occurred on 15 May 2011. From its very beginnings, media pundits, politicians and also some scholars warned that its anti-system message could well lead to a reduction in turnout in the forthcoming local and general elections. However, alongside its criticisms of the current system it also issued a critique or challenge to voter apathy which might have countered its negative effects.

The purpose of this article is thus to investigate the impact of 15M on electoral participation by examining the extent to which involvement affected individuals' levels of support for the electoral process. In doing so, as well as testing the conventional wisdom of normalization in a new context, I seek to present a new understanding of the contemporary interplay between protest and electoral politics.

The article begins with a review of the existing literature that has examined the relationship of protest and voting and particularly how the former influences the attitudes that affect voting. Next, the background of the 15M movement is provided, along with details about its disposition towards the electoral process. Here it is argued that although 15M used protest repertoire actions and played on individuals' feelings of political disaffection it also articulated the idea that it was important for citizens to be engaged in politics by all means. How then did this apparent contradiction play out among those that supported 15M? Did 15M in fact bolster the democratic belief that voting is a moral obligation? To investigate these questions I use data from a four-wave online panel survey that sampled Spanish Internet users between 16 and 44 years of age. These data allow for a comparison of how 15M activists and non-activists viewed the notion that it is one's civic duty to vote and their reported probabilities of voting in the general election. The analysis is conducted using a fixed-effects estimation technique and confirms that, *ceteris paribus*, taking part in the 15M boosted individuals' sense of civic duty and self-reported probability of voting.

2. The Link between Protest and Voting

The protests of May 1968 were crucial in the development of the argument that protest constituted a threat to representative institutions (Norris et al., 2006). A series of claims about "relative deprivation" and "disaffected" or "anti-system radicalism" grew up after these events that viewed the protestors as explicitly hostile towards conventional modes of democratic engagement (Gurr, 1970).

Indeed the pro- tests were ultimately seen as threatening the traditional governance mechanisms of Western democracies by overloading the system with demands that elites ultimately could not meet (Crozier et al., 1975). From this perspective, joining a protest entailed (and could itself even trigger) a set of political orientations critical to different elements of the political system. Following this line of argument, the work of Fendrich (1977) linked taking part in the US civil rights movement in the mid-1960s to the expression of more radical attitudes and leftist behaviour. Sherkat and Blocker (1997) similarly showed that past activism was connected to more liberal orientations and higher levels of laicism. Jennings and Niemi (1981) demonstrated that joining protests in the US in the mid-1960s and 1970s widened the pre-existing attitudinal differences between protesters and non-protesters (Jennings, 1987). Similar patterns were observed in West Germany where radical protest was found to negatively affect levels of political support and efficacy. Peaceful protest, however, had little effect on these orientations (Finkel, 1987).

Despite the obvious implication that protest would bear little and even possibly a negative relationship to voting, the impact of protest on electorally relevant attitudes and behaviour was not closely scrutinized. Indeed, one study did claim that protests against the Korean and Vietnam wars led to abstention in American elections (Schrei- ber, 1975), but the individual mechanisms behind this effect were never explored. Rather, it was largely assumed that during this "protest era" (Hooghe, 2003), politically engaged and sophisticated citizens incorporated electoral abstention to the protest repertoire as a way to express dissent (Kleinhenz, 1995).

During the 1990s a new understanding of protest emerged that claimed it had "normalized" and become a legitimate and widespread mode of political expression (Inglehart, 1990, Norris, 2002; Putnam, 2000; Tarrow, 1998; Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2001). According to these scholars, protest is not a substitute for institutional participation (i.e. voting), but complements and extends it. A number of empirical studies subsequently corroborated the similarities between conventional participants and pro- testers (Dalton & Van Sickle, 2005; Norris et al., 2005). A key finding in this respect was that being registered to vote had a positive impact on the likelihood of protesting (Norris, 2002; Schussman & Soule, 2005). This provided strong support for the idea that voting and protest are compatible and not conflicting.

The idea that protest constitutes a "normal" mode of political expression has thus achieved something of a consensus, although studies supporting this view have been largely confined to established democracies. The work that has been done among newer democracies reveals a more mixed picture. While some evidence of normalization has been found among third wave and developing democracies such as Argentina and Bolivia (Moseley & Moreno, 2010), in Brazil the link between past protest and electoral abstention has been demonstrated quite clearly (Power & Roberts, 1995). Questions have also been raised about the compatibility of protest and vote in Africa (Ajambo, 2007) as well as ex-communist countries (White & McAllister, 2004).

As such there does seem some debate as to how well the notion of normalization applies to protest in "younger" democracies (Bernhagen & Marsh, 2007: 65). This

debate has gained further fuel from the recent protest activity emerging in Southern European nations in the wake of the global economic recession. Indeed, both Italy and Greece – two of the countries most affected by the economic crisis – have lately experienced significant decreases in the turnout rates of their general elections.[1] These elections were held after harsh protests against austerity policies, which were seen as signaling a deeper political malaise against the political system itself, especially in the Greek case (Verney, 2012). While clearly not definitive, these participatory patterns are suggestive that a body of disaffected citizens are emerging who are willing to express their views via extra-parliamentary actions but not through voting.

3. The Case of 15M

The case of 15M offers a very useful new opportunity to examine the question of whether normalization theory applies in newer and less established democracies. Spain belongs to the third wave of democratization, as described by Huntington (1991), and seems to be one of these young democracies in which important differences persist between traditional participants and protesters. The latter hold more politically engaged but critical attitudes when compared to conventional participants (Ganuza & France´s, 2008). The specificities of protesters might have been accentuated by the 15M discourse, which built upon Spaniards' political disaffection. Indeed, Spain stands out among the Western democracies for its high levels of political dis- affection, cynicism and anti-party feelings (Torcal, 2006).

In terms of its timing, both historically and in the electoral cycle, the case of 15M in Spain also offers a particularly useful opportunity to test whether recent protest events signal a move away from the normalization of this type of activity. The 15M movement is a representative example of the global unrest that encompassed the earlier *Arab Spring* in the Middle East and the subsequent *Occupy* movement that started later in September in New York City's Zuccotti Park. It also served as the immediate antecedent to several massive mobilizations in Italy, France, Germany or Mexico.[2] Its formation and evolution coincided with two sets of elections (local and national) throughout the Spanish territory allowing us to examine directly how engagement with it affected individuals' views on elections and voting.

A final aspect of the 15M that enhances its qualities as a critical test of the normalization trend is the youth of those involved. Arguments about a recent decoupling of protest and electoral activities rest in large part on the youth of those involved.[3] Even among those advocating the normalization thesis there is an acceptance that conventional politics has lost its appeal for youngsters. New cohorts are less inclined to obey and take part in formal politics, but are more prone to be attracted by direct forms of participation (Dalton, 2007), especially extra-parliamentary politics and protest (Stolle & Cruz, 2005, 2008). Given the Indignant's appeal to younger citizens we might expect its supporters to be more inclined to reject "traditional" political representation and embrace protest instead.

To sum up, therefore, despite widespread acceptance of normalization theory, there are a number of reasons to believe that recent protests in the newer democracies of Southern Europe and Spain in particular may be countering the trend towards the integration of conventional and unconventional modes of political

activity. This article tackles this question directly by examining how involvement in the Spanish 15M movement affected individuals' belief that voting is a civic duty. Seminal works on electoral behaviour have shown the importance of this belief as a key driver behind the decision to vote (Blais, 2000; Campbell et al., 1954; Downs, 1957; Gerber & Green, 2000; Riker & Ordeshook, 1968). Thus I look at this important prior political orientation, as well as citizens' reported likelihood to vote.

The *Indignant* movement first emerged in the spring of 2011. It grew out of dissatisfaction with several new policy measures that were introduced that year including the *Sinde* law which punished illegal online file-sharing (Hughes, 2011) and the set of austerity measures to deal with the economic crisis. University students already angered by the implementation of the European Higher Education Area in 2008 were further enraged by these initiatives as were a wider set of organizations and individuals worried about the effects of social spending cuts. The discontent resulted in the establishment of a group calling itself Real Democracy Now (known by its initials in Spanish as DRY). DRY called for a series of demonstrations in 50 Spanish cities on 15 May, under the slogan "For a real democracy now, we are not merchandise in the hands of bankers and politicians". It is estimated that about 130,000 people across Spain joined the protest. Two days later the demonstrations were replicated and led to night-time camps in about 30 cities including the main squares of Madrid (Puerta del Sol) and Barcelona (Plaça Catalunya). Even though the camps only lasted about two months, the movement itself remained active for more than a year (for more details on the evolution of the events related to the movement, see Figure 1).

From the start, the relationship between this civic movement and the electoral process was somewhat ambiguous. The organizers themselves claimed not to adhere to any particular ideology or to support a specific party. The mottos they adopted were explicitly critical of the electoral system and the main parties including "they call it democracy, and it's not", or "the Partido Popular (PP) and the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) are the same". Other slogans attacked politicians directly, calling them "thieves" and urging the public to "kick them out", making the accusation that "they don't represent us". The first worries about the likely effect of the movement on election turnout were raised on 19 May by the President of the Regional Electoral Committee of Madrid, who declared the protests illegal. His fears were echoed in several national and international newspapers with headlines such as "Who's Afraid of Abstention?"[4]

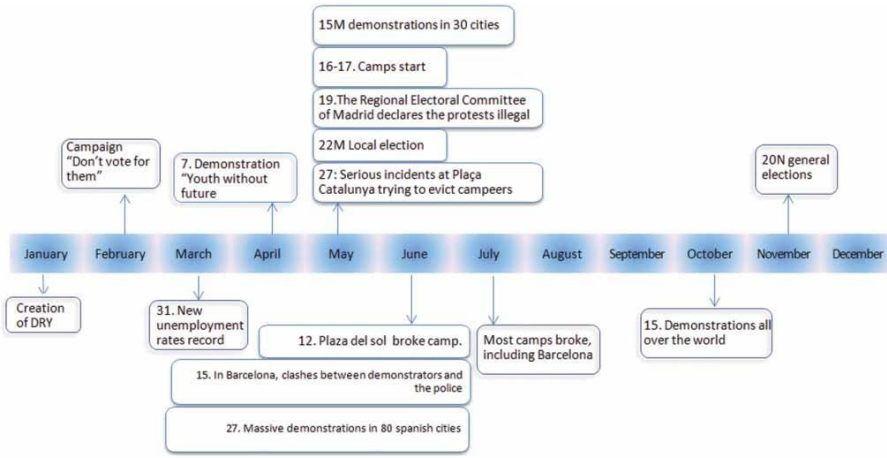

Figure 1. 15M movement timeline (in 2011).
Source: elaborated by the author.

Despite the perceived anti-electoral tone of their message, there does seem to be some grounds to suggest that their goal was less nihilistic that these stories suggest. For example, those behind the "do not vote for them" slogan made it clear on several occasions that they were asking electors not to vote for those political parties that had approved the *Sinde* Law and to instead support smaller parties to enter parliament and overturn it (Fuster, 2012: 390).[5] Similarly, 15M spokespersons claimed that they did not mean to encourage abstention.[6] This claim is supported by the fact that 15M messages were partly inspired in Stephane Hessel's *Time for Outrage!*,[7] a short booklet that praises outrage as a revolutionary force but also strongly attacks indifference. The fact that DRY and the campers despised political indifference during two electoral campaigns clearly conveyed a disapproval of political apathy that, in an electoral context, could have been interpreted as a disapproval of electoral abstention. Certainly the first reports from the 2011 local elections suggested the effect had not been negative. Turnout was recorded as 66%, which was actually three points higher than in the former municipal elections in 2007.[8]

The movement did not dissolve immediately after the local elections. Massive demonstrations, building occupations and marches lasted the entire summer leading up to the date of general elections on 20 November (20N from here on). Despite this continuation their prominence in the media receded quite rapidly after May. Figure 2 shows this by reporting the number of online news stories per month during 2011 that mentioned two different combinations of keywords referring to the 15M movement.[9]

Despite the evidence that voter turnout rates had not fallen in the local elections, suspicions about the impact of the *Indignant* on abstention in the 20N general election continued. The movement maintained its harsh line against the political system and political elites and it was again widely expected this would discourage electors from showing up at the poll stations. The Spanish conservative newspaper *El Mundo*, for instance, stated on its front page the day preceding the 20N general

election: “the indignant take Sol (Madrid’s main square) and call for abstention”. This perception was reinforced by the fact that some splinter groups from the movement released manifestos calling for active abstention.[10] As in the local elections, however, at no time did DRY actively encourage people not to vote.[11] Indeed one sector of the movement launched a campaign “for the state of permanent participation” and an online initiative –“#aritmetica20N” – which recommended voting for the third party in each district.

In contrast to the local elections, however, participation rates in the national elections lent support to those who had feared greater abstention following the 15M protests. The outcome itself saw an absolute majority given to the conservative party and increased the number of parties present in the parliament, especially left-wing parties. Turnout, however, fell from a total of 74% of electors in 2008 to 69% in 2011. There was also a slight increase in blank votes (0.36 points, making a total of 1.37% in 2011) and a 100% increment in the proportion of invalid votes, which reached an unprecedented 1.29% in 2011. Whether this was due to the Indignant, however, remains the subject of some debate.[12] From the perspective of the voting behaviour literature, given that the electoral outcome was clearly predictable and the competitiveness of the race was low, one could argue that turnout was actually higher than would otherwise have been the case (Franklin, 2004).

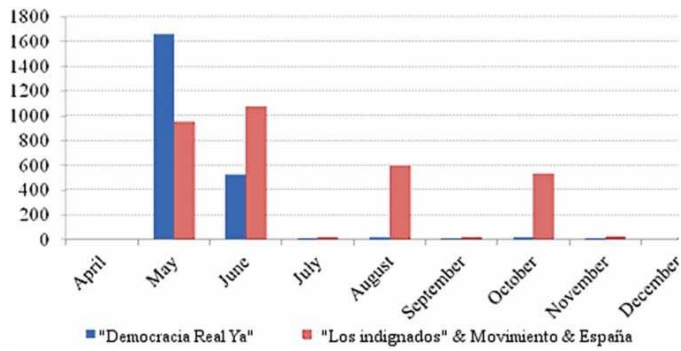

Figure 2. Number of online news referring to 15M movement in 2011.
Source: elaborated by the author using Google news statistics. Keyword search limited to Spanish territory and media.

Based on the particular circumstances surrounding 15M activities there are also reasons to expect the movement fostered increased attention to the electoral process itself. Much of the movement discourse focused on complaints about the lack of voter choice and placed the spotlight on elections. Through their involvement in the demonstrations, several million people were exposed to political discussion, collective dynamics, deliberation and dissent, many for the first time. These activities are known to increase individuals’ levels of political competence (Andersen & Hansen, 2007; Luskin et al., 2002). Therefore, this process may even go beyond the normalization of protest: the perceived importance of voting may actually have increased for protesters as compared to before they joined the movement.

4. Research Design and Data

This study investigates these questions about the short and longer term impact of the 15M on participants' electoral behaviours and attitudes. I do so using an online panel survey of Spanish citizens between 16 and 44 years old. The four waves of the panel were conducted in November and December 2010, May 2011, November 2011 and May 2012, respectively. Thus, the second and third waves took place just before the local elections on 22 May and before the general election on 20 November, respectively.[13]

Before presenting our analysis I acknowledge and discuss some of the limitations of the sample on which it is based. First, and regarding the representativeness of the sample, the online mode of the survey means that only Internet users are included, although the number out of scope is quite small within this age group.[14] Second, the sample encounters the problem of attrition that is common to all panel surveys, with every wave becoming less representative than the previous.[15] Although we do retain a fairly large N (1717 individuals) by the final wave, the decreasing sample size means that inferences from successive waves should be made with caution.

Furthermore, the age of the respondents entails that the results lack generalizability to the entire Spanish population. However, given that young people were heavily involved in 15M then this bias may actually work in favour of this social agent since we would expect to find healthy rates of participation in the movement in the sample. Furthermore this group constitute a population of considerable interest for scholars of electoral and non-electoral participation given their higher rates of absten- tion and interest in more direct and expressive modes of political engagement.

The main independent variable is whether the respondent took part in 15M activi- ties. This was measured through a two-part retrospective question included in the third and fourth wave of the panel survey that took place in November 2011 and May 2012 respectively. Respondents were first asked whether or not they had heard about the movement – 97.5% of the respondents had done so in wave 3 and 98% in wave 4. They were then asked "from May 2011 on, have you participated in any of the demonstrations, camps, marches or protests of this movement?" Just under one in five (18.7% of the sample, N ¾360) answered "yes" to this question in the third wave and this increased slightly in wave 4 (23%, N ¼387) without adjusting for attrition.[16] These numbers are actually only slightly inflated compared with the estimates drawn from a random probability sample conducted at the end of 2011 through to early 2012.[17] This comparability gives us greater confidence in the robustness of the findings given the limitations noted above. Overall a total of 492 people in the sample had taken part in a 15M protest. From here onward those individuals participating in 15M are referred to as activists and those that did not as non-activists.

The dependent variables were two-fold. The first was an indicator of the likelihood that the respondent would vote in the upcoming national election and was measured on a 0 – 10 scale.[18] The second measured agreement with the statement that one has a duty to vote.[19] The question followed Blais and Achen's (2010) logic to minimize any social desirability bias and overestimation of the phenomenon.[20]

The analysis was conducted using a linear fixed-effects model which took full advantage of the panel structure of the data to determine the impact of joining 15M protest on the evolution of the two voting variables. Fixed-effects models are ideal for this type of study since they control for the average differences in pre-existing observable and unobservable predictors of voting at the individual level such as interest in politics, socialization history and education levels and so isolate the effects of the time-variant variable of interest, i.e. participation in 15M activities.[21] Of course some time-variant factors may have played a role either in the engagement with the Indignant or in the evolution of attitudes towards voting. Hence the model includes controls for perceptions of the economic situation (personal, current, retrospective and prospective), exposure to media and political information and, finally, government and opposition evaluations.[22]

5. Analyses

Figures 3 and 4 report the changes across the four panel waves in the levels of the two dependent variables for activists and non-activists. With respect to civic duty, a t-test shows that the means are not significantly different between the two types of actor at any of the four time points. Willingness to vote, however, does show a divergence after wave one, with activists becoming significantly more likely to endorse the statement in waves 2 to 4.

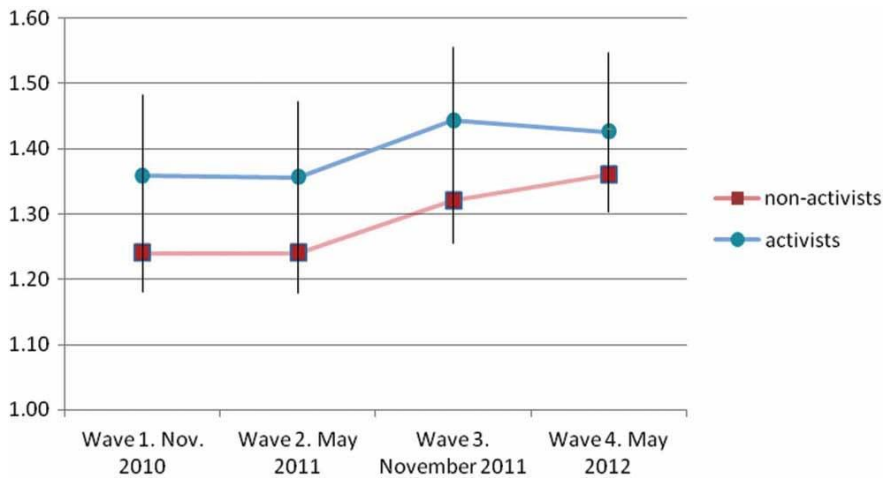

Figure 3. Evolution of the average levels of duty to vote for 15M activists and non-activists.

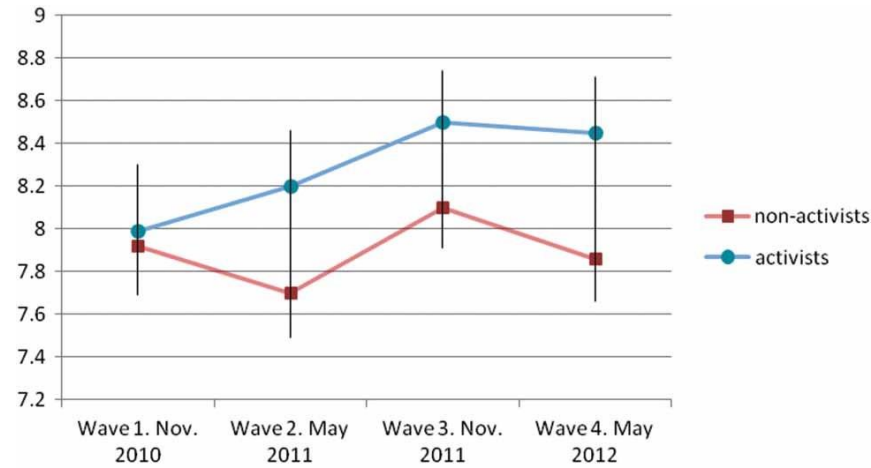

Figure 4. Evolution of the average reported probability to vote in general elections for 15M activists and non-activists.

The initial comparisons, while interesting, are not very conclusive in that the presence or absence of differences between the two groups may be due to pre-existing differences in the socio-demographic or attitudinal profile of activists and non- activists. A stricter test would be to compare two groups of citizens with exactly the same socialization, values and attitudes before the emergence of the Indignant movement and follow them as some get involved in protest and others do not. The panel survey allows us to do this in a post-hoc manner using the fixed-effects approach.

Table 1 reports the results for the models using the two versions of the dependent variables. The fit of both models is satisfying at the 0.001 level. The results show that increasing media exposure – and particularly, exposure to political content – fosters greater levels of civic duty, with the exception of newspapers, which appear to lower it. More positive evaluations of the government and the opposition also increase the likelihood of viewing voting as a duty. Most important for the purpose of this article, however, is the finding that getting engaged with the Indignant exerts a positive and significant effect on the evolution of sense of civic duty between November 2010 and May 2012. The same applies to the declared probability of voting in the general election. Involvement in 15M is positively and significantly linked to expressing growing willingness to vote in elections.

Table 1. Fixed-effects linear estimation of 15M activism on the evolution of duty to vote and probabilities of voting

	Duty to vote			Probabilities of voting		
	Coef.	Std. Err.	sig.	Coef.	Std. Err.	sig.
Took part in 15M activities	0.101	0.040	**	0.230	0.098	**
Perception of economic situation (current)	−0.024	0.019		−0.036	0.046	
Perception of economic situation (retrosp.)	0.000	0.025		−0.069	0.062	
Perception of economic situation (prosp.)	0.011	0.020		0.082	0.049	*
Perception of personal economic situation	−0.018	0.021		−0.004	0.051	
Time TV daily	0.001	0.010		0.060	0.024	**
Frequency of exposure to news (TV)	−0.016	0.014		0.033	0.035	
Frequency of exposure to political information (TV)	0.038	0.012	***	0.052	0.030	*
Frequency reading newspapers	−0.005	0.013	**	0.044	0.033	
Frequency of exposure to political information (Internet)	0.021	0.012	*	0.062	0.030	**
Time Internet daily	0.037	0.015	**	−0.001	0.037	
Government evaluation	0.040	0.015	***	−0.044	0.036	
Opposition evaluation	0.048	0.014	***	0.087	0.035	**
_cons	1.078	0.089	***	7.080	0.219	***
sigma_u	1.118			2.835		
sigma_e	0.782			1.917		
rho	0.672			0.686		
Number of obs.	8148			8148		
Number of groups	2720			2719		
Obs per group: min	1			1		
Average	3			3		
Maximum	4			4		
R-sq: within	0.01			0.010		
R-sq: between	0.06			0.080		
R-sq: overall	0.04			0.050		
F(13,5415)	3.75***			4.030***		
corr(u_i, Xb) =	0.1409			0.170		

Notes: The table represents unstandardized fixed-effects regression coefficients.
***p < 0.001; **p < 0.05; *p < 0.1; two-tailed.

6. Discussion and Conclusions

The immediate goal of this article has been to answer the question of whether and how involvement in the Spanish 15M movement affected attitudes towards voting. In addressing this question I have revisited the debate on the normalization of protest; more precisely on whether the latest protests triggered by the economic recession are converging with more conventional political acts or signaling a return to radical disaffection and a rejection of institutionalized forms of political engagement. 15M was seen to provide a more critical test of the normalization thesis given the anti-system discourse that surrounded it, and the youth of both their activists and of Spanish democracy, all of which would lead to expect negative effects of protest on turnout.

The empirical evidence provided by the fixed-effects estimation models shows unequivocally that being involved in the movement did in fact make citizens more likely to feel that voting in elections is a civic duty. Taking part in this movement also made citizens report a greater probability of voting in the forthcoming national elections. The results are seen as convincing in that they are drawn from panel data survey and controlled for time-invariant factors such as previous attitudes or background. The findings clearly reject popular conjecture that the movement contributed to the downplaying of elections and fostered abstention. Furthermore, they point to positive effects of protest on electoral be- haviour, which goes a step further than what states the normalization hypothesis. Indeed, protest here seems to have a socialization effect that leads people to look at elections differently, in a more positive manner, as a result of their political involvement with the 15M movement. Considering the overtly critical posture that the Indignant adopted towards politicians and politics, this finding of a strengthening of the norm that voting is a duty among supporters is all the more noteworthy.

Aside from confirming the trend of a normalizing of protest this study has several other implications for the social movements and electoral behaviour literatures respectively. First, the results indicate that contemporary social movements can have a major impact on participants' deeper political attitudes and orientations in quite a short space of time. Civic duty is a belief or value that is generally understood to be a product of early socialization and thus not highly susceptible to change (Camino & Zeldin, 2002). The fact that it increased significantly as a result of activism within 15M raises important questions about how and why this proved possible. Were certain activities within the movement of particular importance in generating these positive views about voting? Second, the strategy adopted by the 15M is an innovative and apparently highly successful one that deserves closer attention. Despite its radical anti-system stance this social movement appears ultimately to have had positive and reformist effects. How was this achieved? Part of the answer may lie in the way in which the Indignant managed to combine catchy mottos with a cynical discourse to support a social norm against apathy, including electoral abstention. Any new research that looks into future variants of 15M both inside Spain and elsewhere should bear these questions in mind when starting their analysis. As such researchers might consider taking a qualitative approach to complement the quantitative approach used here to

fully probe these complexities and better understand the dynamics and implications of modern-day protest movements.

Notes

1. In Greece we see a drop from 71% (2009) to 62.5% (May and June 2012 elections averaged). In Italy the evolution was from 80.5% (2008) to 75.2% (2013).
2. According to some analysts, the Spanish protest may have triggered and led the Occupy movement. See Castañeda (2012) and the BBC article "Spain's 'Indignant' lead international protest day", avail- able at ,http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-15315270..
3. Anduiza et al. (2011) compared Madrid 15M demonstrators with those who attended eight other demonstrations held in Spain between January 2010 and May 2011, noticing that the Indignant were sig- nificantly younger and less likely to be members of organizations.
4. *Diario Vasco*, 20 May 2011. Other examples include: "Most of the associations that have publicly sup- ported this movement ... come from the radical, anti-system left ... Perhaps aware of that, and since their abstention could worsen the bad picture already drawn by surveys regarding the 22-M, the leaders of the PSOE, have already said that the 'Indignant' are right". *ABC*, 20 May 2011. "The Indignant from Barcelona are torn between abstention and voting. The opinion of the Indignant from Plaza Catalunya is divided with regards whether or not to vote. While some reject the vote, arguing that there is no political force to represent them, others claim that voting is a right and an obligation." *Que´*, 22 May 2011; "Its immediate message – 'don't vote for any of them' – is not being taken as a joke by Spain's major parties, especially by the traditional left, including the Socialist Party (PSOE), currently in government." *The Irish Times*, 21 May 2011.
5. "In the next election we are called to exercise our main democratic right: voting .. . We do not ask you to vote by any particular party or ideology, but to check for alternative parties that might better rep- resent your ideas" ,http://www.nolesvotes.com/.
6. "Some of us consider ourselves progressive, others conservative. Some of us are believers, some not. Some of us have clearly defined ideologies, others are apolitical, but we are all concerned and angry about the political, economic, and social outlook which we see around us: corruption among poli- ticians, businessmen, bankers, leaving us helpless, without a voice", available at ,http://www. democraciarealya.es/manifiesto-comun/manifesto-english/.. See also their urgent communique´ of 22 May: "we need to clarify before citizenship that our movement has never asked to abstain or vote blank or cast null votes, or vote for any party in particular. DRY encourages people to report and decide for themselves who to give their vote to according to their ideology .. . Our goal is to improve the current electoral system, but until that model changes, we believe that everyone should participate as you see fit", available at ,http://madrid.democraciarealya.es/2011/05/22/comunicado- de-prensa-urgente/..
7. The Spanish translation of the title (¡Indignaos!, an imperative form of the verb "to outrage") is believed to have inspired one of the names of the movement as well as some of its demands and actions.
8. The turnout is similar to the 68% reached in 2003 local elections, a year of exceptional civic mobilization against the Iraq war.
9. Key words were a combination of (*The Indignant Movement Spain*) and "For a Real Democracy Now".
10. Two examples are *agorabcn*, mainly composed of anarchist organizations from Barcelona, and some local assemblies such as Rota's.
11. Another announcement in the same vein: "The only thing that we are going to ask of people is that they make an informed and judicious choice .. . Each and every citizen must make those decisions according to conscience." Klaudia Alvarez, spokesperson for 15M member group Real Democracy Now (DRY) for the online newspaper *Green Left* (16 October), available at ,http://www.greenleft.org. au/node/49110..
12. Spanish scholars themselves did not agree when the press asked them what had been the impact of the social movement on the election. Among the six academics interviewed by a Spanish newspaper four days after the election, only two identified negative consequences either through an increase in political disaffection or directly by triggering abstention. Eva Anduiza and Raimundo Viejo emphasize the

plausible effects of the Indignant on party fragmentation and the increase of null votes. Available at ,http://www.lavanguardia.com/politica/20111124/54239243801/indignados-voto-elecciones-generales.html..

13. The survey (CIS 2855) was sponsored and funded by the Centro de Investigaciones Sociolo´gicas (CIS) and the Universitat Auto´noma de Barcelona (UAB) research group "Democracy, Elections and Citi- zenship" (P.I. Eva Anduiza). The survey is the cornerstone the POLAT (CSO2010-18534) project, a research funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation. The panelists were recruited fol- lowing different strategies (i.e. website banners) that avoid profesionalization of the respondents.
14. The CIS 2847 survey, conducted in December 2009, shows that 83% of those under 45 years old have used the Internet at least once in the past 12 months.
15. 2100 individuals entered the panel in wave 1. Six months later, 287 withdrew and 620 were freshly enrolled. In the fourth wave, 1322 individuals from the original sample remained and 395 from the refreshment. That makes a total of 2720 different people that at some time entered the survey and were asked about their civic duty and their probabilities to vote.
16. This variable takes value 0 for everybody in waves 1 and 2.
17. The CIS 2920 survey reveals that 90% of the respondents over 18 years old knew about the movement and 11% had been involved in their actions. Those percentages increased to 95% awareness and 15% direct involvement if respondents were restricted to those under 45 years of age.
18. Unfortunately, the probabilities of voting in local elections were not asked in this survey.
19. The question was "Different people feel differently about voting. For some, voting is a duty. They feel that they should vote in every election regardless of their feelings about the candidates and parties. For others, voting is a choice. They feel free to vote or not to vote in an election depending on how they feel about the candidates and parties. For you, the respondent, in your personal opinion voting is first and foremost a:1 Duty 2 Choice." If respondents chose "Duty", they were then asked "How strongly" with options very much, somewhat and not very. After recodification, the variable takes values from 0 ("choice") to 3 ("duty, very strongly").
20. On this respect, the authors say: "The challenge, then, is to make it easy for people to admit that they do not have a sense of duty. Our approach is write a new duty question, offering a non-duty option that is as attractive and socially appropriate as possible" (Blais & Achen, 2010: 6).
21. Wave dummies have not been included in the models because they would absorb all contextual effects, including the elections in time 2 and 3 and the activity of the 15M itself, which are at the heart of this study. These models are, therefore, one-way fixed-effects.
22. See the appendix for the full descriptives of these variables.

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Appendix

Table A.1. Descriptives of the variables used in the fixed-effects estimation

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Took part in 15M activities	8229	0.09	0.28	0	1
Perception of economic situation (current)	8229	0.88	0.81	0	4
Perception of economic situation (retrosp.)	8229	0.36	0.57	0	2
Perception of economic situation (prosp.)	8229	0.88	0.70	0	2
Perception of personal economic situation	8229	0.67	0.66	0	2
Time TV daily	8229	4.66	1.92	1	8
Frequency of exposure to news (TV)	8229	3.32	1.13	0	4
Frequency of exposure to political information (TV)	8229	1.43	1.36	0	4
Frequency reading newspapers	8229	2.58	1.43	0	4
Frequency of exposure to political information (Internet)	8229	1.57	1.49	0	4
Time Internet daily	8229	3.35	1.37	1	6
Government evaluation	8229	1.09	1.01	0	4
Opposition evaluation	8229	1.08	1.02	0	4