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Debunking Spontaneity: Spain's 15-M/*Indignados* as Autonomous Movement

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Abstract

The Spanish 15-M/Indignados have drawn global attention for the strength and longevity of their movement, particularly in or repressed by their insurrectionary assemblies and many and based on evolution of culture in social movements that pay close attention to the maintenance and evolution of collective identities and

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movement cultures in periods of latency or abeyance in order to better understand the rapid mobilization of networks in new episodes of contention.

Keywords: Anti-austerity protests, global justice movement, Indignados/15-M, Spain, deliberative democracy, collective identity, autonomous movements, spontaneity, movement continuity, movement culture, genealogy

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Notes

¹ Indignados is a term used by mass media and by which the movement is known outside Spain; activists refer to themselves as 15-M, arguing both that 'indignant' does not even begin to describe their anger, and that it overlooks other emotional responses, such as hope and solidarity. I therefore use Indignados initially as a descriptor before reverting to 15-M.

² Other characterizations of this cleavage in the political science literature have used the terms left-libertarian versus left-authoritarian.

³ This... to the cr... autonom... ts, leading... he... ndscape.

⁴ The fo... practices she... narrative -... long been a... other

⁵ Movim



6. But is typical of activist narratives in the Spanish context which are often marked by a sense of inferiority with respect to other contexts, stemming from the fact that Spain 'missed' many of the social movement experiences of the 1960s and 1970s due to the dictatorship. It is true that this hampered the absorption of deliberative practices that flourished elsewhere during this period, but only strengthens the importance of local and national deliberative traditions in the Spanish context in the post-transition period.
7. Assembly practices can be traced farther back, to anarchist practices before Franco, for example although continuity is harder to prove.
8. A 2001 book on methods of asamblearismo practice states that the turno de palabra can be modified to favour those who either have not spoken or have not intervened in a long time, and to allow people to respond if they have been 'alluded to' (Lorenzo Vila & Martínez López, [2001](#), p. 57). Despite the availability of the book at social movement events, its recommendations were not widely adopted at the time.
9. 20-21 December 2003 Ciudad Real (La Mancha).
10. Autonomous assemblies are in principle open to all, but as individuals, not as members or representatives of parties or unions.
11. Interview with 'Txema' in Madrid 2002.
12. The two first points of the manifesto produced by the (15-M/DRY) general assembly in the Puerta del Sol on 20 May 2011 were a change in the Electoral Law to open lists and a one person one vote system, and that the fundamental rights stipulated in the Spanish Constitution be fully implemented, including the right to free and free healthcare, and free education. Acampa
13. See 1... dos for those ch... enados for thos... es.
14. Citize
15. The ic... Iso the basis of a rece...



16. Indeed the chants of the 15-M crowd with their hands in the air of 'These are our weapons' (Estas son nuestras armas) is a common one at mass protests in Spain, signifying non-violence.

17. Translation from Spanish by author.

Additional information

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