'If a Fight Starts, Watch the Crowd' A Natural Quasi-Experiment on the Effect of Violent Tactics on Popular Support for Protest Movements.

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Abstract

Violent protest strategies have often been considered as less effective than non-violent action for achieving the goals of movements. The main proposed mechanism is that non-violent action lowers the participation barriers and costs, and therefore is able to increase turnout. In this paper we explore a complementary mechanism: the impact of violent tactics on popular support and perception of protest movements, Often, the causal effect of these choices is difficult to estimate. In this paper we exploit a natural experiment in the context of the 15M (*indignados*) movement in Barcelona: a series of riots that took place during the fieldwork of a face-to-face survey in Barcelona. Our results show that, on average, rioting reduced support for the movement in 7 percentage points. Moreover, we find that this effect is highest for the 'weak supporters' of the movement (around 16 points) and null for its core supporters. Results are robust to different specifications. These findings have potentially important implications for protest movements concerned with broadening their support base.

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1 Introduction

Protest movements in democratic contexts usually have a wide array of tactical choices at their disposal. While sometimes the repertoire itself has an intrinsic value to the movement participants', often the choice of a specific set of protest instruments derives from an assessment of the costs and potential benefits of each course of action.

While engaging in violent protest is under most conditions more costly than participating in non-violent demonstrations, it is much more difficult to estimate the potential benefits of each tactical choice. This is true both for the protesters themselves as for the researchers that have often tried to estimate the effects of violent tactics on the likelihood of movement success.

There are at least two main difficulties in such an endeavour. The first one is defining what does constitute a 'success' of a protest movement. Often this has been operationalized as policy change, but other authors have argued that social movements also have more general goals that are not directly linked to observable short-term policy changes. The second one is the endogeneity of tactic choice: movements resort to one or another tactic depending on a number of factors that might also be related to their probabilities of success.

In this paper we offer a credible causal estimation of the effect of choosing violent tactics on popular support for protest movements. This is a relevant outcome per se for most social movements, but perhaps more interestingly, it can also be a crucial mediator to explain other outcomes of social movements, such as policy impact, for example.

We rely on the sudden occurrence of a series of street riots during the fieldwork of a face-to-face survey in Barcelona. The eviction of a squat center linked to the 15M movement was followed by a set of riots that lasted 5 days. By comparing the respondents interviewed before and after the riots, we estimate a negative average effect of the violence outbreak of about 7 percentage points in support for the 15M movement. However, this effect is mostly concentrated in those respondents we define as 'weak supporters' of the movement, and null among its core supporters. It is negative, although not statistically significant for the opposers. Our results are robust to the inclusion of controls and various specifications.

2 Theory

2.1 Literature

Previous research has addressed the consequences of movement tactics, including, violent vs non violent action, for policy, mobilization or cultural outcomes. Some authors have argued that the ability of social movements to bring about political change at various levels depends on their ability to disrupt existing practices (Fishman & Everson, 2016; Cloward & Piven, 1979) and on using a variety of tactics (Morris, 1993), including violence.

However, an increasing amount of evidence seems to suggest that violent tactics are less effective in achieving their goals (Chenoweth & Cunningham, 2013; Howes, 2013; Huet-Vaughn, 2015; Stephan et al., 2008). Violent protests seem to be counterproductive in the long run, even if they may produce some short-term advantages.

The literature points to a number of mechanisms for the lower efficacy of violent protest. Violence may have several unintended consequences such as enhancing elite's discourses based on public order maintenance (Wasow, 2017), reinforce the opponent (Howes, 2013), facilitate repression from the state (Soule et al., 2004; Stephan et al., 2008), and reduce the ability to remain resilient in the face of oppression (Chenoweth & Cunningham, 2013). From the point of view of potential participant activists violence is not cost-friendly and is often incompatible with their values and needs, which is are crucial aspects for movement diffusion (Soule et al., 2004).

One of the main mechanisms at stake in this question is that violence reduces public support for the protesters' movement. While most of the attention has been on policy change (Enos et al., 2017; Huet-Vaughn, 2015; Soule et al., 2004), some previous work has shown that social movement activity can move public opinion and policy mood (Banaszak & Ondercin, 2016).

Less attention has been paid to how the level of public support for the movement is affected by the movement's type of protest activity. This is striking for public support is a very important resource for social movements (Ennis, 1987). Large support anticipates large ability to mobilize other resources. sends signals to elites and majorities, and is more likely to grow.

Part of the limitation may come from the fact that few studies take individuals as unit of analysis, and most have tended to focus on events or movements. Louis highlights the fact that psychology has rarely entered the analysis of how collective action may produce social change (Louis, 2009), and so the psychological mechanisms that

drive support for movements remain underexplored.

A few recent pieces have started to analyze this issue by tackling into the broader area of how protests affect individual attitudes. Wallace and her associates analyze with observational data how proximity to protests changes individuals' attitudes of political efficacy (Wallace et al., 2014). There are only a few studies that exploit exogenous variation in exposure to political events such as protest. Frye & Borisova (2016) have found that protests against election fraud increase trust in government.

More relevant to our concerns, Wasow has found that proximity to violent protests has a number of effects that have conducted to decline in support for the Democratic party and may have been crucial for the electoral outcome of 1968 (Wasow, 2017). He applies Granger causality tests to longitudinal observational data. Andrews et al have also analyzed how civil right protests increased support among some white individuals, contingent upon contextual characteristics (Andrews et al., 2016).

Unobserved variables may complicate the findings of these analyses. Using natural experiments. Young has analyzed how repression is particularly effective influencing vote choice among the poor (Young, 2016). García-ponce & Pasquale (2015) analyze how exposure to pre-election violence influences support for the state through preference falsification voting patterns in Africa. They point that (2015:22) "a next step for this research agenda is to systematically observe how citizens respond to other political shocks – such as opposition protests, rallies, and demonstrations." Both Young and Ponce and Pasquale work with natural experiments carried out in the context of an authoritarian regime, so we add to this request the need to explore the use of violence in democratic political contexts.

2.2 Argument

Our general expectation is that the use of violent tactics will harm popular support for social movements. We follow Feinberg and collaborators' idea that violence makes it difficult for bystanders to identify with movement activists (Feinberg et al., 2017). Since collective identity is the most important predictor of collective action (Klandermans, 1984; van Zomeren et al., 2008), we expect that support for the action will also be conditioned by the extent to which a bystander can identify with those carrying out a protest. Violence may alienate would-be sympathisers because it is at odds with the ideal of how protest should take place in a democratic context. The silent majority would be put down by this mode of protest. As Snow et al. (2006) argues, movements success (and movement support) depends on the extent to which grievances (and tactics) are framed in a way that resonates with

mainstream beliefs and values. We expect violence to be unlikely to resonate well in democratic political contexts even in the presence of some demands that may be considered as legitimate.

Feinberg et al. (2017) already provide some support for this idea, using survey experiments where they manipulate the extremity of movements protest behaviour of different hypothetical groups. They find the expected negative effect of extremity on support, with identification with the movement as mediating variable. Our research contributes to this strand of research by providing evidence that is contextually located in a real case, and by exploring heterogeneous effects.

However, this average effect might cover important heterogeneities. We do not expect all citizens to react equally to violence. Whenever there are protests and violence associated, we often see competing frames of interpretation of the events, with opposing views on who is ultimately responsible for the violent outbreak (the police or the protesters), on the severity of the violence employed by one camp or the other and, explicitly or not, also on the legitimacy of the use of violence. The social movement and its supporters will tend to claim that their actions were a legitimate response to the authorities, while the status quo advocated will de-legitimize the movement by focusing on the violent tactics.

Therefore, in the aftermath of violent protests, we should expect citizens to be confronted with competing frames. The attitudinal implications of this situation are not perfectly understood. but the literature has identified a set of cognitive processes that condition how citizens receive and process information in these contexts. In the first place, the well-known mechanism of selective exposure predicts that citizens will be over-exposed to the frames that are aligned with their prior views. thus reducing exposure to contradicting information. Second, confirmation bias states that citizens will pay more attention to the messages that support their priors. and finally and motivated reasoning theory expects citizens to be driven by their predispositions in processing information, and may "ignore or devalue contrary information, bias the perception of credibility, or overlook important factors" (Taber et al., 2001).

The implications of this perspective for the attitudinal implications of protest violence, therefore, are more nuanced than the general expectation of a negative effect. Even if we assume a general dislike towards violence, depending on citizens' prior predispositions towards the movement, their effects of violent tactics on support shall be different. If we classify citizens along a continuum of support for the movement, we can distinguish between core supporters, weak supporters, indifferent, and opposers. For each of these groups we might lay out different expectations. Opposers will be exposed, and willing to receive negative information on the movement, so

we expect the outbreak of violence to negatively affect their attitudes towards the movement, fostering rejection. However, there might be some floor effects: if their attitudes are very negative to start with, the additional impact of the violent tactics might be small or negligible. On the other side of the spectrum, core supporters will tend to be exposed to the movements' interpretation of the events, and therefore we expect the impact on them to be generally minimal. Even if they dislike violence in general, they might be shielded from the negative effect by the processes of selective exposure and motivated reasoning. The ambivalent and neutral segments of the public opinion

H1 Violence is expected to have a negative impact on popular support for protest movements

H2 The effect will be stronger for weak supporters of the movement, and more reduced/null for core supporters and opposers

3 Empirics

3.1 The case: 15M movement in Barcelona and the 2016 Gracia Riots

In October 2011 as a follow up of a protest against the eviction of four dwellings, a group of people occupied a disaffected former bank office in a lively and commercial street of Gràcia, a central neighbourhood of Barcelona. Soon after, about 30 or 40 people started to develop a "free place" project, without state or private property, in which different social activities where carried out (food banks, free shop, library). The place was called "Bank expropiat" (expropriated bank), Following the decentralisation of the 15M (initially only at the city's main square) the Gràcia local assembly met there too.

The owner of the place, the savings bank *Catalunya Caixa*, tried to recover the premise suing the occupants in 2013, but abandoned de civil procedure and in 2014 to sell the place. The new owner did not continue with the judicial process because, as it was later to be known, the government of Barcelona, headed by mayor Trias (CiU) had been paying him a rent of 65,000 euros/year to avoid the political costs of an new eviction (that same year Trias had failed to achieve the eviction of another premise in a similar situation which had produced an intense and escalating wave of protests).

In 2015 Barcelona en Comú won the local elections. This platform, headed by anti-

eviction movement Ada Colau, was composed by a number of left-wing movements and parties including *Podemos*, a political party that appears in 2014 in the Spanish political landscape with its roots in the 15M movement.

In January 2016 the government of Barcelona stops paying the rent to the legal owner of the Bank Expropiat. This produces a judicial eviction sentence that is carried out by the Catalan police on the 23 of May 2016. A campaign against this eviction started with a demonstration that very evening and continued in the days to follow. The campaign included social media mobilization actions, stickers and posters, and peaceful demonstrations. But soon evolved into full-scale rioting, including clashes with the police, erection of fire barricades and property destruction. Dozens of protestors and anti-riots policemen were wounded during the riots, that lasted at peak intensity for four nights. Protest actions continued for two weeks.

The 15M has been a highly popular movement in Spain, with levels of support from public opinion that were over 65% at the time of its birth (Anduiza et al., 2012). Housing has been a relevant issue in the organizational precursors of the 15M (V de Vivienda). While these riots were more about the use of this specific space and gentrification than about housing, the conflict had a root on housing and eviction issues. Housing is an important concern for the residents of Barcelona: 37% mention it among the first 3 most important problems. More than 10% of protest events in Barcelona have to do with this issue (Cristancho, Anduiza and González 2017). This means public opinion is in principle sympathetic towards the 15M and concerned about housing issues in Barcelona. This makes our test of a negative effect of violent protest harder to pass that if it related to an issue or movement that raised little public support.

3.2 Identification Strategy: A Natural Quasi-Experiment

We exploit the unexpected occurrence of a series of riots connected to a local group of the 15-M movement during the fieldwork of a face-to-face survey in Barcelona as a natural quasi-experiment that allows us to estimate the causal effect of the tactical shift on citizens' support for the movement.

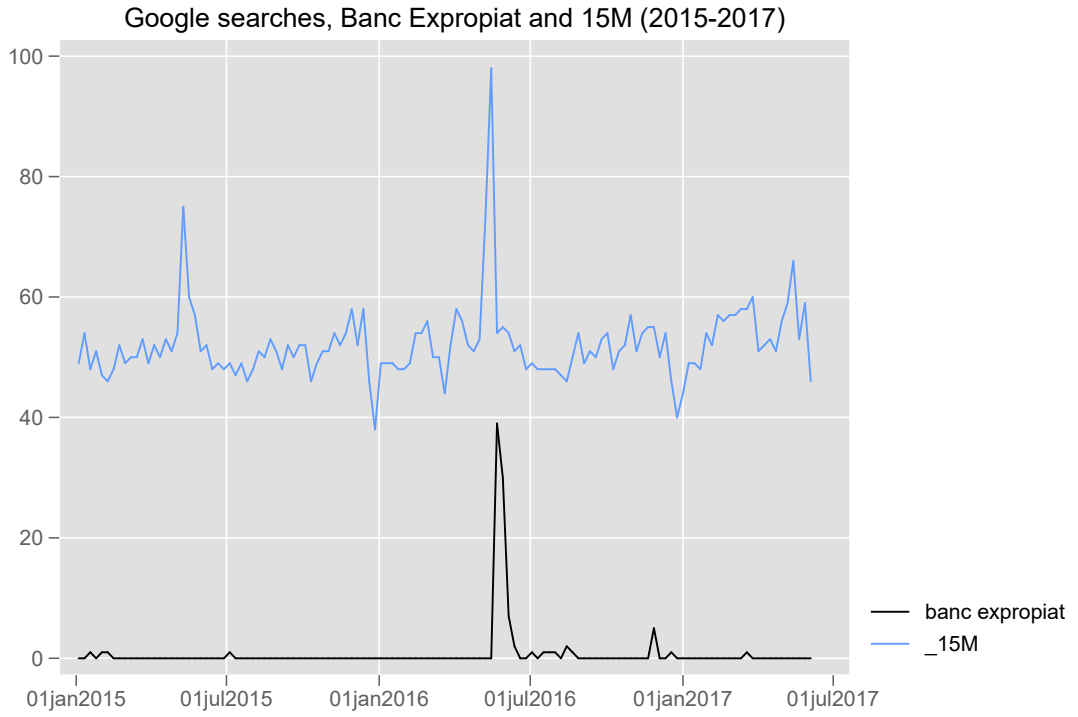
Using unexpected events during survey fieldworks is an identification strategy increasingly used to address a number of questions. These events range from terrorist attacks (Legewie, 2013) to corruption scandals (Ares & Hernández, 2016), protest (Frye & Borisova, 2016) or state repression (García-ponce & Pasquale, 2015).

This strategy allows for an identification of the causal effect of the event on a given outcome under a common set of assumptions, the first one is, of course, ignorability.

Since assignment to treatment and control groups is not random neither controlled by the researchers, and correlates perfectly with time in which the survey was administered, it might correlate with observable characteristics of the respondents related to the fieldwork organization and respondents' reachability. In this case, the research team selected over 150 starting points across the city (in a stratified random selection of addresses), from which random routes started. The fieldwork company decided the order in which the routes would be followed. We address the imbalances through the use of controls and fixed-effects.

Of course, for the estimate to be interpreted as causal, the excludability assumption must hold as well. In this case, it means that the day of the survey only affects the outcome through the actual treatment of interest (exposure to violent tactics). This requires that no other potential events occurred during the period. A close reading of those days' newspapers do not seem to suggest any potential threat to the exclusion restriction. Finally, we should expect citizens to have been aware of the event. This assumption, that can be regarded as compliance, should be satisfied if the event sparks sufficient media attention. While we do not have direct evidence, we can use the google searches as an indicator of excludability and compliance. Figure 1 shows how the events sparked a peak of public interest, as measured by google searches, in both the 'banc expropiat' itelf and the 15M movement.

Figure 1: Google searches



3.3 Data

The data was collected in the context of the Recercaixa Project 'Pathways to Political Inclusion' by the company GESOP. Our data come from a survey that was conducted between May 9th and June 9th 2016 on a sample of 1500 respondents, older than 18, living in Barcelona. The stratified sample is based on 60 zones, corresponding to the 73 neighborhoods in the city that result from grouping those with less than 8000 inhabitants. Distribution of the interviews responds to a proportional allocation, through a random selection of non-contiguous census tracts within each neighborhood. Within this census tracts, households were randomly selected and within the household, the respondent was selected according to a quota-system based on age (18-29, 30-44, 45-59, $>$ 60), gender (men-women) and city district. The survey was devoted to political participation, with a set of questions on various forms of engagement, attitudes towards social movements and a set of socio-demographic controls.

The outcome variable (support for the 15M movement) was elicited through a direct, dichotomous question on whether the respondent supports the movement. The treatment is measured as being interviewed before ($T = 0$) of after ($T = 1$) the first night of riots.

Ideally, the moderators (support status) would be measured pre-treatment. However, we do not have a pre-survey, so we only can rely on indirect measures that, while providing us with information on the general attitude toward the movement, are not likely to be affected by the treatment. In this case, we will use both party identification and ideology. There are no statistically significant differences in these variables between the treatment and control group, with one exception: there are less weak supporters in the treatment group. The difference, however, disappears after controlling for age, gender and neighborhood pointing to the fact that this is more a compositional effect than a change due to the treatment. While this might be a concern, we also use ideology. that does not show any change whatsoever.

3.4 Results

Table 1 shows the raw data on percentages of support for the 15M movement before and after the start of the riots, and split by support groups. The mere comparison of proportions shows a significant decrease in support for the movement after the tactical shift, of over 7.6 percentage points. The drop in support is especially strong among the opposers and the non-partisans, while it is not significant for the core supporters.

Table 1: Support for the 15M movement

	Core	Weak	*Opposers*	Non-Partisans	Total	N
Control	91.5	66.8	38.3	56.8	65.2	649
Treatment	91.4	51.1	27.6	51.4	57.6	594
Difference	-0.1	-15.7***	-10.7**	-5.4	-7.6***	1243

* p<.1. ** p<.05. *** p<.01

In table 2 we present our main results. The estimated Average Treatment Effect across our sample ranges between 6 and 7 percentage points. depending on the specification. The result is robust to the inclusion of individual controls as well as neighborhood fixed effects, and to the use of a Linear Probability Model and logit specification. This means that those respondents interviewed after the first day of riots were around 6-7% less likely to support the 15M movement, on average.

Table 2: Average Treatment Effect. main results

	LPM			Logit		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Treatment	-0.08**	-0.07***	-0.06*	-0.32***	-0.39***	-0.37**
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.12)	(0.14)	(0.19)
Controls		YES	YES		YES	YES
Neighborhood FE		YES			YES	
(Pseudo)R^2	0.006	0.219	0.274	.004	.188	.239
N	1243	1168	1168	1243	1168	1155

* p<.1. ** p<.05. *** p<.01

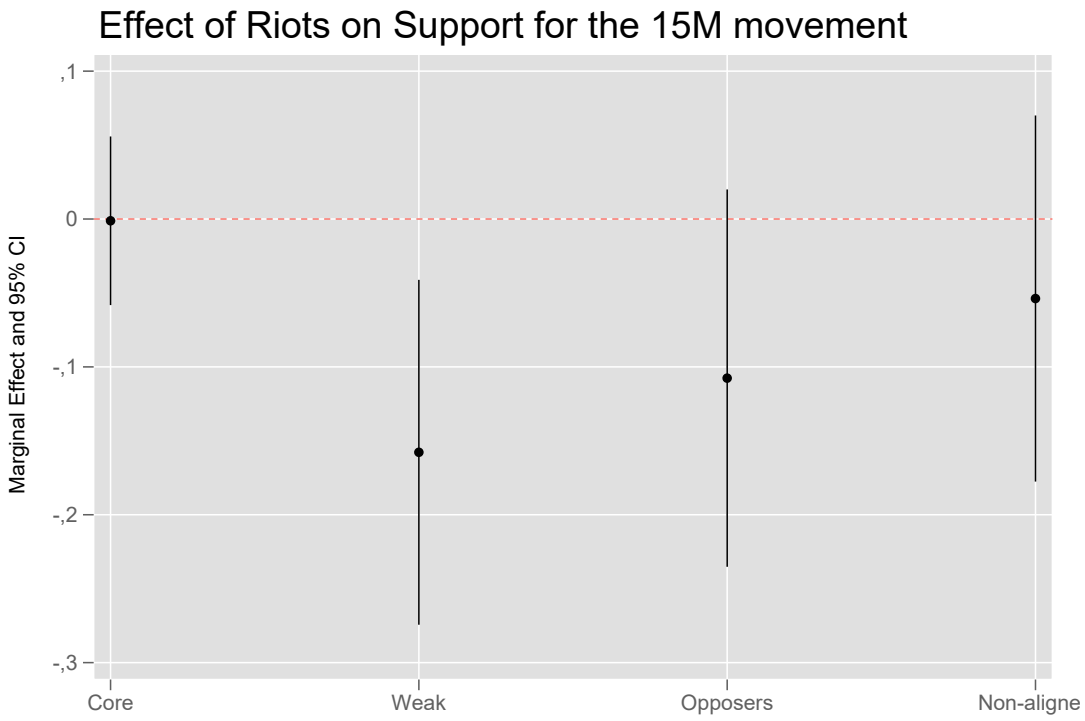
Controls include age. gender. ideology and partisanship

We expect this effect to be more pronounced for the weak supporters of the movement. whom we expect to be more sensitive to the use of specific tactics. In order to test this argument, we need to measure predisposition to support the movement in a way that is not affected by the treatment. Since for the treatment group we cannot rely on a pre-treatment measure. we used two different operationalizations of the inclination to support the movement that are both theoretically and empirically not likely to be affected by the treatment, based on partisanship and ideology.

The first one is based on party identification. We coded as core supporters the identifiers of the two parties that explicitly supported the movement (the anti-capitalist pro-independence *CUP* and the leftist *Podemos* and their Catalan associates). Weak supporters are the partisans of the two center-left parties, the pro-independence *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* and the Catalan branch of the Spanish Socialist Party, PSC. Finally, we coded as opposers the followers of right-wing and center-right parties (PP, *Ciudadanos* and CDC) and non-aligned those that did not express a party identification.

Figure 2 shows how the effect of the riots is null for the core supporters, and very strong for the weak supporters: their level of support decreased in almost 16 percentage points following the riots. There is a negative, albeit not statistically significant effect for the opposers, and no effect at all for the non-aligned.

Figure 2: Treatment Effects, by Partisanship



4 Conclusions

Social movements have a wide tactical repertoire at their disposal. The choice of one tactic over the other might respond to a varied set of concerns and incentives, related to the state repression, their activists' beliefs and commitment, their risk-acceptance or to strategic calculations on the likely impact of each path. Research on protest and social movements increasingly converges towards the finding that non-violent protest movements tend to be, on the long run, more successful in reaching their goals and promoting policy change than violent ones.

In this paper we have explored a likely mechanism through which this might be the case: the erosion of popular support. Taking advantage of a natural quasi-experiment, due to the unexpected set of riots occurred in Barcelona during the fieldwork of our survey, we estimate a negative average effect of the violent shift of the 15M movement of about 6 percentage points.

Perhaps more interestingly, we also find important heterogeneous effects. Weak supporters of the movement, together with opposers, are those that are more negatively affected by the violence, while core supporters do not change their levels of support for the movement. This points to a situation in which, through the use of violent tactics, social movements might keep their core bases of support but risk loosing the sympathy of less committed citizens, alienate those which display lower support levels, and increase antagonism of those that already are distant from the movement.

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Appendices

A Balance

The treatment assignment in this case is not under the researchers' control and not produced by a random process. Therefore, unbalances on observables might occur and do occur. Table 3 shows the treatment and control moments of the distribution across a range of variables. The results of the balance tests guided the selection of covariates included in the analyses. The main, statistically significant unbalance found is related to the share of weak supporters in the treatment group, higher than in the control group. There are also marginally significant imbalances in gender composition and latitude.

Table 3: Balance

	Control			Treatment		
	mean	variance	skewness	mean	variance	skewness
Weak Supporters	0.24	0.18	1.22	0.28	0.20	0.98
Opposers	0.20	0.16	1.52	0.21	0.17	1.389
Non-partisans	0.30	0.21	0.86	0.25	0.18	1.19
Age	49.82	306.4	0.15	48.5	353.5	0.2
Ideology	3.60	4.6	0.24	3.76	5.35	0.32
Gender	0.54	0.25	-0.182	0.49	0.25	3.77
Knowledge	1.32	0.98	0.15	1.26	1.01	0.22
Gracia	0.08	0.07	3.10	0.08	0.07	3.18
lat	41.40	0.00	0.14	41.41	0.00	0.30
lon	2.17	0.00	0.33	2.17	0.00	-0.23

B Entropy balancing

In this section we apply the data pre-processing method known as entropy balancing, as described by Hainmueller (2012) and Hainmueller & Xu (2013). Entropy balancing produces a set of weights that balance the treatment and control distributions on a vector of covariates. Crucially, it balances them in the first, second and third moments of the distribution. Table 4 compares treatment and control after the balancing, showing full balance.

Applying the entropy balancing weights, we can recover a very similar estimate of the treatment effect: $b = -0.06, p = 0.021$, so the unbalances on observables were not leading to biased estimates.

Table 4: Post-weighting balance

	Control			Treatment		
	mean	variance	skewness	mean	variance	skewness
Weak Supporters	0.24	0.18	1.22	0.24	0.18	1.22
Opposers	0.20	0.16	1.52	0.20	0.16	1.52
Non-partisans	0.30	0.21	0.86	0.30	0.21	0.86
Age	49.82	306.40	0.15	49.82	306.4	0.15
Ideology	3.6	4.63	0.24	3.6	4.63	0.24
Gender	0.54	0.25	-0.18	0.54	0.25	-0.18
Pol. Knowledge	1.32	0.98	0.15	1.32	0.98	0.15
Gracia	0.08	0.07	3.1	0.08	0.07	3.1
lat	41.4	0.001	0.14	41.4	0.001	0.16
lon	2.16	0.001	0.33	2.16	0.001	0.33

C Full tables with interaction

Table 5: Conditional Average Treatment Effects

	(1)	(2)
	ols1	logit1
Treatment	0.00	0.04
	(0.05)	(0.44)
Weak Supporters	-0.21***	-1.61***
	(0.05)	(0.34)
Opposers	-0.35***	-2.15***
	(0.06)	(0.38)
Non-partisans	-0.22***	-1.63***
	(0.05)	(0.36)
Treatment×Weak	-0.12*	-0.56
	(0.07)	(0.49)
Treatment×Opposers	-0.10	-0.56
	(0.08)	(0.53)
Treatment×Non-partisans	-0.05	-0.27
	(0.07)	(0.50)
Constant	1.07***	3.51***
	(0.09)	(0.57)
R-squared	0.276	0.24
N	1168	1155

* p<.1. ** p<.05. *** p<.01

Controls include age. gender. ideology

Reference category: Core

D Robustness

D.1 Gràcia effect

If our treatment is capturing exposure to the riots, and therefore we are indeed estimating the causal effect of the use of violence on support for the 15-M movement, we should expect the treatment to have a stronger effect on those that were more exposted to it, namely the residents of the district of Gràcia. We have 94 Gràcia residents in our sample, 52 interviewed before the riots and 42 after the beginning of the violent outbreak in the neighborhood. In table 6 we present the results of a model in which treatment is interacted with residence in Gràcia. We use the weights produced by the entropy balancing to keep balance in observables. The interaction term is statistically significant, and indeed the marginal effects for Gràcia predict a drop of support of 26 percentage points, far stronger than the 5 points for the rest of the city.

Table 6: Gràcia Local Average Treatment Effect

	(1)
Treatment	-0,05*
	(0,03)
Gràcia	0,04
	(0,07)
Treatment×Gràcia	-0,22**
	(0,10)
Constant	0,66***
	(0,02)
R-squared	0,010
N	1168

* p<.1, ** p<.05, *** p<.01

Estimates after entropy balancing

D.2 Alternative operationalization of treatment

In the main text we have used a dichotomous operationalization of the treatment variable, that divides the sample between those that were interviewed before and after the first night of riots. However, the conflict extended over four nights, so the *treatment* is not as sharp and the effects might not be immediate. To account for that, in table 7 we use two dummy variables: one for those interviewed during the riots (N=98) and one for those interviewed after the riots (N=631). Results show that the effect is concentrated after the end of the rioting week, which might point to

the fact that it took some time to materialize. The heterogeneous effects, displayed in figure 3 follow a similar pattern, and show how for the weak supporters they were already in place during the rioting week, and for the opposers and non-aligned. they only emerged after the three nights of riots.

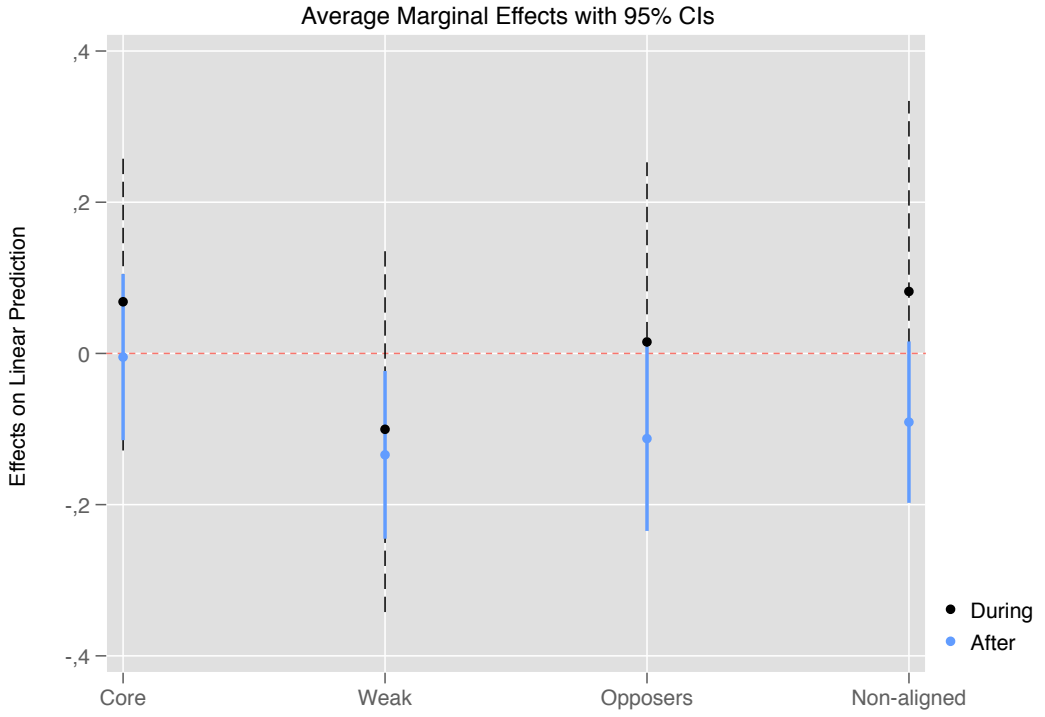
Table 7: Average Treatment Effects

	(1)	(2)	(3)
During	0.08	0.05	0.01
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.06)
After	-0.10***	-0.09***	-0.07**
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)
Controls	NO	YES	YES
Neighborhood FE	NO	NO	YES
R^2	0.012	0.223	0.275
N	1243	1168	1168

* p<.1. ** p<.05. *** p<.01

Controls include age. gender. ideology and partisanship

Figure 3: Treatment effects. by partisanship

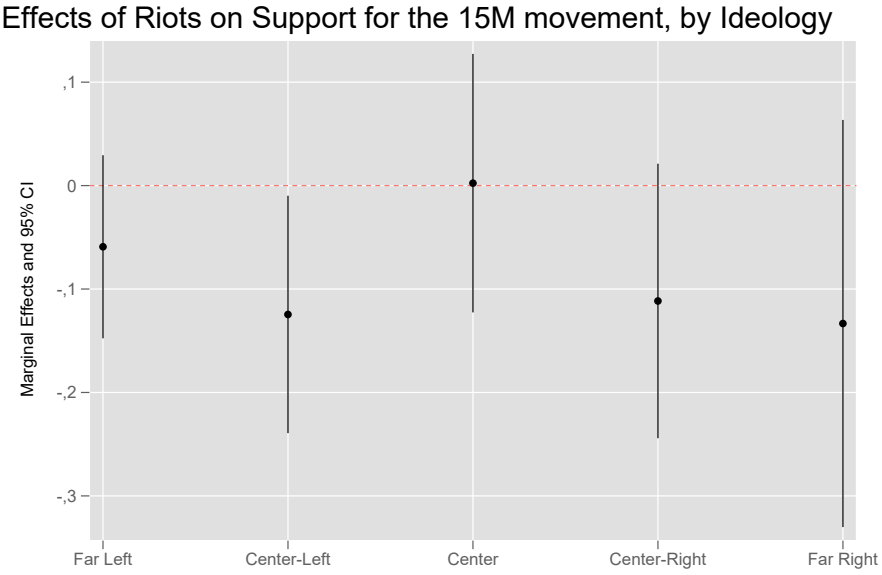


D.3 Alternative moderator

Figure 4 shows the results with an alternative operationalization, that uses self-reported ideology as a measure of predisposition towards the movement. In a similar

way than in the case of partisanship. we observe how the effect is concentrated especially among those at the center-left, which we can identify as the weak-supporters of the movement. Those located at the far-left show no statistically significant decrease in support, while those at the right show, again, a substantial decrease that gets close to statistical significance.

Figure 4: Treatment Effects, by Ideology



D.4 Placebo tests: Alternative outcomes

To lend additional credibility to our causal identification strategy, in this section we present a set of placebo tests. Following the same model specification as in the main set of results, we show how the treatment (exposure to the riots) does not affect support for other social movements, not linked to the riots: the pro-independence National Assembly of Catalonia (ANC) or the anti-eviction movement PAH.

E Mechanisms

Table 8: Placebo test

	(1) ANC	(2) PAH
Treatment	0,04	-0,01
	(0,03)	(0,04)
Constant	0,28***	0,46***
	(0,05)	(0,04)
Controls	YES	YES
Neighborhood FE	YES	YES
R-squared	0,178	0,179
N	1351	1351

* p<.1. ** p<.05. *** p<.01

Controls include age. gender. ideology and partisanship