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Street Politics in the Age of Austerity

From the Indignados to Occupy

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4 The Spanish Indignados and Israel's Social Justice Movement

The Role of Political Cleavages in Two Large-Scale Protests

Ignacia Perugorría, Michael Shalev and Benjamín Tejerina

The 15M movement in Spain (15 May 2011) is widely regarded as the vanguard of the “networks of outrage and hope” or “occupy social movements” that swept several southern European states (Castells 2012; Tejerina et al. 2013b)¹. Unlike Occupy Wall Street, the Spanish Indignados featured not only encampments and assemblies of the young but also very large protest events and wide public support. The mass demonstrations that occurred in Madrid's Puerta del Sol and elsewhere mobilized participants with social and political profiles quite different from previous protest events and social movements (Anduiza et al. 2013). Polls carried out by the Center for Sociological Research indicate that in early June a majority (54 per cent) of the adult population supported the protests, and in a later poll following the November elections, one in ten reported they had actively participated in 15M protest activities.² Similar broad-spectrum mobilization and support was also a feature of the protests that occurred around the same time in Portugal and Greece. In all three countries, a profound political-economic crisis had been set in train by the financial crisis. What distinguishes Spain from these two European countries, and thus makes it a particularly interesting case for analysis, is that while events in Madrid remained at the center of media and public attention, the movement also spread to Spanish peripheral regions with long-lasting anti-centralist stances. The Spanish 15M movement thus seemed to successfully surmount the profound social and politico-ideological divisions that have traditionally cut across Spanish politics: the left-right continuum, and the tension between centralism and regionalism.

From this perspective it is interesting to compare the Spanish 15M with the Israeli case, which, while less well-known, was exceptional in its scale

¹ This research was funded by the Israeli Ministry of Science, Technology and Space.

² Reports and source data are available from www.cis.es. The approval rate was defined here as those who were ‘quite’ or ‘very’ positive divided by the entire sample, including non-respondents and those uninterested in the 15M who were not asked their opinion. Significantly higher rates of support and participation were reported in other, smaller polls. See www.simplelogica.com and www.metroscopia.org.

and support. What began as a small encampment of young people in Tel Aviv in mid-July 2011 protesting against the shortage and high cost of rental accommodation rapidly morphed into a social justice movement (hereafter denoted 14J, since it began on 14 July). This protest campaign dominated public and private attention for two months, gathering broad and enthusiastic endorsement. According to self-reports, one-quarter of the entire adult population participated in street protests.³ However, the economic background in Israel was much less severe than in other cases of mass protest like Greece, Portugal, and of course Spain. Prior to the protests, Israel did not experience either a collapse of its financial institutions or the threat of a sovereign debt crisis. The business cycle had been on the upswing since mid-2009, youth unemployment was moderate, and no new or controversial austerity plan was on the government's agenda (Rosenhek and Shalev 2013).

No less intriguing is the fact that in spite of the deep and fractious ideological and social divisions that characterize politics in Israel, the protest movement was remarkably consensual – even more so than in Spain. It spawned a series of unprecedented mass demonstrations that peaked on 3 September 2011 with a turnout of 400,000 – equal to the mobilization peak reached on 19 June in Spain, with a population six times that of Israel.⁴ Opinion polls indicate that the Israeli protest movement enjoyed extremely broad approval among the mass public (support rates of 80 per cent or more).⁵ Unlike in Spain, it was praised and promoted in nearly all of the major organs of the mass media and was treated with tolerance and even sympathy by most local authorities and police.

In divided societies, it is not obvious how large segments of the public come to participate in demonstrations and award a social movement such broad popular legitimacy that it (temporarily) cannot be either ignored or repressed. The puzzle motivating this paper is the fact that in both Israel and Spain, broad and consensual protests occurred in societies rent by deep sociopolitical divisions that were seemingly unrelated to the distributional issues that animated the protests. Theoretically, focusing on the effect of political cleavages on contentious mobilization contributes to established

3 The Israeli survey analyzed in this paper, carried out shortly after the protests peaked, yielded a participation rate of 24.4 per cent, compared with 25.5 per cent based on a survey by the Israel Democracy Institute in April and May the following year (Hermann et al. 2012).

4 Estimates of the number of protest participants in Israel are based on counts of mobile phone users in the relevant areas by TrendIt (<http://trendit.net/en>), published by all media sources and uncontested by either protest organizers or the authorities.

5 See for example www.peaceindex.org and [http://truman.huji.ac.il/upload/truman_site_poll_37_September2011\(1\).pdf](http://truman.huji.ac.il/upload/truman_site_poll_37_September2011(1).pdf).

understandings of the political opportunity for protest by adding a hitherto unrecognized hindrance (the cleavage structure of institutional politics). Empirically, common denominators discovered in Spain and Israel are likely to have significant explanatory power, given the sharp contextual differences between these two settings in institutional and noninstitutional politics. The comparison may thus shed badly needed light on the recent protest wave, for which the social movement literature proved to be ill-prepared.

In analyzing the political dynamics of the two protests, we focus on their most distinctive shared characteristic: their unusually broad and cross-cutting public support. This is an intentional departure from much of the emergent research on the anti-inequality and anti-austerity protests in consolidated democracies since 2010, which has focused mainly on the sites in which the occupation of public space took place and in which innovative practices were developed (Benski et al. 2013). In some national contexts – notably the Occupy Wall Street movement in the US – this narrow focus is justified because active mobilization behind the anti-inequality protests was limited mainly to the camps themselves. However, in Israel and Spain, endorsement and participation extended far beyond the occupier activists. Thus, our interest is not in the ‘core militants’ but in the hinterland of both passive and active supporters.

We investigate the political and ideological determinants of the success of these two movements in mobilizing mass support. Specifically, what is the relationship between individuals’ sympathy for active engagement and the cleavage structure of institutional politics? Our chapter presents comparative analyses of micro-level data from public opinion polls in Spain and Israel carried out soon after the mass demonstrations peaked. The first section reviews some of the main characteristics of the protests in the two countries, not including their organizational forms. The following two sections focus first on the economic background and second on the national political context, especially institutionalized cleavages. We then discuss our hypotheses and data sources. We present our findings using three explanatory dimensions: the ‘master’ (left-right) political cleavage, support for redistribution, and the social cleavages relevant to each society.

The Protests in Spain and Israel

A wave of protests began in Spain in late September 2010, when trade unions called for a general strike to fight back austerity measures. In March

2011, Spanish university students joined the mobilizational tide and also launched a strike against rising tuition fees and budget cuts in public education. A few days later, the platform Youth Without A Future (*Juventud Sin Futuro*) organized a demonstration against both the economic crisis and the bipartisan '*PP-PSOE* *partitocracy*'. They described themselves as 'Homeless, jobless, pensionless, fearless'. On 14 May, a large demonstration took place in Barcelona, convened by 200 social organizations and unions fighting against welfare cuts in Catalonia (Ubasart forthcoming). In this combustible context, the call issued by the digital platform Real Democracy Now (DRY, *Democracia Real Ya*) to take to the streets on May 15 – one week before regional and municipal elections throughout Spain – was the spark that ignited the so-called 'Indignados' mobilizations. Hundreds of thousands of people, communicating through the Internet and social media applications, took to the streets in fifty Spanish cities in the ensuing days.

Triggered by police repression and the political response to the 15 May mobilization, the original call for 'Real Democracy Now' quickly gave way to an 'Occupy the Square' movement. Mobilizations were portrayed as "apolitical" and, downplaying their heterogeneity in both socio-economic and politico-ideological terms, participants defined themselves as "persons" working together in "common matters" for the "common good" (Perugorría and Tejerina 2013b). The central movement's demands concerned electoral reform and political corruption, ending state subsidies to the Catholic Church, and finding immediate solutions to the problems of unemployment and precariousness. In its initial stages, the 15M movement was supported by 65-70 per cent of the public.⁶ Mobilizations reached a peak on 19 June, with 250,000 people demonstrating in the streets of several Spanish cities.⁷ However, by mid-June the encampments were no longer sustainable due to increasing fears of repression and eviction, and they passed the torch to decentralized assemblies in urban neighborhoods, small towns, and villages. This transition was accompanied by a steep decrease in the number

6 See note 2. In another survey carried out by the Spanish Youth Institute (INJUVE) in October 2011, of the 15-29 age group, 62 per cent of interviewees had a positive opinion of the protests, 14 specific 15M demands were approved by the majority, and 26 per cent reported attending 15M mobilizations (<http://www.injuve.es/observatorio/valores-actitudes-y-participacion/jovenes-actitudes-sociales-y-politicas-y-movimiento-15-m>). According to surveys by Metroscopia for the *El País* newspaper, sympathy towards 15M declined from 64 per cent to 51 per cent between June 2011 and May 2012, but increased to 63 per cent in May 2013. (http://www.metroscopia.org/datos-recientes/analisis-blog/item/clima-social-mayo-2013?category_id=3).

7 The figure of 250,000 protesters is the authors' conservative estimate based on information in national newspapers and from groups close to the 15M movement.

of participants but also by an internationalization of the protest that soon turned the 15M into a beacon for similar movements around the world (see the chapter by Nez in this volume).

The Israeli 14J social justice movement emerged on 14 July 2011 as a protest against the cost of housing by a small group of students who erected tents on Rothschild Boulevard in the heart of Tel Aviv's financial district (Grinberg 2013). The 'tent protest' or 'housing protest', as it was initially called, quickly spawned a series of unprecedented mass demonstrations. The 14J movement was remarkably consensual, and it was praised and promoted by nearly all of the major organs of the mass media, including the business press. Until the protests quickly faded as summer ended, local authorities and the police adopted a tolerant or even sympathetic stance towards the tent encampments and mass demonstrations of the protest movement.

Contrary to the 15M, the Israeli 14J did not place demands on the political system. It did, however, call for the revitalization of the welfare state and for increased state support for young families. The movement adopted the deliberative and participatory democratic practices that originated in Spain but recognized the leadership of a cadre of young activists with two authoritative spokespersons. It cooperated with a wide variety of interest and cause groups, but like the 15M it scrupulously avoided any kind of contact or collaboration with political parties. Protest leaders consciously adopted the all-embracing slogan 'the people demand social justice'. Ironically, however, the most enthusiastic supporters and bearers of this slogan came from the ranks of the middle and upper-middle classes. They included affluent citizens who were among the winners from the neoliberal restructuring of Israel's political economy since the 1980s but whose children found their incomes and employment conditions eroded by the longer-term effects of these very same reforms (Rosenhek and Shalev 2013).

Economic Background

In early 2011, the Spanish economy was in its third year of recession as a result of not only the worldwide financial crisis but also the bursting of a decade-long real estate bubble and the implosion of the market for mortgages. Following the lead of other developed countries, the Spanish government had taken measures to rescue vulnerable banks and to weather the socio-economic effects of the financial storm. However, as talks about Greece's potential economic bailout began to intensify, attention turned to Spain amid worries over its public deficit (60 per cent of its GDP). This

prompted the government to backtrack and announce a slew of austerity measures.

The recession hurt most Spaniards but had a particularly severe impact on the young. Unemployment rates soared to more than 40 per cent for 20-24 year olds. Those with jobs were, however, not much better off. Many were caught in a system of temporary contracts and poorly paid, low-status jobs unrelated to the occupations for which they had been trained (Tejerina et al. 2013a). Moreover, in mid-2011 almost 70 per cent of young adults aged 18-29 still lived with their parents, thus putting further pressure on already tight family budgets and overburdened support networks.

Despite its scope and gravity, the Spanish crisis did not have the same socio-economic impact across the different Autonomous Communities. As a result, it produced diverse political reactions, either exacerbating or downplaying long-lasting regionalist sentiments. Politicians in some of the Communities governed by the People's Party (PP) called for a return of some competencies to the central state. At the same time, regionalist political leaders in Catalonia complained that federalism was 'bleeding' their budgets. The regional government enacted severe austerity measures and deferred payments to its employees, unleashing a strong anti-austerity movement that preceded and prepared the ground for the 15M movement.

The economic background in Israel was much less severe than in Spain. Dissatisfaction with the high cost and limited availability of housing for students and first-time home buyers was widespread, as was resentment about price rises imposed by either the government or monopolistic private corporations. Income inequality in Israel rose in the 2000s, but unlike in previous decades this was due to regressive reforms of the tax and transfer systems. The main victims of cuts in transfer entitlements were not young people, nor were they drawn from the ranks of the middle classes, in whose name the protests were mainly conducted. Rising poverty reflected a sharp deterioration in the situation of the two most vulnerable groups in Israeli society – Arab citizens (20 per cent of the population) and ultra-orthodox *Haredi* Jews (about 10 per cent).

On the eve of the social justice protests, the business cycle in Israel was actually on the upswing and youth unemployment was relatively modest (12 per cent). At the same time, the average real wage had been essentially stagnant for a decade, while housing prices soared. The relative incomes of young adults and families had been falling due to the declining value of assets like higher education, which had previously enabled young people to attain middle-class lifestyles (Shalev 2012).

Political Context and Institutionalized Cleavages

Spanish politics continues to be molded by historical processes. Some elements inherited from the political culture of Francoism (including its delegitimation of some forms of protest) have proven resilient (Tejerina 2010), and the consensus forged between the major parties during the return to democracy in the late 1970s casts persistent shadows over contemporary politics, including the continuing distrust of social movements (Tejerina 2010; Fishman 2012). Since re-democratization, politics in Spain has revolved primarily around two intersecting axes: left-right, and Spanish unionism or 'centralism' versus regionalism or 'peripheral nationalism'. Since the 1980s, two opposing parties have been hegemonic: the center-left Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) and the right-wing People's Party (PP). Although armed separatism existed for a brief period in Catalonia, political attention has long focused on the 'Basque (armed) conflict'. In 2009, the *abertzale* (Basque-nationalist) left, a coalition of different social movement organizations and party formations, began a transition from a hybrid political-military strategy to a 'purely political' oppositional strategy, akin to the Irish and South African separatist causes (Perugorria 2012). As noted below, this transition had ramifications felt in the municipal elections that followed the initial protests of the 15M movement.

Electoral politics in Israel are a complicated *mélange* of parties, issues, and social groups (Arian 2005). The three main categories of parties target the Palestinian-Arab minority, the religiously observant Jews, or the majority of secular and moderately observant Jews. Parties representing the first two constituencies focus mainly on their community's needs and worldviews. In the residual category of parties, which is the largest, the two main rivals were traditionally Labor on the left and Likud on the right. Historically, Labor defined itself as social-democratic and Likud as economically liberal, but the primary axis of contention in Israeli politics since the 1967 war has been whether to trade territories occupied in that war for peace. Over the last several decades, Likud has been the indispensable party of government, usually in coalition with nationalist and clerical parties. The left bloc – comprising the Labor Party and its closest allies – has steadily lost ground to a succession of ephemeral center parties, as its peacemaking strategy was increasingly discredited. Efforts to revive the party by adopting a social-democratic agenda have largely failed.

If we were to characterize party supporters in the Jewish population by their issue positions on the role of territorial aspirations, the use of military force, the rights of Palestinian citizens, and the role of religion in

public life, they would be positioned on a roughly uni-dimensional left-right spectrum. In contrast, positions on social and economic issues tend to be consensual, since most Israelis would prefer a less unequal society (Shalev and Levy 2005; Shalev 2007). Parallel in part to the Spanish situation, 'tribal' collective identities institutionalized in Israeli politics have long served as a structural barrier to class-based demands for redistribution. The main divisions structuring ideology and partisanship are based on nationality, country of origin, or religiosity. At the same time, a vigorous arena of distributive politics flourishes alongside or outside of political parties, based on pressure groups, unions, NGOs, and others who lobby, bargain, and protest vis-à-vis the government, parliament and state bureaucracies. Contentious politics are a ubiquitous feature of this menu, but like party politics they are sectoral in character. For all these reasons, the mass popular protest that emerged in the summer of 2011 was highly unexpected.

Rationale, Hypotheses, and Data

Although public opinion in Spain and Israel was not entirely consensual, the majority of Spaniards and Israelis were supportive of the 15M and 14J movements, and among those who were not, lack of enthusiasm was more common than outright opposition. Still, the majority of the public stayed at home during even the largest demonstrations. How may these variations in passive and active support be explained? Our theoretical claim is that, in contrast to contentious political action resting on a narrower and therefore more homogenous support base, in order to explain support for or engagement in protests as broad as those observed in Spain and Israel it is essential to focus on the role of politicized social and ideological cleavages. By definition, movements with broad public support are at least partially successful in breaching boundaries created by solidarities generated by class, place, ethnicity, religion, and cultural habitus. Such divisions are even less permeable when they already play an established role as political cleavages in the institutional sphere of mass politics, along with ideological divisions that have crystallized in the same sphere.

Israel and Spain are especially suitable cases for examining the relevance of the cleavage structure of institutional politics to non-institutional mobilization because they represent 'least likely' conditions for our hypothesis to be vindicated. The contention waged by the 15M and 14J movements focused on 'non-partisan' issues of economic justice and the responsiveness of the political system, whereas the key social and ideological divisions that divide parties and voters in the electoral politics of both countries

ostensibly belong to unrelated domains. Precisely because many of the core social divisions and issues of 'normal' politics in Israel and Spain are seemingly orthogonal to the questions of equality, redistribution, and the economic and social role of the state that were so central to the protests, their emergence is even more puzzling. If it can be shown that factors like nationalism and religiosity structured individual engagement in 15M and 14J, this would be a strong indication of the power of political ideologies and politicized social divisions to structure mass support for extensive protests.

Substantively, we expect ideological and social cleavages embedded in institutional politics to help predict who participates in protest activities and who remains outside, and among outsiders, to help explain different levels of passive support. However, the role of institutionalized divisions is not the same for passive and active engagement. As a political performance in a public space, the mass demonstration renders social divisions and partisan loyalties potentially more salient than in the context of passive support. As Klandermans (1997) has pointed out, when protest organizations or activists seek to mobilize the members of groups with socio-cultural or socio-political loyalties and identities that differ from those of the leaders, activists, and core supporters of a social movement, even individuals who sympathize with the movement's grievances and demands may refrain from openly joining its mobilizations.

To identify connections between the cleavage structure of institutional politics and individual engagement with the protests that took place in Israel and Spain, we rely on nationally-representative public opinion polls. These polls asked respondents about both their sympathy and their active participation in the protests. (In Israel, the relevant question asked specifically about demonstrations; in Spain, it also included participation in camps or marches as well as demonstrations). The Spanish survey was carried out in November-December 2011, after the last of the mass protests on 15 October; and the Israeli one in the third week of September 2011, after the climactic 3 September demonstration. The Spanish poll has a large sample (over 6000) while the Israeli sample included just over 1,000 respondents, which is typical of opinion polls in that country.⁸

8 For details on the Spanish CIS survey (Study No. 2920) see http://www.cis.es/cis/opencm/EN/1_encuestas/estudios/ver.jsp?estudio=12604. The Israeli poll was a national sample survey carried out by the Smith Institute for the Taub Center for Social Policy Research in Israel during the third week of September 2011.

Findings

We begin by presenting responses to the questions on passive support and active participation that are the basis for our analysis (Table 4.1). Looking first at passive support, while respondents were offered different options in the Spanish and Israeli surveys, it is clear that the protests were much more broadly supported in Israel. Only 8 per cent of the sample expressed opposition to 14J, and a majority chose the strongest category of support. In Spain, however, nearly half (47 per cent) of the respondents ranked their sympathy for 15M at or below the perceived midpoint of the support scale. Moreover, just over one-tenth reported that they were not familiar with the movement (and accordingly were not asked about either passive or active support). In what follows, because the Israeli response pattern is so positively skewed, we focus on explaining variation in whether or not respondents 'strongly supported' the protests in their country. For Spain, 'strong support' is operationalized as the top 4 ranks of the original 11-point scale.

Regarding active participation, the overall rate was more than twice as high in Israel than in Spain (24 per cent vs. 11 per cent). Although active participation in both countries was highly correlated with passive support, not only strong supporters took to the streets. This may reflect a time inconsistency problem – respondents were asked about their support of the protests after they had peaked but were reporting on active participation that would have occurred while the demonstrations were still in full swing.

The 'Master' Political Cleavage: Left-Right Polarization

In contextualizing our two country cases, it was emphasized that in the institutional political arena of both countries the left-right axis both summarizes and symbolically represents the ideological domain of institutional politics. The issue positions of individuals, social sectors, and political parties can all be parsimoniously described on this axis. Yet the content of left-right variation differs substantially between the two contexts, and in each of them it is made up of several different layers of meaning. In general, the left-right division refers to both the 'old' tension between economic liberalism and support for the welfare state, and the 'new' tension between authoritarianism and a pro-growth orientation versus libertarianism and a pro-green orientation. As noted, however, in Israel these issues are weakly articulated by most political parties and do not form the basis for left/right

Table 4.1 Passive and active participation in the Israeli 14J and Spanish 15M movements

ISRAEL: "To what extent do you support the social protest?"		
	Distribution of responses	Proportion attending a demonstration
Strongly support	56%	37%
Support	29%	12%
Oppose	5%	0%
Strongly oppose	3%	0%
Not sure	5%	3%
No reply	1%	–
Total	100%	24%
(n=1,005)		
SPAIN: "To what extent do you sympathize with the 15M movement or 'Indignados'?"		
	Distribution of responses	Proportion attending a demonstration
Full sympathy-8	12%	32%
7	10%	22%
6	11%	16%
5	8%	9%
4	18%	4%
3	10%	5%
2	9%	1%
No sympathy-1	10%	1%
Unfamiliar / haven't heard	11%	–
No reply	4%	–
Total	100%	11%
(n=6,082)		

Note: In Spain the original 11-point scale of passive support was collapsed into 8 levels, and the question regarding active support asked whether the respondent had attended a demonstration or participated in an encampment, march or protest.

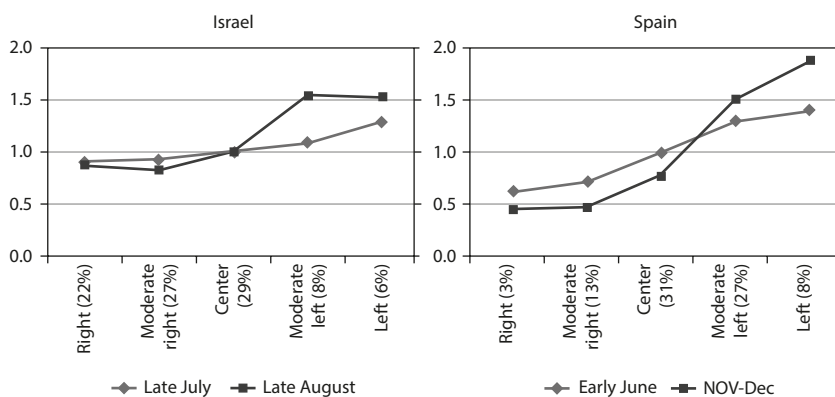
identification, which instead rests mainly on positions regarding territorial, military, and religious issues that are specific to the Israeli context.

In Spain it is also true – though to a lesser extent – that left and right serve as political markers for ‘non-standard’ beliefs and issue positions. Their meaning is linked to local conflicts that emerged in several historically

profound rounds of contention over state authority. The transition from Francoism to democracy three decades ago raised or amplified what continue to be contested issues concerning arrangements for recognizing and accommodating diversity between regions. These issues are partly embodied in the left-right dimension, as well as having their own ideological discourses based on demands for national recognition and/or local autonomy.

Against this background, it is of considerable interest to ask how far support and participation in the protests of 2011 followed the left-right division. Since political economy and redistribution are central to the left-right cleavage in Spain but not in Israel, we expect polarization around this cleavage to be more marked in the Spanish case. However, there is also a temporal dynamic to consider. A protest may enjoy widespread legitimacy at the initial moment of emergence, but after the first flash of enthusiasm dies down it may align more closely with familiar political divisions. Accordingly, for each country Figure 4.1 presents the results of an initial poll carried out only a few weeks after the protests broke out, compared to a later one. In Israel, the second survey was fielded only a month after the first, while in Spain it was six months later. To maximize comparability, the proportion strongly supporting the protests was recalculated for each survey as a ratio, relative to the mean for all respondents.

Figure 4.1 Proportion of strong supporters relative to the mean, according to left-right position



The findings for both countries support both of our expectations. The position of individuals on the left-right dimension is associated with support for

the protests in both countries but substantially more in Spain than Israel. Furthermore, there is clear evidence of growing polarization over time.

In addition to the overall role of the left-right cleavage – the contrasts between the two countries and at two points in time – we are able to compare the impact of this political division on two different types of engagement: passive support and active participation. Here, differences between the two countries are best discerned by juxtaposing them on the same graph and measuring absolute rather than relative rates of engagement. It appears from Figure 4.2 that citizen involvement was more cross-cutting in Israel than in Spain. In Spain, individuals well to the left were almost as likely as their Israeli counterparts to support and participate in the protests – but the differences between the two countries become sharper when attention shifts to the center and right.

Figure 4.2 Two types of engagement in protest, by left-right ideology

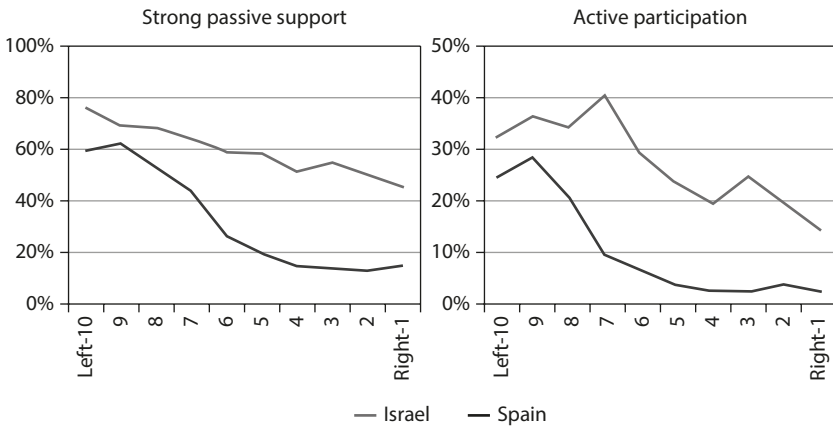


Table 4.2 Cross-country difference in left-right polarization

	Spain	Israel
Passive support	4.4	1.5
Active participation	7.7	2.0

Note: Polarization is measured as the ratio of the proportion engaged in the two most leftist categories in comparison with the two most rightist ones.

The cross-country difference in the left-right gradient can be conveyed by a simple measure of polarization: the ratio of the proportion engaged in the two most leftist categories in comparison with the two most rightist

ones (see Table 4.2). The results highlight not only the greater intensity of political polarization in Spain but also the fact that in both countries – but again, especially in Spain – the left-right division matters more for active than passive engagement.

It should be noted that the ultimate impact of polarization on aggregate support was muted in Spain by the distribution of the population along the left-right spectrum. Whereas in Israel fewer than 30 per cent of passive supporters and 15 per cent of active participants placed themselves in the top 4 categories of the leftism scale, in Spain the parallel proportions were two-thirds and three-quarters respectively. Hence, lack of enthusiasm for the protests on the right had less of an overall impact in Spain than in Israel.

Commitment to Redistribution

As has already been emphasized, in Israel the content of the left-right cleavage concerns issues of identity and foreign policy that are seemingly irrelevant to the 14J, framed as a movement committed to social justice. Indeed, we expected attitudes towards government efforts to reduce inequality via redistribution to be closely related to engagement in the Israeli protest. Since the 15M movement addressed a wider range of issues – including the deteriorating prospects of youth, government corruption and non-responsiveness, and opposition to austerity – we assumed that in the Spanish context, attitudes to redistribution would be less closely linked to protest involvement. Figure 4.3 confirms these expectations. Both forms of engagement in mass protest were more strongly linked in Israel to views on the welfare state than in Spain.⁹ Measuring polarization in the same manner as before, we find that in relation to both passive and active involvement it was about 60 per cent higher in Israel than in Spain (Table 4.3).

Thus, whereas in Israel engagement in protest was more responsive to redistribution than to leftism, the profound role of leftism in Spain in selecting protest supporters and activists was evidently due to something more than the tension between social democracy and free-market liberalism. The left-right cleavage in Spain also overlaps in part with social cleavages that are key drivers of political behavior – the conflict over regionalism

9 In Israel, support for redistribution is measured by combining responses to two questions: one asked whether the government should reduce income inequality, the other asked respondents to choose their most important policy priority from a list that included “reducing poverty and inequality”. In Spain, the relevant question offered an 11-point scale tapping agreement with the view that the government should spend more on benefits and social services even though this would mandate higher taxes. In both cases, we compacted responses into a 5-point scale.

Figure 4.3 Two types of engagement in protest, by attitude towards redistribution

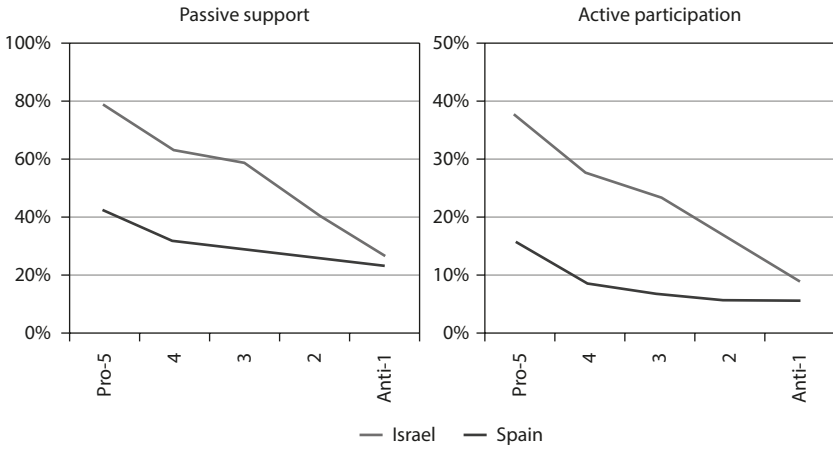


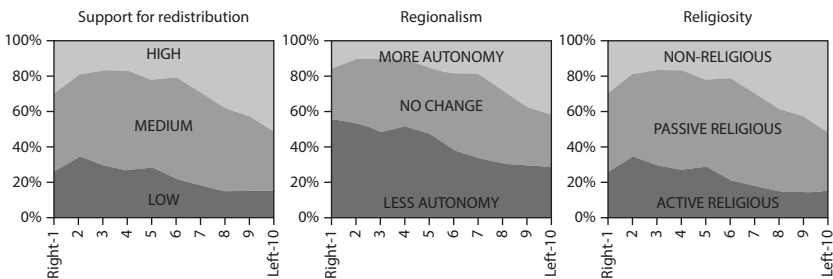
Table 4.3 Cross-country difference in polarization regarding redistribution

	Spain	Israel
Passive support	1.8	2.9
Active participation	2.7	4.2

Note: Polarization is measured as the ratio between the top and bottom categories.

versus centralism, and the religious cleavage. Figure 4.4 shows that all three variables are clearly associated with left-right positions. As we shall now see, such overlaps play an important role in understanding the politics of protest involvement.

Figure 4.4 Correlates of the left-right cleavage in Spain



Politicized Social Cleavages

In both Israel and Spain, conflicts over issues of social and economic justice like those raised in the 15M and 14J protests are directly or indirectly linked to social divisions along ethnic, religious, or regional lines. The politicization of such social cleavages results from both group differences in culture and interests, and historical alliances, co-optations, and animosities between parties and groups. Hence, group membership not only represents a potential prior influence on individual orientations that may have influenced support for the protests under study here, but may also embody group-level interests and loyalties that are at least as relevant.

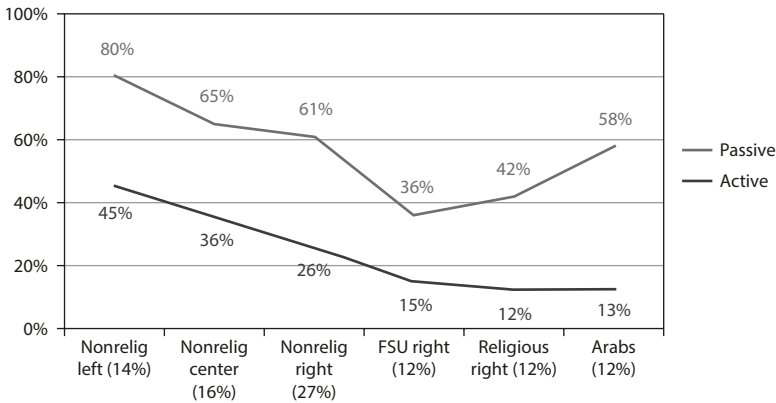
To illustrate this point concretely, consider the alienation of Israel's ultra-orthodox population from the 14J movement. Given the high incidence of poverty among ultra-orthodox Jews, the social justice movement with its critique of rising inequality and focus on the need to revive and enlarge Israel's welfare state might have garnered considerable sympathy and support from this sector of the population. Two factors prevented this from happening: the deep cultural divide between the ultra-orthodox and the educated, secular, and Tel Aviv-based core of the protest movement, and the specific way in which the ultra-orthodox communities of Israel have been incorporated into institutional politics by 'sectoral' political parties. These parties routinely participate in government coalitions that enable them to target state-supplied or state-subsidized services and benefits to their constituents. Fear of jeopardizing this system of redistribution sowed suspicion and reluctance among both their leaders and supporters. At the same time, non-orthodox Israelis deeply resent the benefits won by ultra-orthodox politicians for their constituents.

Bearing in mind the ideological, ethnic, and religious cleavages just noted, we evaluate the effect of institutionalized political cleavages on citizen engagement in the 14J protests by distinguishing six distinct sociopolitical blocs or 'tribes'. In addition to the Arab-Jewish cleavage, our typology relates to the only measurable ethnic division among Jews,¹⁰ that between veterans and 'Russians' (immigrants from the Former Soviet Union, FSU), as well as to the religious and left-right cleavages. Unfortunately, it is not feasible to distinguish between 'hardcore' ultra-orthodox Jews and 'modern' observant Jews; hence both are aggregated here under

10 Measuring the longstanding division between Jewish immigrants (or their descendants) from Arab countries and those who originated in Europe requires information on the origin of grandparents which was not available in the survey analyzed here.

the 'religious' umbrella. We also aggregated 'traditional' and 'secular' Jews (other than Russians) into a single 'non-religious' category, since in any event this distinction had no significant impact on protest support. Finally, note that since 75 to 80 per cent of both Russian immigrants and religious Jews identify with the right, other members of these two groups are not included in this analysis.

Figure 4.5 Passive and active support for the Israeli protests by sociopolitical bloc

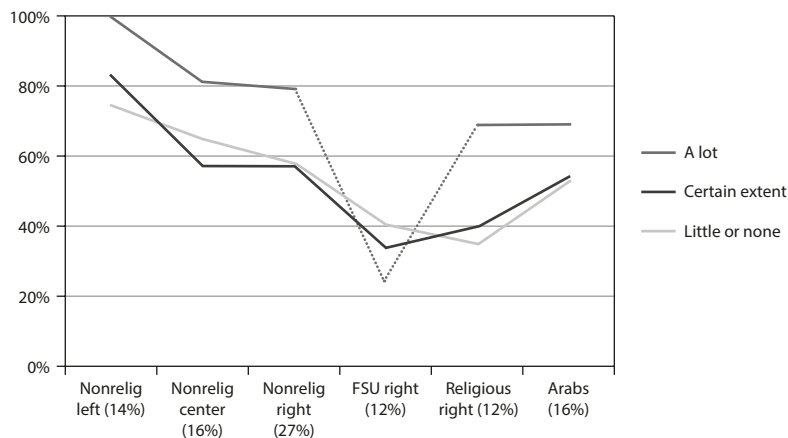


The findings in Figure 4.5 make it evident that the high rates of aggregate support for the Israeli protests conceal considerable divergence between different sociopolitical blocs, and that this divergence is especially marked for active participation. The strongest support and active involvement came from nonreligious, non-immigrant Jewish Israelis who identify with the left. Compared to immigrants from the FSU and observant veteran Jews – both of whom identify with the political right – members of this group were twice as likely to be strong passive supporters and three times as likely to have participated in a demonstration. Among the majority (57 per cent) who defined themselves as non-religious Jews, both types of support were clearly associated with the left-right division. Finally, Palestinian-Arab citizens exhibited a unique pattern of relatively high passive but low active engagement. As a marginalized minority, the Arabs in Israel could hardly be unsympathetic to the protestors' call for social justice, but given the deep social and political gulf between Arabs and Jews (as well as a high degree of spatial segregation), they were less amenable to and available for performative political action on a broad Jewish-Arab front.

Given the prevalence of economic disadvantage among Arabs, ultra-orthodox Jews, and part of the FSU immigrant community, it is clear that

collective political loyalties were capable of overriding the role of economic concerns in shaping the orientation of different social groups to the protests. This tendency notwithstanding, it is still possible that individual-level variation within the groups is at least partly explained by material concerns. To investigate this possibility, we constructed an indicator of ‘fear of future economic distress’ from two questions asked in the Israeli survey.¹¹ More than one in six of the individuals polled indicated that they were seriously in fear of future economic difficulty. Figure 4.6 shows that, except among Russian immigrants, such anxiety exercised a palpable effect on individual-level variation in passive support for the 14J protests within each sociopolitical ‘tribe’.

Figure 4.6 Passive support for the Israeli protests by sociopolitical bloc and fear of future economic distress



Turning now to the impact of politicized social cleavages in Spain, the present section reports findings for the effects of religion and regionalism, connecting them as in Israel to the left-right cleavage. On the face of it, the political role of religion is unlikely to be significant since, in line with the majority of Europeans, only 15 per cent of Spaniards regularly attend religious services (Center for Sociological Research 2009). Nevertheless, Calvo and colleagues have shown that religious voting can be important even when large sectors of the population feel indifferent to religion

11 The indicator summed responses to the following questions: “Do you fear that you or your family could find yourself in poverty or economic distress in the next 2-3 years?” and “Do you or anyone in your family fear being unemployed due to layoffs or difficulty in finding a job?”

(Calvo and Montero 2002; Calvo 2009; Calvo et al. 2010). During the 1980s, the widespread perception of Alianza Popular (AP) as an extremist and conservative party brought sizeable number of Catholics to vote for the center-leftist PSOE. However, after its transformation into the Partido Popular (PP) in 1989, the party allowed Catholic voters to overcome the obstacles that had prevented them from voting for the PP. As a consequence, by the mid-1990s religious voting recovered notably, associated with a sharpening of the religious profiles of the other major Spanish parties (Montero et al. 2008).

Religious voting peaked in the mid-2000s, tied to an unusual level of confrontation between the Socialist government and the Catholic Church. The 2004-2008 agenda of the PSOE government implied controversial and simultaneous changes on various fronts: the civil rights of sexual minorities, the role of religion in the educational curriculum, bioethics, women's rights, and the recovery of the 'historical memory' of the Franco years. The resulting conflict with the moral order defended by the Spanish Catholic Church had a clear effect on voting in the general elections held in March of 2008. In this election, the religious cleavage in Spain was most salient to voters who did not identify ideologically with the left, and had the strongest impact on support for the PP (Calvo et al. 2010). This suggests the importance for our purposes of assessing the joint effect of the left-right and religious-secular cleavages on mass mobilization in the 15M protests.

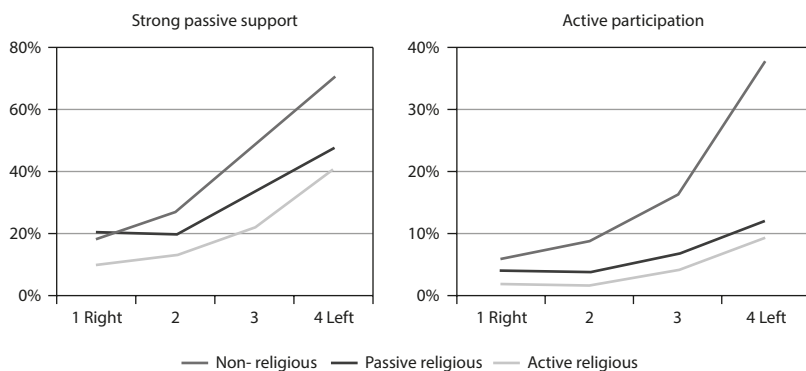
It is worth noting that in the specific case of the 15M movement, political conflict over religion explicitly spilled over into contentious politics. Among other demands, the 15M protestors called for the 'real decoupling' of the state and the Catholic Church. Coinciding with the world summit of Catholic Youth in Madrid and the Pope's visit to Spain, in mid-August 2011 the 15M Working Group on the Economy obtained consensus for a detailed proposal for eliminating tax collection and various state subsidies targeted to the Catholic Church and its allied institutions.¹² This confrontational move presumably increased the salience of the religious cleavage for 15M support, especially (in light of our earlier theory) for performative (active) engagement.

For the purpose of our empirical analysis, we distinguish three broad categories of religious identification and observance in Spain. 'Non-religious'

12 Sources: <http://madrid.tomalaplaza.net/2011/08/17/propuesta-abierta-consensuada-por-el-grupo-de-trabajo-de-economia-sobre-financiacion-de-la-iglesia/>; Retrieved 3 February 2013 from <http://www.20minutos.es/noticia/1428422/0/logros-conseguidos/pendientes-ideario/movimiento-15m>.

respondents (about one-quarter of the total but nearly 40 per cent of those aged under 35) have no stated religion or are atheists. The 'passive religious' identify as Catholics or with some other religion but hardly ever attend services, while 'active religious' attend at least several times a year (roughly one-third of the total and two-thirds of those over 65).

Figure 4.7 The joint effects of religiosity and leftism on support and participation in the Spanish 15M protests

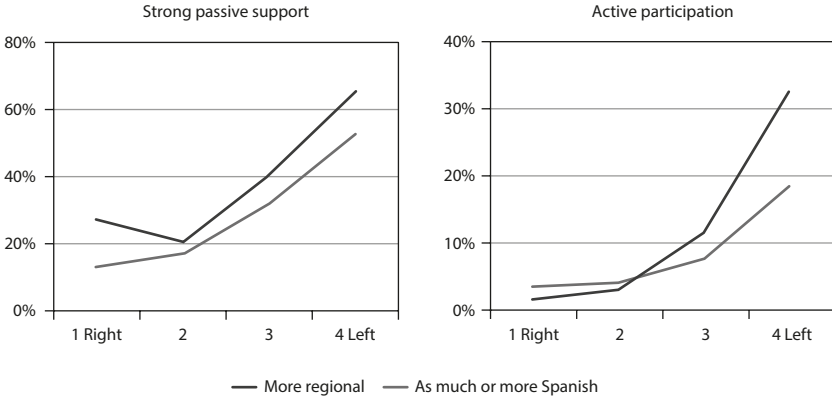


For two reasons, it is essential to analyze the effects of religiosity and political ideology jointly. First, the overlap between the two variables implies a risk of overestimating the impact of religion analyzed alone. At the same time, this overlap is only partial. Some non-religious and actively religious respondents have the 'wrong' orientation (Figure 4.4). In fact, at least half of the members of both groups position themselves in intermediate categories of the left-right scale. Consequently, it is not surprising to find (Figure 4.7) that religiosity has a substantial independent effect on involvement in the 15M demonstrations, net of an individual's placement on the left-right continuum (and also, as will be shown later in the multivariate analysis, net of other determinants). Both passive and active engagements in the 15M movement were restrained among those oriented towards religion. The most visible effect, except for those definitively loyal to the right, is the difference between secular Spaniards (the largest category) and all others.

A second reason for jointly analyzing the effects of the left-right and religion-secular cleavages is that studies of electoral behavior show that their effects are interactive (Calvo et al. 2010). Our results show an interaction that is especially pronounced for active participation in the 15M protests. Religiosity weakened the tendency of engagement to rise along

with leftism. Put differently, secular leftists were 'free' to be drawn into the protests to a degree that more religious leftists were not.¹³

Figure 4.8 The joint effects of regional identity and leftism on support and participation in the 15M demonstrations



Similar findings emerge when examining the regional cleavage in Spain, which we have argued has both an identity dimension (based in some cases on ethnicity) and a political-institutional one. Figure 4.8 shows that while identifying with one's region had only a modest relationship with passive support, it substantially amplified the role of leftism in mobilizing citizens to actively participate in the protests.

Multivariate Analysis

The findings reviewed provide strong indications that ideological and social cleavages shaped engagement in both the Spanish and Israeli protests. However, an obvious question is whether the bivariate and trivariate relationships analyzed would hold up in a multivariate analysis. The purpose of such an analysis is to evaluate net effects, not only by holding constant the other key explanatory variables that we have reviewed so far but also by adding controls for other factors that are not of particular interest for our theoretical agenda but could plausibly have explanatory power.

13 Interestingly, these are not the same interactions that Calvo and colleagues (2010, Figs 3 & 4) found in their study of voting for the two main parties in Spain's 2008 elections.

Before turning to the results, it should be emphasized that we do not regard the multiple regressions that follow as an empirical test of a well-specified theoretical model. Rather, the purpose is to test the robustness of previously-examined bivariate relationships and to obtain estimates of the relative weight of different predictors and the extent to which they are similar for both the two outcomes and the two country cases. We ignore possible interaction effects, including some that have already been documented in the previous exploratory analysis, because this would complicate and overtax the model.

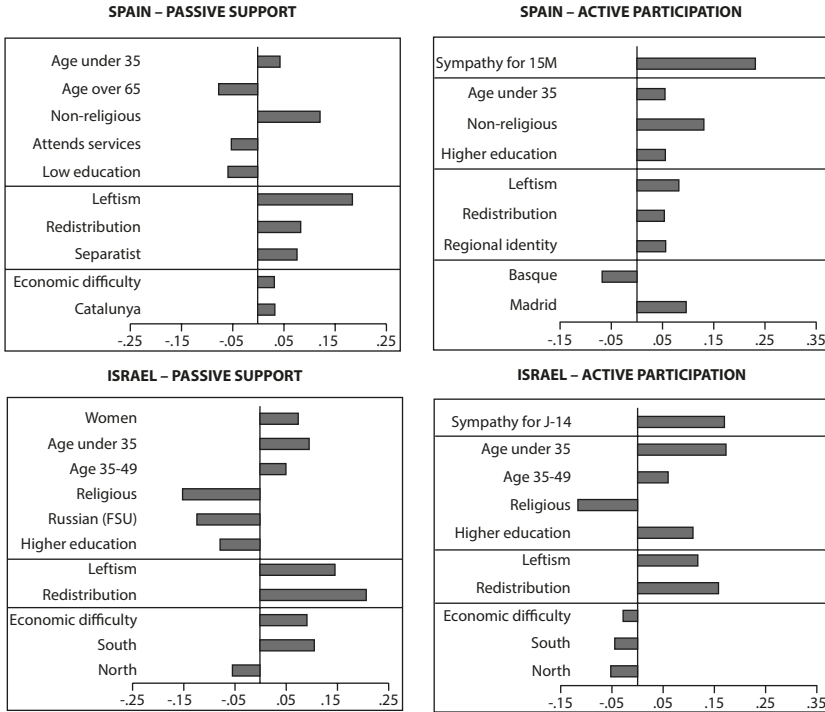
The key explanatory variables for both countries include the left-right cleavage, attitudes towards redistribution, and the social cleavage (religion) which is common to both countries. For Israel, the model also includes a dummy variable for respondents from the Former Soviet Union. For Spain, we add two measures of the regional cleavage, one tapping collective identity and the other the desired level of local autonomy, as well as dummy variables for the two most important centers of regional nationalism (Catalonia and the Basque Country). A third binary variable is intended to capture any net impact of Madrid, the Autonomous Community that hosts the three branches of the central government and was the epicenter of the 15M movement.

The control variables included in all models are: (a) age, on the grounds that the protests were clearly dominated by, and mainly oriented towards, young people and that older persons might have faced greater technical difficulties and anxiety about participating in demonstrations; (b) gender, given the prominence of women in the leadership and activist core of the Israeli movement; (c) education, since students played a central role as activists and supporters of these movements, and complaints by the Spanish 'youth without a future' were often linked to the shortage of (good) jobs for university graduates; and (d) variables measuring the degree to which respondents felt they were under economic pressure and, in Israel, dummy variables to represent the north and south of the country, where economic opportunities are generally inferior to those in the center.

For each country, separate regressions were estimated for passive and active engagement. The models for both were identical, except that the one predicting active engagement includes passive support as an independent variable. The reason is that in relation to active participation, our interest is in explaining what turns sympathy into action. The question at hand is therefore how any given factor (e.g. leftism) affects the propensity to take an active role in the protests, beyond its contribution to understanding individual differences in passive support. Note that for Israel the multivariate

analysis does not include Arab respondents. The political and ideological affiliations of the Arab minority and its internal cleavages differ substantially from those of the Jewish majority, and the size of the Arab sample is insufficient to permit separate analysis.

Figure 4.9 OLS regressions predicting high passive support or active participation in the 15M and 14J protests



The charts in Figure 4.9 are designed to ease the task of comparing the four different sets of results. To facilitate comparability within and across regressions, they present standardized (beta) coefficients but only those that were statistically significant (t-statistic of at least 2). Note that since both dependent variables are binary, a case could be made for estimation using logistic regression, but we opted for the simpler and more intuitive OLS approach. The full results of the regressions are available on request.

We begin with the two charts for passive support. Before noting specific highlights of these results, it is worth pointing out that the set of independent variables with significant net effects, and the size and direction of these effects, are broadly similar between the two countries. In both countries

leftism, support for redistribution, and the religious cleavage have the most impact on whether individuals expressed strong sympathy for the protests. In Israel, consistent with the weaker connection between the meaning of the left-right cleavage and distributional issues than in Spain, attitudes towards redistribution are a stronger predictor of passive support than left-right position. Another noteworthy difference is that whereas both a direct indicator of economic distress and one of the regional indicators have substantial effects in Israel, the relevant variable for Spain has little impact.

So far as country-specific predictors are concerned, as expected Israelis who immigrated from the Former Soviet Union were substantially less sympathetic to the 14J movement. In Spain, also not surprisingly, individual support for regionalism plays a role, but only as measured by support for institutional separatism. However, no additional effect is found for the dummy variables for Catalonia and the Basque Country. Although respondents in Catalonia were a bit more sympathetic than the average respondent, it appears that the distinctiveness of these two regions is mainly accounted for by other individual-level variables included in the model (such as separatism and leftism). Lastly, only in Israel were women more likely to sympathize with the protests than men.

Turning to the findings for active participation, in both countries the young, leftists, the secular, the educated, and egalitarians were the most likely to turn sympathy into active engagement. But except for the religious cleavage, all of these effects were notably stronger in Israel. The most obvious difference between the two countries is that in Spain more of the variation in whether individuals took to the streets is explained by their degree of sympathy. In addition, in Israel differences in age and ideology contributed much more than in Spain to the residual variation in active participation.

Only in Israel do we find that indicators of economic distress influenced protest participation. Although the observed effects are weak, it is interesting to note a significant shift in their direction as we move from passive to active engagement. Net of differences in ideology and social cleavages, more advantaged Israelis (those with a higher education) were less likely to strongly support the protests – but at any given level of support, they were more likely to participate.

Finally, Spanish regionalism has interesting effects on active engagement. Individuals expressing regional nationalism (as indicated by their primary identity) were somewhat more likely to participate. However, the net effects of the regional dummy variables show that in the nationalist Basque Country the propensity for active engagement in the 15M protests was below average. The second finding confirms our suggestion that for

Basques, the pressing regional-political agenda at the onset of the 15M movement had the effect of crowding out their propensity to take to the streets on behalf of an 'outside' movement.

* * *

Can social movements in divided societies win broad support and inspire large-scale participation? Our paper has analyzed two extensive and consensual protests that took place amidst the 2011-2012 international cycle of anti-inequality protests – the Israeli 14J and Spanish 15M movements. We have characterized these movements as having broad and cross-cutting public support and have aimed to unveil their limitations as well as success in breaching politicized social and ideological boundaries. Our theoretical claim is that, in contrast to contentious political action that rests on a socially and politically homogenous base, in order to explain support for such extensive protests it is essential to focus on the cleavage structure of institutional politics. While central to the study of mass electoral politics, the role of political cleavages has not previously been addressed as one of the features of the institutional political system that may either facilitate or impede contentious collective action.

Given the lack of prior theoretical guidance regarding the role of institutionalized political cleavages in structuring engagement in non-institutional political action, our research is exploratory and aims to contribute to the development of empirically grounded and inspired theoretical insights. Two features of the design of the research have facilitated this endeavor: the contrast between two different levels of engagement (passive and active), and the comparison between two different national contexts. The protests occurring in Israel and Spain both featured mass mobilizations and broad popular support (dependent variable), and the two countries also share institutional political systems that are rent by social and ideological cleavages dividing parties and voters in electoral politics (independent variable). Moreover, in both contexts these cleavages belong to domains that are nominally unrelated to the core issues of distributive justice and political accountability raised by the protesters. Hence, we have suggested that Spain and Israel are ideal showcases for uncovering the role that social and ideological divisions entrenched in 'conventional' politics may play in the patterning of group and individual engagement in 'unconventional' political action.

Our empirical findings are based on micro-data from parallel public opinion polls conducted in 2011 in Spain and Israel after the protests peaked. We began with an analysis of the impact of the 'master' left-right cleavage,

showing that in both countries support and participation in the protests were considerably stronger among citizens on the left and weaker among those on the right, especially in relation to active engagement. However, there are also quantitative and qualitative differences between the two countries, particularly in the likelihood of respondents identifying with the political right or center participating actively in the protests. Consistent with the greater centrality of social and economic issues to the meaning of left and right in Spain, we find stronger ideological polarization of supporters there than in Israel. At the same time, and for the same reason, both passive and active forms of support were more strongly linked to views on redistribution in Israel than in Spain.

Although politicized social cleavages are partly embodied in the left-right divide, our multivariate statistical analysis confirmed that they also had substantial effects in their own right on the structuring of engagement in the 15M and 14J protests. At the same time, we also found evidence of interactive effects of ideological and social divisions. For example, although clearly located on the political left, Israel's Palestinian-Arab citizens combined relatively high passive support with low active participation. In Spain, we found that religious affiliation and observance restrained the propensity of those on the left to play an active part in the 15M movement, whereas being secular or having a primarily regional identity had the opposite effect. These kinds of interactions suggest that future research would benefit from the use of configurational methods and that the weight of different determinants of engagement in protest cannot be accurately assessed by means of a regression model that includes only main effects. Nevertheless, the key findings of our multivariate analysis are clear and important: the 'gross' bivariate effects presented in the exploratory results also show up as 'net' effects in a multivariate model; and in the two countries, both political ideology and politicized social cleavages matter.

Differences in the results of the Spanish and Israeli regressions are particularly interesting as far as active participants are concerned. Israeli protesters tended to be young (under 35), secular, university-educated, and living in the relatively affluent center of the country, and they were both left-wing ('dovish') and social-democratic in their ideological outlook. Parallel tendencies were generally found in Spain – but with the exception of the religious cleavage, the effects were much weaker.

What do these findings portend for the study of Occupy-type social movements, and the social movement literature more generally? Our research moves away from the prevailing focus on the core activists of the recent socio-economic protests and their novel practices to the less-studied

hinterland of passive and active supporters. This perspective highlights the challenges faced by any social movement aspiring to appeal to and mobilize the mass public, an aspiration that was expressed in the Spanish and Israeli protests by framing their critique in very broad terms ('economic injustice', 'political unaccountability'), widening the boundaries of the social movement community ('the middle class', 'persons', 'the people'), and portraying their concerns and demands as 'apolitical' and even 'commonsensical'. Our findings imply that these framing efforts paid off for the 14J and 15M movements. Both movements, especially in Israel, attained considerable levels of support. However, the fact that politicized social and ideological cleavages ostensibly unrelated to the gist of the protests nonetheless structured both passive and active support for them draws attention to the role of everyday politics in structuring engagement in these movements. The effects of this structuring are evident in a glass ceiling mechanism that was especially important for participation in performative forms of support, and also received expression in the increased polarization of passive support as the cycle of contention progressed. Are unconventional social movements irremediably tied to institutionalized political cleavages despite their unequivocal attempts to distance themselves from 'divisive old-time politics'? Future comparisons with the similar movements that emerged in less-fractured societies – the Portuguese *Geração à Rasca* and the Greek 'Indignados' mobilizations – may shed light on this important question.

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