

The electoral consequences of political disaffection in a volatile context: the case of Spain (2014).

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Abstract: During the last couple of years, political disaffection has become a concept of widespread use to explain the changes seen in the Spanish political space. Disaffection has even been used as one of the explanatory mechanisms for the emergence of new parties as Podemos or Ciudadanos. The goal of this work is to explore empirically whether political disaffection is playing a relevant role in reordering the Spanish's electoral preferences and in which sense. We test two hypotheses: (a) whether disaffected voters tend to vote for mainstream parties as Casajuana and Sánchez-Cuenca suggested or (b) whether the new political parties are channelling political disaffection and these voters are choosing these parties in the last European Parliament election. Our findings show that disaffection has played a relevant role in shaping voters' decision, compared to critical citizens, the disaffected prefer mainstream parties. However, they are more likely to vote for these parties when compared to citizens that are supportive of the political system.

Key words: political disaffection, party choice, vote, crisis, new political parties.

1. Introduction

The last elections that have taken place in Spain, namely the 2014 European Parliament Election, the 2015 Regional Election in Andalusia and the 2015 Local and Regional Election, share the shock they have produced in the political landscape. New parties like Podemos (Ps) or existing parties that have reinvented themselves like Ciudadanos (Cs) have attracted many voters, changing the distribution of power. At least they have tried to, in what has been named as “the New Polity” (“*la Nueva Política*”, in Spanish). Different voices from a variety of backgrounds

have attempted to explain these changes as the result of the widespread disaffection that Spanish citizens felt regarding political institutions and elites.

The effects of the economic crisis, the rising unemployment, budgetary rigour and numerous scandals of political corruption have been placed at the heart of this rampant disaffection and the changes perceived in citizens' electoral behaviour. Political disaffection has been used to describe all sorts of scenarios from alienation of the public vis-à-vis political elites to a feeling of disappointment that pushes citizens to place their trust in different, new actors. What is political disaffection precisely? How does it actually impact citizens' electoral behaviour? The concept of political disaffection has become of such widespread use that it is unclear its analytical power.

This ambivalence is present both in the media and the general public, and in the academia. Although there is not much published yet linking the current context to disaffection, consolidated academics have offered some preliminary explanations in political blogs. For instance, in a conversation between Ignacio Sánchez-Cuenca and Carles Casajuana (Casajuana and Sánchez-Cuenca, 2013), a diplomat, they came to the conclusion that political disaffection meant distance and disengagement from politics. This feeling that materialized in the statement that "*all politicians are the same*", lead those voters "*to vote for the worst political option*", the same they had described as inefficient and corrupt. However, Ignacio Urquizu (Urquizu-Sancho, 2014) or Lluís Orriols (Orriols, 2015), in contrast, propose the complete opposite. New political forces are trying to build their political platforms by agitating disaffection and appealing to such voters by presenting themselves as a fresh choice. This thesis articulates around the idea that these parties build their appeal around the topics that triggered disaffection: corruption and the privileges of elites in times of budgetary rigour.

Political disaffection has long been a key part in the discussion over the relation between citizens and elites in any political system. Thus, the question we seek to explore in this paper builds on the paradoxical content that this concept has. Has disaffection played a role in citizens' party choice in the last European Parliament Elections?

This paper uses data from the Spanish subsample of the 8th Wave of the European Election Study (2014) to explore the role of political disaffection in such election. The contribution aims to be two-fold: on the one hand, introducing some clarity to the theoretical discussion, and, on the other, assessing the claims that all these changes are due to political disaffection. To what extent has disaffection been a relevant force in shaping citizens' electoral behaviour? In which sense has it driven such behaviour? Preliminary findings show that disaffection, in its sense of political alienation and distance from the polity, has been relevant in the last European Parliament election. Furthermore, disaffected citizens were more likely than others to vote for mainstream parties

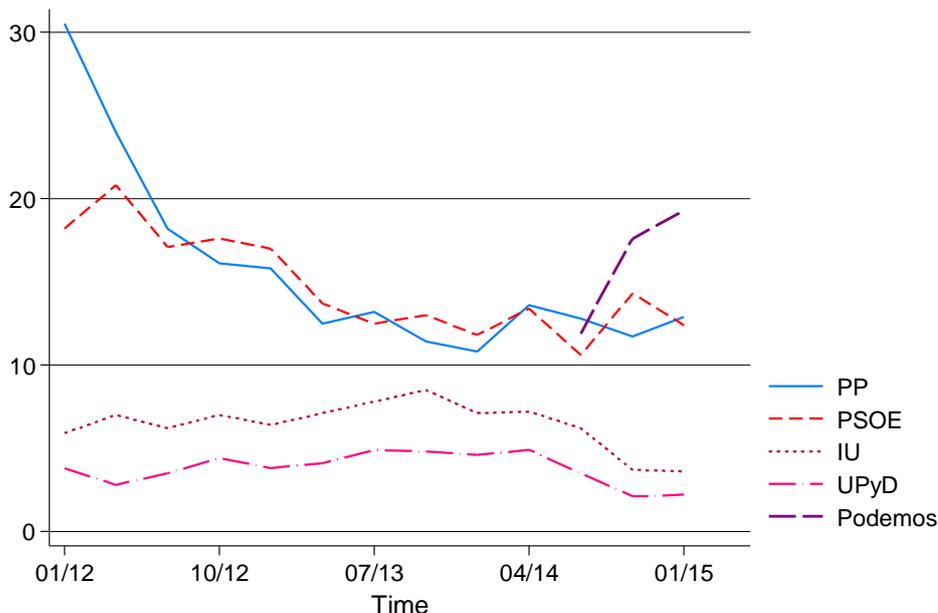
although not the most likely. Critical citizens, however, were more likely to vote for smaller parties or new options than disaffected citizens.

This paper has been structured into five sections. The first will deal with the theoretical framework, definition and operationalization. The second, introduces how political disaffection has related to political disaffection to introduce the hypotheses. Third, we discuss the research design and analytical strategy. Fourth, the hypotheses were tested and results described. Finally, some closing remarks and theoretical implications will be described.

2. The concept of political disaffection

The results of the last European Parliament election in May 2014 pointed to a restructuring of electoral preferences amongst Spanish citizens. Podemos won eight percent of the votes (1.250.000 votes) and five MEPs. For the first time in the history of Spanish democracy, the two mainstream parties together did not get 50 percent of the votes. In addition, surveys acquired and unseen relevance as they pointed to an earthquake of the Spanish party system, from the imperfect bipartism (two big parties and some smaller forces) to a multiparty scenario. This change was not trivial, for starters, it could radically alter government formation and lead to a period where coalition governments became the rule and not the exception. In this scenario of speculation, surveys were showing a constant increase in vote intention for Ps and Cs as figure 1 shows.

Figure 1. Evolution of electoral preferences between 2012 and 2015.



Source: Own-elaboration from CIS Barometers.

The following election, the regional election in Andalusia supported this new scenario of fragmentation. Ps performed well with a 15 percent of the votes, although not as well as some polls have predicted. The big surprise was the entry of Cs, a Catalan party that had decided to jump into national politics and in the first election in which they ran outside of Catalonia won 9 percent of the votes. Although the Socialists won that election, they did not have a majority that allowed them to form government, which they finally did with the support of Cs. A similar situation occurred nation-wide after the local and regional elections that took place two months after. In what has been called “the New Polity”, government formation has required pacts and coalitions in a fragmented scenario. It is relevant to say here that pre-electoral surveys have been able to foresee with a reasonable degree of accuracy what the new scenario would be, in spite of the lack of baselines. All in all, the parties that the Spanish seem to have favoured in the last round of elections are the two traditional mainstream parties, Partido Popular (PP) and Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) and two less mainstream, although they would like to become so, Ciudadanos (Cs) and Podemos (Ps).

2.1. The concept of political disaffection.

Disaffection is a term of widespread use in behavioural sciences such as psychology, education or political science. However, as it will be developed in this section, it has been used with several meanings that are not always compatible.

Political disaffection has been used by political scientists to reflect a feeling of *distance* between citizens and the political system (Di Palma, 1970: 31). Political attitudes like low interest, distrust, inefficacy, disconformity, impotence, frustration and rejection are the most representative of a disaffected citizenry (Gunther et al., 2007; Montero et al., 1998; Pérez-Nievas et al., 2013). Other studies have also included political expressions such as cynicism, inefficacy and distrust regarding the political process (Abramson, 1972; Long, 1980a; Pinkleton et al., 1998; Torcal, 2006: 2). In substantive terms, disaffected individuals seem to be captured in a vicious circle: they show low levels of support towards the political system but they do not picture themselves as having a role in changing it (Aarts et al., 2014: 202-203). In other words, political disaffection combines a sense of distrust in political institutions with a feeling of distance from the whole political system (Citrin et al., 1975).

Most of the works on political disaffection support this idea of bidimensionality of the concept. It is not just distrust, other citizens may be distrusting and still feel that it is in their hands to make changes. The crucial part lies in the combination with a feeling of distance and lack of capacity to change a reality they dislike, relating disaffection with discontent, rejection and external inefficacy. Research on political disaffection is closely linked to political efficacy, define as “*the*

feeling that individual political action does have, or can have, an impact upon the political process, that is, that it is worthwhile to perform one's civic duties" (Campbell et al., 1954: 187). Further research found that this concept was also bidimensional, consisting of internal and external political efficacy¹. External efficacy is here understood as the "*beliefs about the responsiveness of governmental authorities and institutions to citizen demands*" whereas internal efficacy stands for "*beliefs about one's own competence to understand, and to participate effectively in, politics (...)*" (Niemi et al., 1991). Following this line of reasoning, political disaffection has been related not only to a lack of support but also to a lack of internal efficacy, a lack of interest in politics and, even, a certain hopelessness (Long, 1980b: 38). In fact, Martín and van Deth (2007: 303) define political disaffection in terms of the opposite to political involvement. Our own preliminary analyses support the bidimensionality of the concept of political disaffection (full factor scores can be found in table A2 in the annex). All in all, we find theoretical and analytical support to construct political disaffection as the combination of distrust and lack of political interest.

The implication of this approach to political disaffection is that it is one of the different ways in which citizens relate to the political system. At the same time that this disaffected citizens are identified, there may be others that, even if they share this feeling of discontent or distrust, demand a *greater role in the political process* (Aarts et al., 2014). These citizens should display low levels of trust combined with high levels of political involvement. In addition, two more types of citizens could be expected: citizens that are comfortable with the political system as it is, trusting it without becoming involved, and other citizens that have the skills and education to trust politics but also be engaged in them (Pérez-Nievas et al., 2013).

Last but not least, political disaffection has been considered as a trait of the political culture of Southern European countries (Montero et al., 1998). Resultingly, political disaffection is stable in time because it is transmitted from parents to their children. New generations' learning into politics includes learning the attitudes related to political disaffection, which, in turn, explain the different levels observed across countries and their relative stability throughout time.

2.2. How to measure political disaffection.

Political disaffection has been approached in different ways, not only in terms of the content awarded to the concept, but also in terms of measurement and operationalization. The most complex measurements require a good range of variables, whereas the simplest rely on the combination of two relevant dimensions.

¹ Morrell (Morrell, 2003) provides a complete overview of research and measurement strategies of political efficacy.

Montero and his co-authors (Montero et al., 1997, 1998) produce a factor variable that results from the analysis of a variety of the dimensions that have been mentioned in the previous section: inefficacy, distrust, political interest, feeling of political apathy... The replication of this strategy with the data used in the paper show that two dimensions rise of the combinations of these variables (see table A2 in the annex). In a nutshell, these dimensions group along two main axis along with what the literature proposes: distrust or distance from the political system and lack of involvement or low levels of interest. To operationalize individuals this way, we would need to predict the factor score for each dimension and combine them into a new variable that presents the possible relations.

However, Montero (2013) in a more recent work proposes an alternative operationalization that takes into account the previous work but uses a simpler strategy. Building on the bidimensionality of political disaffection they select the two most representative variables of each dimension to construct their categorization: trust in political institutions and interest in politics. The result is the same table with the four possible relations (see Table 1), however, we have opted for this approach because we deemed it to be more parsimonious and the results were directly interpretable, task that became more complex with the factor scores. It could be argued that satisfaction with democracy offers a better evaluation of how citizens feel regarding the political system, however, this dimension does not fully represent the feeling of distance in the way that trust in Parliament, the chosen operationalization, does. Although close, these dimensions are not interchangeable (Montero et al., 1997). Furthermore, Martín and van Deth (Martín and van Deth, 2007) also favour such an approach when they define political disaffection as the expression *in negative terms* of political involvement.

Table 1. Typology of citizens

	Interest in politics	
Trust in Parliament	Uninterested	Interested
Trustful	Cive	Deferent
Distrustful	Critical	Disaffected

Source: (Montero et al., 2013).

This typology offers further advantages because it allows us to differentiate the several kinds of citizens that we expect to find, facilitating comparison. It also allows us to connect the studies of political disaffection with another body of literature that should not be neglected, that on support for democratic regimes and the role of critical citizens (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000; Norris, 1999, 2011). Since the 1990s there has been an erosion of trust in political institutions and a decrease in political support for democracy (Norris, 1999; Pharr and Putnam, 2000) that has been tried to explain using two different strategies. The first one focuses on a *positive approach*,

defending the emergence of a large group of better-educated citizens, more skilled and critical, and thus, more critical with the functioning and outcomes of political systems. The second one, on the contrary, is called the *negative approach*. It points out that the lack of support is found instead amongst those less educated because they are pushed to the margins of the economic order and the dissolution of social links dispossesses them of the skills to deal with increasingly complex political systems (Armingeon and Schädel, 2014).

Both possibilities are not contradictory as their authors hold, rather they can be found as complementary. Those with higher levels of education can be critical because they have the skills to comprehend their political environment, whereas those who do not have the skills become mistrusting because they do not understand the evolution of such environment and fear being left out (Mishler and Rose, 2001). Back to our classification of critical and disaffected citizens, they both share the distrust regarding the political system, however they differ in their levels of political interest. While critical citizens display high levels of political interest, are involved in protest and tend to participate in protests (Dalton et al., 2000: 60); the disaffected have low political interest and decline all sorts of non-electoral participation. Given that they both accept taking part in elections, in which sense do they differ? The following section introduces some theoretical expectations in this sense.

3. Electoral consequences.

As we pointed out at the beginning of this paper, political disaffection has been widely mentioned as a key element in explaining the restructuring of Spanish citizens' voting behaviour. However, it is not so common to find academic works that take political disaffection as an explanatory factor of voting behaviour. The nature of this attitudinal orientation, understood as a feeling of distance and rejection of politics, lines this explanation with other cultural approaches. Political disaffection has been part of the political culture of Southern Europe (Montero et al., 1998) and new political generations learn into this attitude, which would explain its stability across time and space. However, its components may suffer variations due to contextual shocks such as the economic crisis or agitation by a political party, which activates its explanatory potential that otherwise remains somehow dormant.

Even if it is in a different political system, some researchers have looked into the relationship between party choice and political disaffection. For instance, Magalhaes (Magalhães, 2005) test the relation between different forms of political participation and disaffection in Portugal. He concludes that there are differences in terms of cognitive mobilization, non-conventional participation and electoral participation, but these differences do not translate into differences in

party choice (Magalhães, 2005). Confronting the vote for Bloco de Esquerda and government-seeking parties he does not find differences. Furthermore, women with low levels of education, low income and living in small towns are the most likely to define themselves as disaffected (Magalhães, 2005). Disaffected voters not only seem unsophisticated but they cannot be identified as less supportive of the statu quo than other individuals.

Complementary to these studies, the political behaviour of critical citizens, understood as those who distrust politics but feel empowered to face them and change the statu quo has largely been examined. These citizens can be considered as sophisticated because they do not rely so much on the traditional shortcuts such as ideology or party identification. These citizens evaluate party supply by themselves and they are able to choose the political option that best suits them at a given moment and context, not feeling obliged to stick to it in the following election (Dalton, 2013). Subsequently, if they thought that all politicians are the same, they would be expected to look into less mainstream options that offer a change, that is, smaller parties on the margins of the party system that are more radical and less constrained by the promises of government (Freire et al., 2014; Maravall and Sánchez-Cuenca, 2008; Whitefield and Rohrschneider, 2009). As they do not declare a strong party identification, they are expected to switch parties more freely between the available options (Dalton et al., 2000). If this trend were to be confirmed for the Spanish case, two possible scenarios could rise. On the one hand, critical citizens could be opting for less mainstream parties such as Izquierda Unida (IU) or Unión, Progreso y Democracia (UPyD) ; on the other hand, they could actually chose a bigger break and chose the new political options such as Ps or Cs, given that their voting decision is not anchored by long term factors such as party identification.

We have assumed that disaffected voters are the opposite of critical citizens in terms of their individual characteristics, so we expect the disaffected to have higher chances of voting for the statu quo, understood as mainstream parties, remaining more constant and loyal in their party choice. As we described at the very beginning of this paper, outside journals, political scientists have a lively debate over the sense in which disaffection drives voting behaviour (Casajuana and Sánchez-Cuenca, 2013; Orriols, 2015; Urquizu-Sancho, 2014). To what extent did disaffection shape citizens' party choice in the last European Parliament election?

The two main trends in their responses have shaped the hypothesis that guide our analyses (summarized in fig. 2):

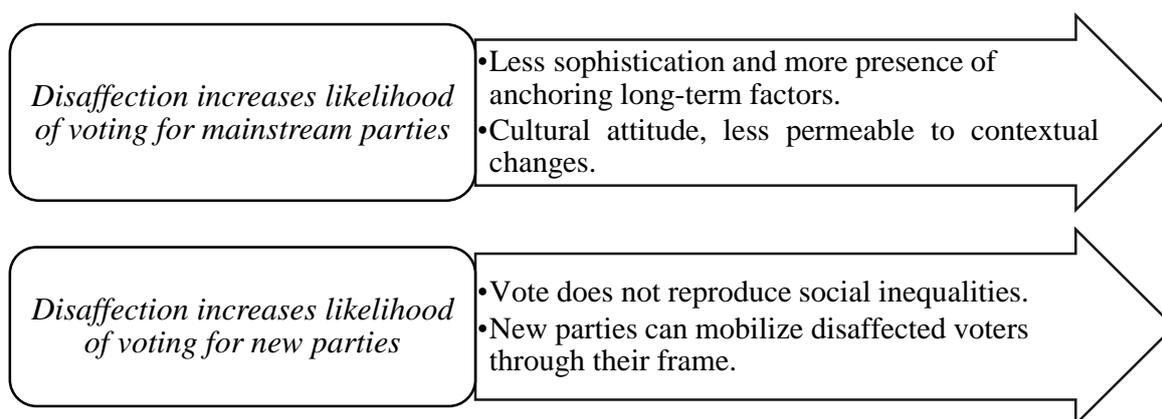
- i. H1: *Disaffection increases the likelihood of voting for mainstream parties* (Casajuana and Sánchez-Cuenca, 2013).

Are disaffected citizens voting for the worst political options? To answer this question we first need to operationalize this “worst political options”, specially due to the normative implications of this statement. In this case, we have chosen to understand the statement as a provocative way of referring to voting for the statu quo, for those mainstream parties whose performance keeps them dissatisfied, but that they still feel linked to. In a way, these citizens consider all politicians the same, reflecting not only a feeling of political cynicism but also of alienation and inefficacy because they are unable to break with this situation. This would go in line with Sánchez-Cuenca’s (Aguilar and Sánchez-Cuenca, 2005; Barreiro and Sánchez-Cuenca, 2012; Sánchez-Cuenca, 2008) previous findings about the mechanisms of accountability in complex political arenas, where it would make sense that disaffected voters stuck to the political options they are aware of. These voters are somehow uninterested and apathetical towards the political system. Thus, if they are not willing to engage with it, it seems unlikely that they will be willing to bet on any change of the statu quo, even if they are dissatisfied with it (Orriols, 2013). They are less sophisticated, so they should need long terms factors to help them choose, because no involvement implies that they do not *pay attention* to politics (Martín and van Deth, 2007). Indeed, people with lower levels of cognitive mobilization, as the disaffected were described in the previous section, should be more reliant and loyal to previous choices. Another argument to take into consideration is that disaffection should increase the probability of voting for the traditional big parties insofar as a cultural syndrome not permeable to political context (Montero et al., 1998).

ii. H2: Disaffection increases the likelihood of voting for new parties.

In contrast, Ignacio Urquizu defended that the disaffected are more likely to vote for anti-establishment parties. Looking at the recent development of events, Cs and even Ps, are hard to describe as anti-stablishment parties. However, at the time of the European Parliament election they did present themselves as a radical change to the existing practices and ways. Although disaffected citizens are said to be less skilled and politically sophisticated, this should not be an obstacle for them choosing these parties given the low cost attributed to voting (Anduiza Perea, 1999; Barreiro, 2004). Besides, disaffection has been described as one of the triggers of political mobilization (Bowler et al., 2007; Dalton et al., 2001). Disaffected citizens are discontented with the outcomes of their political systems, so it could also happen that they voiced this discontent by choosing one of the political offers that attempts to build its constituency on this issue. In this sense, Ps and Cs have tried to activate the issue by stirring the increasing distance between citizens and elites and the numerous cases of corruption that have affected the two main parties.

Figure 2. Summary of hypotheses and main arguments.



4. Research design, data and operationalization.

In this section we will describe the variables used in the regression models discussed in the following section. The data come from the Spanish subsample of the eighth wave of the European Election Study, conveyed in 2014.

a. Dependent variable

The research question states fairly clearly which is the dependent variable, party choice, however, its actual operationalization demands some further attention. The rationale behind this paper is that disaffection makes some political options more attractive than others due to the role that they assume in the political system. In this specific case, we are not looking at the precise party of choice or the punishment to the incumbent. What is being tested is whether disaffection increases the likelihood support for the statu quo, understood as a support for mainstream parties, or the likelihood of support for political alternatives as a way of voicing the disconnection from the political system implied by these respondents. Given that the Spanish party system may be changing, we differentiate between mainstream parties (PP and PSOE), small traditional parties that run nation-wide (IU and UPyD) and new parties (Podemos and Ciudadanos). These third group of parties have been considered separately because even if they are an alternative part of the supply, they have strongly played the card of their freshness to attract voters. Their lack of managing experience is not presented as a weakness but rather as strength that signals their commitment to democratic values and their lack of obligations to anything but the “general will”.

Table 2. Operationalization of party choice in European Parliament Elections.

Categorization of parties	Political parties.
Mainstream parties (MP)	PP
	PSOE
Small traditional parties (SP)	IU
	UPyD
New parties (NP)	Podemos
	C's

b. Independent and control variables

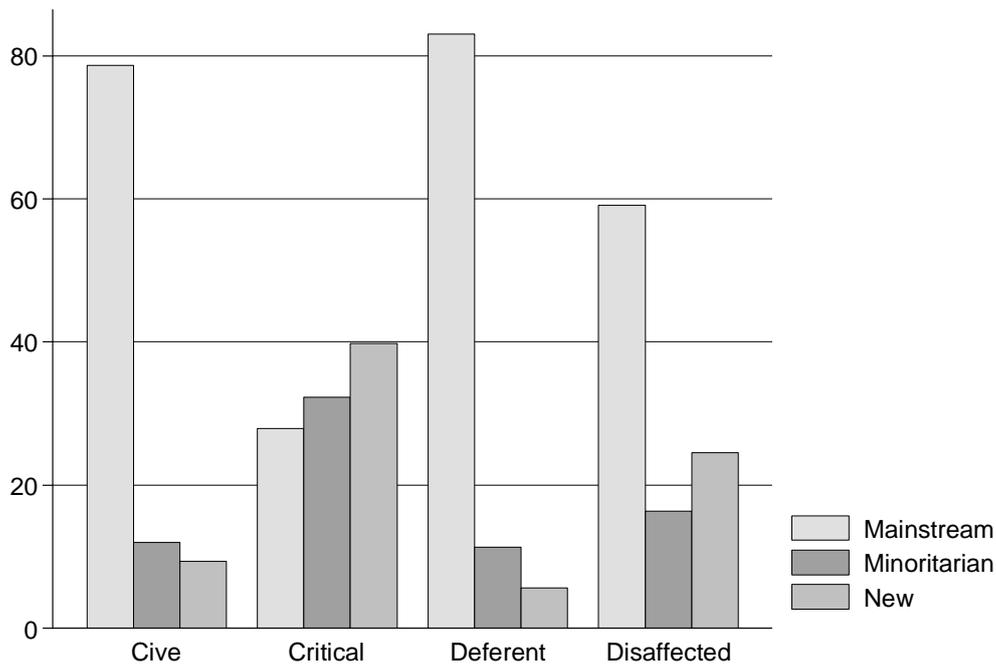
The main independent variable takes into consideration Montero, Sanz and Navarrete's (Montero et al., 2013) operationalization of political disaffection, which combines trust in Parliament with interest in politics. The combination of these two dimensions tries to account, not only for the distance citizens feel for the political system, but also their willingness to engage with it. The sum of both dimensions leads to a typology of citizens that is shown in table 1 in the theoretical section, with four categories: cive, critical, deferent and disaffected.

The control variables considered are age, gender and education. Age is a continuous variable ranging from 18 to 93. Gender is a dichotomous variable that takes "female" as reference category (0). Finally education has been considered as a continuous variable. Even if the survey categorizes the amount of years spent in formal education, we have considered that it could be introduced as a continuous variable to ease interpretation, particularly due to the small size of the sample. These variables are not only the ones that are regularly considered by the literature but they also allow us to control for how skilled citizens are to comprehend their political environment and the differentiated impact that the crisis has had in different social groups (Muñoz et al., 2014).

5. Results.

Before going into testing the hypotheses, we performed preliminary descriptive analyses (shown in fig. 3) that confirm the existence of differences in their party choice across the different categories developed by the categorization of citizens that has been proposed. In other words, at first sight, the disaffected, critical, cives and deferent choose parties in different proportions, opening the door to performing more complex analyses that allow for the testing of the hypotheses that were proposed before.

Figure 3. Vote for mainstream, minoritarian or new parties across citizen's attitudes.



Source: Spanish subsample of the eighth wave of the EES (2014).

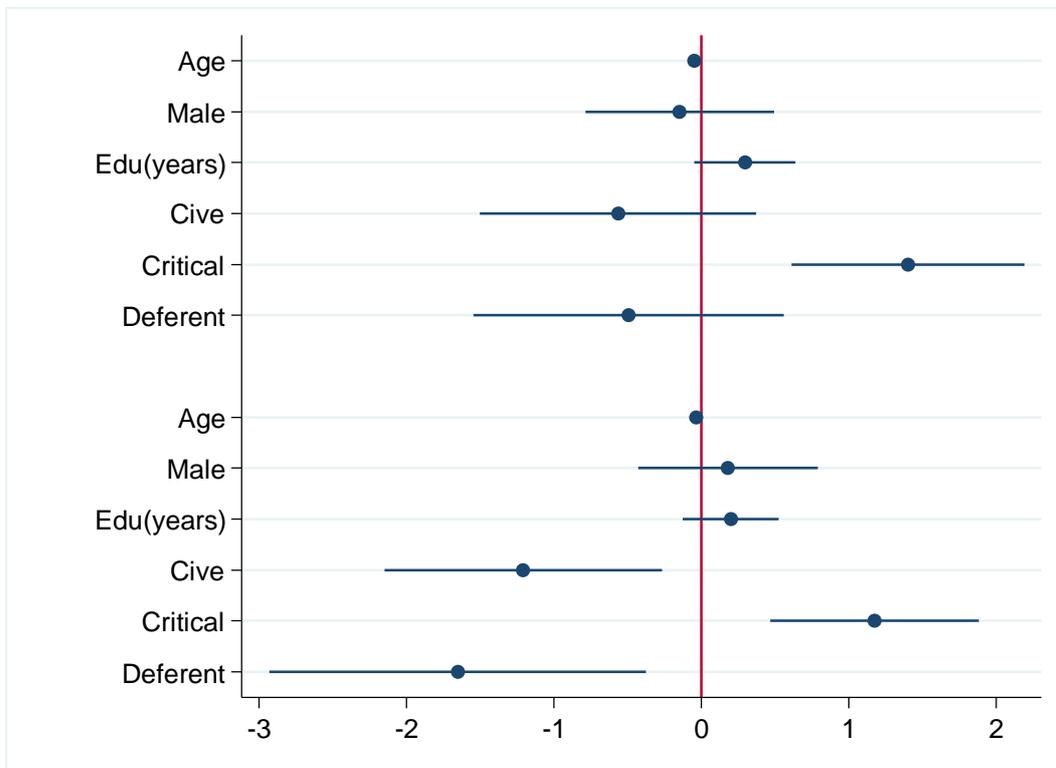
In a nutshell, the research question wondered who did disaffected citizens voted for, in terms of mainstream or alternative parties, and if these made them different from critical citizens, cives and deferent citizens. The first hypothesis supported that disaffected citizens felt alienated from the political system and, thus, were more likely to vote for mainstream parties, which represent here the *statu quo*. On the other hand, the second hypothesis proposed that disaffected citizens expressed their distance by voting for alternative parties, either small or new ones that have tried to obtain electoral gains from disaffection becoming widespread in the last years. In this sense, for the first hypothesis to falsify we would expect in our analyses that disaffected citizens would have higher chances than the other categories of voting for mainstream parties whereas if the second were to be falsified, they should be more likely than the other categories to choose small or new parties.

The model we deemed most appropriate to answer the research question, given the structure of the dependent variable, was a multinomial logistic regression model (the full model and the calculation of the marginal effects can be found in the annex, in tables A3-A4). In the dependent variable the reference category was voting for mainstream parties (PP and PSOE) as the strongest representatives of the *statu quo*, whereas minoritarian parties (IU and UPyD) or new parties (Cs and Podemos) would represent attempts to channel reform. The reference category of the

independent variable is “disaffected”. Since this is the category we are most interested in, the results will depict differences between these citizens and the others.

Figure 4 plots the coefficients of the multinomial regression model in terms of B coefficients. This graph supports that, to a certain extent, disaffection played a role in the last European Parliament Election. Given that the size of the effect cannot be directly interpreted in this kind of model, the interpretation of this graph will be complemented with the one shown in figure 5. Briefly, figure 4 depicts the probability of voters choosing small or new parties instead of voting for mainstream parties. In the case of small parties, only critical citizens show differences compared to disaffected, whereas in the probability of voting for new parties, differences are more clearly cut.

Figure 4. Multinomial logistic regression model plot. 2014.



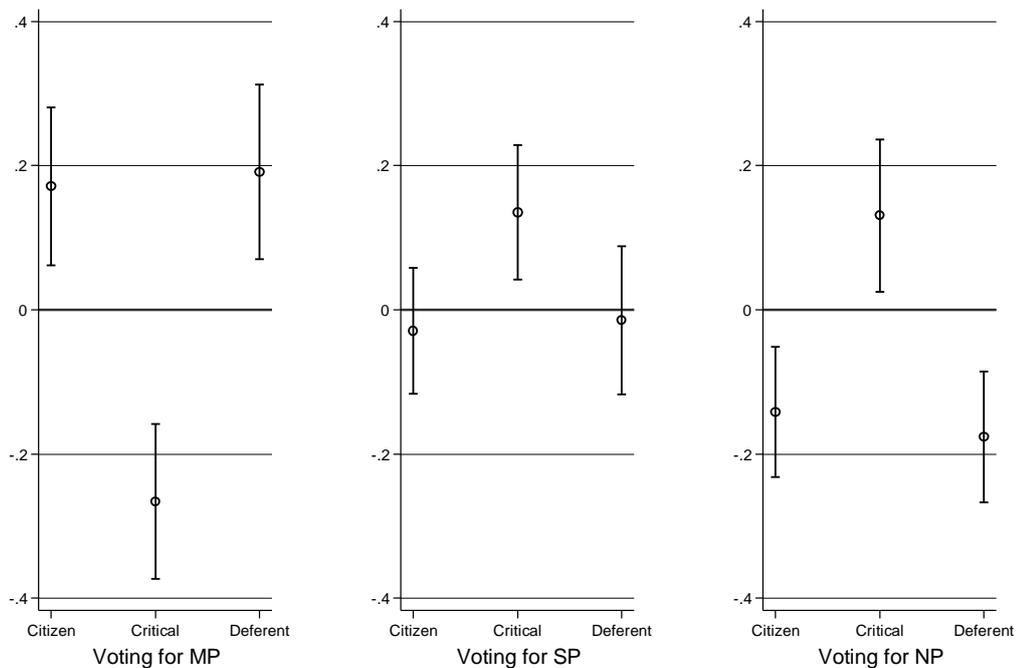
Note: The results depicted in this graph show b coefficients with confidence intervals. The reference category is vote for mainstream parties.

Source: Spanish subsample of the eighth wave of the EES (2014).

To improve the robustness of results and display more clearly the substantive meaning of the models calculated we use the difference in average marginal effects between the disaffected and the other citizen categories in the probability of voting for each kind of party (figure 5). Put it more bluntly, if the probability of voting for each country is calculated, to what extent are disaffected citizens different from the others. When looking at the probability of voting for mainstream parties, both critical and disaffected move away from voting for these parties, while

the deferent and cives are more likely. In this case, critical citizens are the ones that move away the most, although disaffected citizens do so too, to a lesser extent. In terms of the probability of voting for small parties, differences are only statistically significant between critical and disaffected citizens, in line with what the literature proposed. Critical citizens have higher chances of voting for small parties than the disaffected. Last but not least, when it comes to new parties the picture is the opposite to the one found for mainstream parties. Disaffected and critical citizens are more likely than cives and deferent citizens to vote for the new parties. And even among the first two, critical are slightly more likely than the disaffected of voting for these parties. All in all, the movement of critical citizens seems split between small and new parties, always alternative options in the party supply. Disaffected citizens move clearly towards mainstream parties or new parties.

Figure 5. Difference between categories of the typology of citizens in the average marginal effect of the multinomial logistic regression. 2014.



Reference category: disaffected.

Source: Spanish subsample of the eighth wave of the EES (2014).

In terms of the hypothesis the results are ambivalent. Voters are more likely to support mainstream parties if they are compared to critical citizens, thus partially confirming hypothesis 1. Critical citizens, even if the size of the effect is not very large, are more likely to vote for small and new parties than the disaffected. However, if they are compared to the supportive categories of the

categorization, namely cives and deferent citizens, hypothesis 2 is confirmed, disaffection increases the chance of voters opting for new parties.

6. Concluding remarks

This paper started questioning the role of disaffection on party choice in the last European Parliament election in Spain. Informally it has been assumed that much of the realignment that has been taking place in Spain is due to disaffection but, what is the actual explanatory power of this mechanism? The ambiguity of the concept has contributed to its widespread use. Amongst others, disaffection has been related to many different components that do not always fit well together, such as distance from politics, alienation or disenchantment and cynicism (Montero et al., 1998). This paper tries to shed some light into the paradox of the many meanings of political disaffection by looking at how disaffected citizens vote (Casajuana and Sánchez-Cuenca, 2013; Orriols, 2015). Which parties are they most likely to opt for, those that maintain the statu quo or those that agitate the issues of disaffection to build their platform?

To answer the question in a way that relates meaningfully to the literature on disaffection, but also on support for democracy, we have constructed our dependent variable by slightly transforming party choice. Parties were classified according to their stance regarding the political system into mainstream parties (PP and PSOE), small parties (IU and UPyD) and new parties (Cs and Ps). The main independent variable operationalizes disaffection as a combination of trust in Parliament and interest in politics. This leads to disaffection being one of the attitudes that can exist in a society whenever the surveyed do not trust Parliament and are not interested in politics. Three other categories arise: cive (interested and supportive), deferent (not interested but supportive) and critical (not supportive but interested).

The multinomial logistic regression models performed throw results that confirm mildly our hypothesis. Compared to supportive citizens, that is, cives and deferent citizens, disaffected voters are more likely to vote for new parties. The rather limited costs of voting do not hold back disaffected from choosing new political options that voice their discontent. However, this cannot be stated in absolute terms because when we compared disaffected voters to critical ones, those with whom they share their lack of support, the results were the opposite. Disaffected voters are more likely to vote for mainstream parties and less likely to vote for small and new parties than critical citizens.

The findings of this paper have two implications for the Spanish democracy. Although disaffected voters tend to vote less for mainstream parties than supportive citizens (cives and deferents), they vote less for new parties than the critical. The first implication is that, a relevant part of disaffected

parties vote for the same political parties they neglect: their feeling of alienation is reproducing in their electoral behaviour. The second implication is related to the portion of disaffected individuals who vote for new parties. Those citizens have found a channel for their discontent which could activate them in the future into involved citizens. A part of disaffected citizens could be *standby citizens* (Amnå and Ekman, 2013), waiting for new actors who are able to engage them into politics.

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ANNEX

Table A1. Description of variables.

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
vote2	333	1.636	.8232924	1	3
Citizen	1090	293.945	1.137.879	1	4
Eduyears	1104	265.942	1.010.346	0	4
Male	1106	.4783002	.4997549	0	1
Age	1106	49.1656	1.799.362	18	93

Source: Spanish subsample of the eighth wave of the EES (2014).

Table A2. Factor analysis scores

	Factor1	Factor2	Uniqueness
Interest	0,252	-0,723**	0,413
Trust	0,899**	-0,01	0,191
Ex. Efficacy	0,888**	-0,009	0,211
In. Efficacy	0,159	0,801**	0,333

** for coefficients bigger than 0,5. Source: Spanish subsample of the eighth wave of the EES (2014).

Table A3. Multinomial logistic regression model

	Vote for Small Parties (SP)	Vote for New Parties (NP)
Age	0.952*** (0.0100)	0.964*** (0.00929)
Male (Ref.cat: female)	0.864 (0.282)	1.198 (0.373)
Education (years)	1.343* (0.235)	1.220 (0.201)
Citizens' typology (Ref.cat: disaffected)		
Cive	0.569 (0.272)	0.299** (0.143)
Critical	4.054*** (1.633)	3.232*** (1.164)
Deferent	0.610 (0.327)	0.192** (0.125)
Constant	1.394 (1.072)	1.428 (1.039)
Pseudo R ²	0.167	
N	331	

Odds ratios. Standard errors within parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Source: Spanish subsample of the eighth wave of the EES (2014).

Table A4. Average marginal effects for citizen.

Predicted margins for base outcome 1, mainstream parties.						
	dy/dx	Std. Err.	z	P>z	[95% Conf.	Interval]
<hr/>						
Citizen						
Cive	.1712185	.0664514	2.58	0.010	.0409762	.3014608
Critical	-.2658046	.0652134	-4.08	0.000	-.3936206	-.1379887
Deferent	.1912386	.073542	2.60	0.009	.047099	.3353782

Predicted margins for base outcome 2, minoritarian or small parties.						
	dy/dx	Std. Err.	z	P>z	[95% Conf.	Interval]
<hr/>						
Citizen						
Cive	-.0293715	.0531088	-0.55	0.580	-.1334629	.0747198
Critical	.1352438	.0569263	2.38	0.018	.0236704	.2468173
Deferent	-.0148938	.0624241	-0.24	0.811	-.1372428	.1074553

Predicted margins for base outcome 3, new parties.						
	dy/dx	Std. Err.	z	P>z	[95% Conf.	Interval]
<hr/>						
Citizen						
Cive	-.141847	.0548301	-2.59	0.010	-.249312	-.034382
Critical	.1305608	.0643557	2.03	0.042	.004426	.2566956
Deferent	-.1763449	.0551351	-3.20	0.001	-.2844076	-.0682821

Reference category, disaffected.

Source: Spanish subsample of the eighth wave of the EES (2014).