The Iaioflautas movement in Catalonia: A seniors' networked social movement

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Abstract

In the last decade there has been a growing attention on the topic of political participation in the later life. Yet, there is still a lack of research on older people's participation in social movements and the meanings of their involvement. Within the current context of protests, particularly in the 15M-Indignad@s movement, the Iaioflautas appeared. Founded in Barcelona in 2011, the Iaioflautas ("flute-grannies") is a networked social movement that gathers older activists who wish to give voice to their demands in a non-institutional organization. Their identity revolves around two main concepts: they are old people, and they are Indignad@s. Drawing from contributions of the social movements' literature, this paper aims to describe the Iaioflautas protest movement from the perspective of highly engaged members and to identify its salient characteristics. Information was gathered by means of semi-structured interviews with 15 active members of the organization in Barcelona. The main findings are, first, Iaioflautas responds to organizational forms of the new networked social movement, which represents an organizational change in diverse ways. Second, Iaioflautas aims at specific and socially oriented goals, allowing heterogeneity and preventing self-driven interests. Third, the fact of being mobilized older adults as well as their characteristic joyful and cheerful ways yields them great social approval. Fourth, participants are gradually increasing their adoption of ICTs for organizational and personal purposes. Lastly, Iaioflautas share significant similarities with another older adults' social movement –the Raging Grannies.

Introduction

There is a relevant amount of studies about the political participation of the older population (for instance Campbell, 2005; Goerres, 2009; Jennings & Markus, 1988; Jirovec & Erich, 1995; Kam, Cheung, Chan, & Leung, 1999; Miller, Gurin, & Gurin, 1980; Nygård & Jakobsson, 2013; Schulz & Binstock, 2006; Simon et al., 1998; Williamson, 1998), while a "senior power model" has been put forth a few decades ago in the North American literature (as argued by Schulz & Binstock, 2006). The model states that since older adults are a sizeable segment of the population, that share a political consciousness reflected on collective action on old-age issues, have high voting rates, and count with the representation of mass membership organizations, thus they exert a powerful influence on the policy making process. Furthermore, this would be intensified with the aging of the more educated, healthier and wealthier baby boomers (Hooyman & Kiyak, 2011, Chapter 12). However, some authors claim there is no such thing as a senior citizens voting bloc since older people constitutes an heterogeneous group (Binstock, 2006; Schulz & Binstock, 2006). Older people cast their votes among candidates as proportionally as other age groups, and there is no evidence to believe that age is the one characteristic that becomes homogenized in self-interests and political behavior when reaching the old-age category. Beyond controversies, the senior power model exemplifies some of the ways older people (can) participate in politics.

Political participation is a broad concept that encloses different ways of political engagement. Many studies have already focused on the relationship between age and political participation (for instance Goerres, 2009; Nygård & Jakobsson, 2013). However, much of this work focuses either on older people electoral behavior (see for example Cheung, Kam, Chan, & Leung, 2001; Goerres, 2007), or on comparing participatory patterns between the old and the young aged (see for example Quintelier,

2007). In addition, a vast array of studies approach age as a predictor of political participation, which reveals the prominent role of quantitative studies in this topic (see for example Campbell, 2002, 2003; Caren, Ghoshal, & Ribas, 2011; Goerres, 2009; Jennings & Markus, 1988; Jirovec & Erich, 1995; Kam et al., 1999; Melo & Stockemer, 2014; Miller et al., 1980; Nygård & Jakobsson, 2013, 2011).

Yet, the number of available studies on the political activism of older people is limited. There are examples of past and present social movement organizations led by older people. For instance, the Townsend movement in the US in the1930s, the Gray Panthers in the US and Germany in the 1970s, the Older Women's League in the US in the 1980s, the Raging Grannies in Canada and the US in the 1980s, the Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act of 1988 in the US, the C Team in Denmark in the 1990s, or the Red Hat Society in the US in the 1990s.[1] However, all of these groups –excepting the Gray Panthers and the Raging Grannies– mainly focused their attention and efforts on the defense of older people issues. Some of them were concerned by threats against pensions or health services; while others were struggling against ageist attitudes and stereotyping of the older.

In addition, there is little research that accounts for the meanings and interpretations of their experiences providing insights for a better understanding of older people's involvement. Among some exceptions, we bring in the following. Firstly, Goerres (2009, Chapter 7), who made the case for the social movement led by older people that protested between 2004 and 2005 against rises in property taxes in England. Interviews revealed that a shared identity of being old was not sufficiently strong to mobilize them all together. Yet, they gathered to protest due to a common cause which was the defense of a shared self-interest rather than a social group interest as such.

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[1]For information on them see, among others: Hooyman & Kiyak, 2011; Quadagno, 2011; Walker, 2006.

Stereotypes and images did not clearly impel their decision of taking part of the movement, while some participants were motivated by the mobilization of peers –even in worse health conditions, who acted as "role models". Secondly, Fox and Quinn (2012) also found heterogeneity among older activists in Ireland instead of common motivations, attitudes, motives, ideas and even actions. They examined the meanings of activism for older people reacting to governmental decisions on medical services for the senior population in 2008. Protesters did not engage in response to a collective identity defined by their age. Yet, a major motivating factor for becoming involved was a sense of injustice perceived either at young age or at present times. In this case, fighting negative stereotypes appeared as a relevant motivation.

Lastly, the case most widely inquired from a qualitative perspective corresponds to the Raging Grannies, a group of organized older women located in Canada and the US (in what follows we summarize Caissie, 2006; Hutchinson & Wexler, 2007; Narushima, 2004; Sawchuk, 2009). Requirements for becoming member are to be a woman and to be old, since "being older brings life experience that younger women do not yet have" (Caissie, 2006, p. 93). Participants wear stereotypical "granny" outfits to challenge the way society views and positions older people. They sing familiar old melodies with adapted lyrics that defy the cultural devaluation of older adults and older bodies. They dress in exaggerated old age costumes and props and are inclined towards an irreverent kind of humor. They also attend demonstrations with rock chairs and wheelchairs, and show up uninvited at events subject of their protests. While claims against ageist attitudes of politicians and society were key motives for their foundation, the Raging Grannies have a sense of inter-generational responsibility as some see their participation as an action on behalf of their grandchildren and of younger generations in general. In addition, other activist groups invite them to strengthen their protest actions.

Raging Grannies take advantage of their image of grandmothers (perfect, loving), which has served themselves and other activists as protection against the hesitant police. Most Raging Grannies had previous experience in activism, even in political parties, while the Internet –and specific services as electronic mailing lists– are everyday life tools for the movement organization, both at local and country level.

In recent years, a new and particular form of protest has spread over the world. From Iceland in 2008 and Tunisia in 2010 to Hong Kong in October 2014, networked social movements (Castells, 2009) make the most of Internet 2.0 tools. They are historically new social movements (ibid.) usually identified with young segments of the population. One of these movements, the 15M or Indignad@s movement, emerged in Spain in May 2011 (Toret, 2013). One of the collectivities born within 15M was the Iaioflautas movement. Iaioflautas is a protest networked movement created by and for older people, which embraces the goals of the 15M movement. Particularly, its members are engaged in active challenge of political powerholders and their decisions. For all these reasons a case study on Iaioflautas constitutes a timely and relevant contribution in the field of political participation and social engagement of older people.

Framework and context of analysis

Although Iaioflautas is readily regarded as a social movement, the rapid advancements in information and communication technologies endow late social movement organizations with some distinct characteristics compared to previous movements. As summarized by Garrett (2006), ICTs have influenced several aspects of the practice of social movements, such as its structural mechanisms, the enabling and constraining factors provided by their environment, and the ways in which they are placed and viewed in society. ICTs can contribute to increase levels of individuals' participation by providing affordable access to political information, developing greater

collective identity, and facilitating the creation of community networks, a process initially described by Rheingold (2002). Particularly, ICTs impact social movements at the organizational level by gradually evolving from hierarchical structures to decentralized forms of organization, allowing horizontal relations and transitory participation. In addition, the decreasing role of hierarchical forms would allow for increasing collaboration between diverse social movements and organizations (see Castells 2009 for a review at an international level and Toret 2013 for the Spanish case).

As for the reasons that impel peoples' involvement in social movements, social psychology offers an adequate approach by addressing the individual level. Drawing from three different approaches in the social movements' literature –namely, societal breakdown theories, resource mobilization and political process theories, and new social movements theory–, Klandermans (1997) describes four subsequent steps for actual participation in social movements. The initial step involves people becoming potentially mobilized by movements, which imply that the latter needs to gain the former's sympathy. For this being possible, potential participants must develop a collective action frame that fits with the movement's cause. A sense of injustice, identification with others' claims, and conviction that a change is possible are the elements that constitute a collective action frame. The second step concerns the capacity of movements to use networks to recruit potential participants. A person within the reach of the movement's recruitment network may be requested not only to take part of the mobilizations, but also to request the same to others in their own networks.

The third step regards the motivations to participate, which are divided into collective and selective incentives. Collective incentives include the expectations that own participation increases chances of achieving the movement's goals, that participation of many others increases the possibilities of attaining them, and the value

given to such goals. While selective incentives concern the personal costs and benefits of taking part (non-social), and the reactions of social networks to the individual's participation (social). The fourth and last step relates to overcoming possible barriers for participation. With this respect, the author suggests that significant others are key actors in maintaining potential participants motivated with the movement. All these steps were found to be best explained when taking into account theories of the three different approaches to social movements. Although a further description of the theories implemented in each stage exceeds the space limits of this paper, we believe that the model as a whole constitutes an adequate general approach to contrast it to the case of Iaioflautas.

Documental research allows for an initial approach to Iaioflautas as a protest movement. As an organization, it was born in October 2011 as a side-effect of the uprising of the 15M-Indignad@s social movement. The 15M movement originated in May 2011 in different cities of Spain and had Madrid as its core location (Toret, 2013), while Iaioflautas was originated in Barcelona (Catalonia) and spread in different cities across Catalonia and Spain. According to the organization's website, the movement can be found in 11 cities.[2] Iaioflautas is the branch of senior citizens of the wider 15M social movement, which gathers older people willing to take part of the widespread discontent towards the political elite. Their main identity pivots on two features: they are older people and they are Indignad@s. They define themselves as "the generation that fought and achieved a better life for their children". Yet, at the same time they define themselves as "descendants of the 15M movement". The comic book they published for their first anniversary emphasizes this aspect, which is used for taking

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[2] See www.iaioflautas.org (last accessed October 2014) (website in Catalan and Spanish). Nonetheless, the website does not gather all existing Iaioflautas groups since (a) some do not have a weblog, or (b) are not linked from this website (see Results).

maximum profit: "Their older people costumes allows them to quickly spread confusion and take advantage of their unexpected appearances […]" (Iaioflautas & Lucio, 2013, p. 4).

Similarly to other older adults' activist groups such as the Raging Grannies (Caissie, 2006), Iaioflautas have come up with some own terms. The collectivity's name is rooted in the spirit of a vindication of the pejorative label "perroflauta" used against hippie-squatter younger people. "Iaioflautas" is an adaptation of the label to the case of the older, "iaio" meaning "grandparent" in Catalan, thus, "Iaioflauta" meaning something like "flute-grannies". They themselves like also to label their actions as "travesuras" (mischief). Finally, in their protests, which include demonstrations and occupation of different public and private spaces, they identify themselves with vivid yellow vests and caps.

Iaioflautas can be described as a multi-issue organization since it pursues to attain six different goals. Iaioflautas (2014) summarizes them as follows: (a) Not one more Euro for bank bailouts; (b) Quality public education and health; (c) No to precarious work; (d) No to the labor reform; (e) For a decent and guaranteed housing by means of a universal basic income; and (f) Gender issues. Internet and social network sites are key to spread their claims and activities.[3] Iaioflautas have a website with primary information such as a manifesto (translated into different languages), a list of all actions undertaken thus far, a published comic book, contact information and their various appearances in the media.

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[3] Besides the website, they have a Twitter account (www.twitter.com/iaioflautas) and a Facebook page (www.facebook.com/pages/iaioflautas/210932025643956) (last accessed October 2014).

Objectives and method

The aim of this paper is to describe the Iaioflautas protest movement from the perspective of the most engaged members and to identify its salient characteristics. Specific objectives are three. First of all, to describe the way this protest movement is organized. Second, to identify the way individuals participate in the movement, the role of ICTs in this participation and their personal trajectory in political participation. Third, to understand the social context, or the reactions, participants' engagement causes in their social environment.

In addition to the exploration of the organization of the movement, at an individual level, we examined four fundamental dimensions. First, participants' political background and/or experience in previous political activities; second, the motivations, opinions and goals supporting their involvement in Iaioflautas; third, the participatory patterns with Iaioflautas; and fourth, the role ICTs play in their activities within Iaioflautas. From a transversal perspective, we also explored participants' perception regarding stereotypes of ageing –whether they felt pressures or confronted them.

This qualitative research approached the Iaioflautas movement headquartered in Barcelona. The first author conducted semi-structured interviews with 15 active members of the movement. All interviews were conducted in Spanish. A short questionnaire was submitted to participants to collect socio-demographic data: seven participants were between 55 and 64 years old; five were between 65 and 74 years old; two were between 75 and 84 years old; and one was 85 years old or more. In terms of gender, seven were female, and eight were male. A majority of participants were retired, while the rest were still active in the labor market, including a few that were unemployed searching for a job. Based on the obtained grounded evidence, next section

organizes the results around three main areas: characteristics of the organization, individual's participation, and social environment of participants.

Results

Characteristics of the organization

Among participants we found a sustained discourse describing the movement being strictly free from political partisanship, despite the personal preferences every member may have. Although there seems to be a recognizable inclination towards the left –especially in its core members– there was consensus about the presence and participation of people from almost every political ideology with the exception of right-wing conservatives. This heterogeneity has been essential for a greater inclusiveness of potential members that get involved because they adhere to the demands claimed by the organization (see Framework and context of analysis). In this light, the organization has come up with a way to converge people of different political opinions through the pursuit of unequivocal and practical demands.

> I am a communist, and they [the Government] are going to take away my pension. But any other fellow, whether socialist, anarchist, or even supporter of the [Spanish] Phalanx, they are going to take it away from them too! […] So why can't I hang out or get along with them? And this is Iaioflautas. In Iaioflautas you have people of all colors. (Participant E)[4]

One of the most prominent Iaioflautas characteristics is the joy and happiness their public interventions emanate. Members wear yellow fluorescent vest to make them highly visible and attract attention to their cause. They print their core claims on them occasionally accompanied with badges and caps of the same garish color. They display their actions in such a cheerful and playful way that makes them stand out in

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[4] Authors' own translations from Spanish.

demonstrations and marches. This happiness reflects the attitude of their participants as stated by one of the interviewees:

> One of the things we say is that it's not worth to fight pissed off. […] There has been an idea going on in Iaioflautas that is if we want a better society, it can't be achieved being angry. I'm not saying that you can't be angry once in a while, but to go on in life like that, living pissed off, and to pretend that fighting for a better society, that people live better, that we can have a decent life can come out of that…it's really complicated, isn't it? (Participant A)

Moreover, this turned out to be an attractive feature for potential members:

> In a demonstration in Passeig de Gràcia I saw some vests, and they had a truck, and I was like "Oh, they're putting some music", so I thought they were very cheerful people and I liked all that joy they had. So then I looked for them in the Internet and found their webpage […]. (Participant H)

Forged as a non-violent action group, Iaioflautas tries to ensure a peaceful behavior within the demonstrating crowd, either calming younger protesters or identifying infiltrated police officers. As one Iaioflauta said:

> When a massive demonstration is being carried out, I can tell you that many young people come with their children because they feel safer if we are around. […] Because what do police cars do? They go getting closer so that some youngsters begin to insult them and throwing things at them. This gives them the excuse to break in, arrest and beat people. [But] do you realize what it's like a picture of an old person being beaten? (Participant L)

The condemnable image of this scenario along with the potential bad press against the police supports the role of the Iaioflautas as a pacifying, as well as attractive, element of aggregate political participation.

Many of the interviewees have vast experience participating in politics by being stable members of parties, unions, neighborhood associations, or other organizations,

and actively taking part in protest activities (strikes, demonstrations). Furthermore, some of them share membership in such organizations. Coming from these traditional and institutional organizations, the experience of being part of Iaioflautas raises a sort of freshness that brings new life into their political action. To begin with, Iaioflautas lack the common hierarchical structure of traditional political organizations; there are neither official leaders nor spokespersons assigned or voted. Members voluntarily take on responsibilities to keep the organization working. Participants gather generally once or twice a month face to face. These assemblies have a previously conformed outline of the subjects to be discussed, which is announced at the beginning, and any attending person can have his or her say. During the meeting, a volunteer takes notes summarizing the points discussed and agreed in a minute book and subsequently sends it to all participants in the database. A coordinator group of 10 to 12 people meets to prepare the assemblies, proposes the next actions to be discussed, and plans the necessary arrangements to carry them out. There are also several committees in charge of specific areas or responsibilities: press, organization, finances, and pensions, among others cited by interviewees. Yet, Iaioflautas shows to be a very dynamic and flexible political organization: both the people with responsibilities and the number of members of the different groups within the organization are always changing. Much of this is due to the voluntary nature of the whole organization. If someone wants to join or leave a group, or take turns with other colleagues, no matter the reason, he or she can. In alignment to this, there are no membership fees and members do not hold membership cards. Expenses for materials and projects (such as vests, caps, badges, banners, posters, markers; the making and publishing of the comic book) come from donations of the participants themselves as well as from crowdfunding.

Iaioflautas claims to fight against the loss of rights and benefits achieved by civil society in the past, and for the wellbeing of the present and coming new generations. Such a broad statement allows Iaioflautas to collaborate with other non-institutional political organizations and social movements with a much narrow and specific set of objectives. So has been the case of the other well-known organization raised in the midst of the 15M movement, PAH[5] (Platform of the affected by mortgages), a group of ordinary civilians that organize themselves with a very clear goal: to fight against evictions requested by the financial institutions. Whenever support is needed to stop an eviction in course PAH relies, among other organizations, on the Iaioflautas to lend them a hand. In fact, some Iaioflautas are active members in both organizations.

In addition, the constant appearance in the media of the Iaioflautas of Barcelona –the founding city of the movement– in late 2011 and throughout 2012 provoked the emergence of further Iaioflautas in other cities of the country. These new Iaioflautas – "replicas" as they call them– contact each other to learn from their experiences in terms of organization, logistics, communication strategies, as well as bringing forth new ideas for future actions. Iaioflautas of Barcelona have been invited several times to meet with Iaioflautas from other towns and cities to share their skills and experiences in person in the spirit of training sessions. They have also incorporated new technologies to improve the communication between replicas by means of Google Groups, creating groups at different levels (regional and country). The goal is to share ideas and organize activities, although each replica is responsible for its own performance. There are currently about 16 Iaioflautas replicas spread over Catalonia and Spain. Iaioflautas of Barcelona report having 900 subscribers to their distribution list, but in terms of "membership" counts on about 120 stable active participants.

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[5] www.afectadosporlahipoteca.com (last accessed October 2014) (website in Spanish).

The Iaioflautas website, Twitter account, and Facebook page are all run by different participants in charge. They also manage a distribution list for everyone interested in the organization and in getting involved, becoming one of the most essential channels concerning callings for general assemblies and publicly announced actions. Emails have become the most widely used means of communication among the organization, although since not all members have an email account, phone calls (either using landlines or mobile phones) are the most prominent alternative. Whenever reaching fellow members by email is impossible, participants turn to a specific list of fellow members each one has to call. Whenever fellows do not own or use these technologies, participants usually contact someone from their closest network (grandchildren, children, nephews/nieces, etc.) to pass them the message.

Aside from the help particular Iaioflautas receive from their younger relatives regarding the use and manipulation of ICTs, the organization as a whole has also benefited from the assistance provided by fellow younger activists from other movements. In many occasions, most notably during the organization's early stage, younger people join their actions and focus on the instantaneous spreading of information through the Internet by means of Twitter, Facebook, live streaming videos, and other digital platforms. This has also boosted the interest of some Iaioflautas to learn and adopt these technologies in their everyday lives. In addition, the organization has undertaken courses of digital technologies taught by young expert activists, although with varying outcomes. For many Iaioflautas this meant to use (and adopt) an email account for the first time, a point that the movement itself seeks to develop for improvements at the organizational level.

Individual's participation

Participants described great diversity in terms of political activity in their life course. More than half of the participants have a long history in political involvement. However, participation in non-governmental organizations has not been a common form of participating politically, but it has been the case among some less historically active. As expected, the most experienced participants have also taken part in protest activities, such as demonstrations, marches, or strikes, although some non-experienced have also joined in a sporadic fashion (especially during their youth). Indeed, the lead in the foundational stages of the Iaioflautas came from individuals with a long political involvement. Many of the pioneering participants were close acquaintances and some even share affiliation in the same parties and/or unions, but as the movement grew into a known organization, more newcomers joined the group with no familiar connection. Some of the interviewees became aware of the existence of Iaioflautas in the streets, while a few others through their media exposure. Nonetheless, nearly all members with no previous close relationship with pioneering members sought for information about Iaioflautas in the Internet –with the exception of the two eldest interviewees.

Following with personal ICT usage, interviewees engage in a more sporadic pattern compared to their younger counterparts. Thirteen of them have access to Internet either from their mobile phone or at home, but frequency and intensity of use varies greatly among them. All interviewees own a mobile phone, but nearly over half of them upgraded to Smartphones. In general, the most skilled learned to use these technologies driven by external forces that required their adoption, namely in the workplace or in Iaioflautas itself. Likewise, the same dynamic applies concerning the use of digital platforms, such as e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp among the frequently cited. All in all, it seems that the use of some of these technologies –such as e-mail,

mobile phone, and WhatsApp– are more oriented towards internal use of the organization; whereas others –Facebook, Twitter, and weblogs– are intended for an external audience.

Due to Iaioflautas high activity, participants are welcomed to contribute in several ways. Although volunteerism is a key point of the organization, it is also agreed that tasks should be distributed among members to avoid attrition or overload of responsibilities for few people. This is why they attempt to rotate responsibilities and some of them commit themselves to undertake activities alternately. Depending on the degree of responsibility members engage, loosely speaking, as "coordinators", "commissioners" and/or "performer". The majority of interviewees (around ten) are early members from the start, and about seven of them are "coordinators" (those who are part of the coordinator group that arrange the actions and assemblies). In addition, some of the "coordinators" also engage as "commissioners" in different areas that keep the movement working (communication, pensions, and finances among a few). However, not all "coordinators" are pioneers. Participant O has relatively less political experience compared to her fellow coordinators, but is highly skilled and experienced in information and communication technologies. Due to these highly valued abilities, along with her interest and commitment to Iaioflautas, she performs actively as "coordinator" and "commissioner". A third and final type of participant is the "performer", one that engages in assemblies, activities and actions planned. All interviewees share this role, although in varying degrees. The majority take part in most activities and actions: occupying public and private spaces; protesting in demonstrations; supporting other organizations, movements and events; participating in public talks and meetings; as well as attending the monthly assemblies. Nonetheless, a

few interviewees showed to be more critical about particular actions, which make them more selective when supporting activities:

> There was a mischief that was very controversial, which was to go to Montserrat and talk to the abbot to ask him something. […] And there were a lot of us like "but we usually go to places to occupy them, and now we're going to ask an abbot…why?" To me it was a contradiction; we're not asking him nothing. […] So I participate in what I'm interested in; and if something doesn't interest me I don't go, and nobody says anything to me. And that's what I like. (Participant H)

Adding to this selectiveness, there is also some criticism towards the driving forces of the organization:

> There is always an interest, and it seems that there is a party behind them. […] That's what restrains their mobilizations, for sure. And that's what I disagree with. So when I realized this, I thought "Hum, I don't want to take part thoroughly, because I disagree." (Participant I)

As for driving forces to participate in Iaioflautas, all interviewees cite fighting against injustice and the loss of social benefits and wellbeing as essential motives. Along with this, five interviewees, with different political backgrounds, regard bringing the people into awareness of the unjust measures taken by the government to manage the financial crisis.

> We have a very clear goal which is to denounce what they are doing, because it cost us a lot of sacrifice to get a job, to achieve some improvements, a [contractual] agreement, vacations, 40 working hours a week. And they have taken everything away with one blow. What future our children will have? What future the youth will have? (Participant M)

It is a common understating among members that their central claim as a movement is that they fight not for their own children and grandchildren, but for

everyone else's. Therefore, there is very little room –if any at all– in Iaioflautas for addressing personal and particular issues. Participant N describes this focus clearly:

> In Iaioflautas I've met some people that come here to talk about their own things, like "Because my cousin, they have done this to him…" And then you have to remind them like "Hey, we're not here to fix your cousin's problems, we're trying to fix the problems of your children, of mine, of the younger generations that will have a horrible future." (Participant N).

It is then solidarity with others what gathers these people and drives them to take part in the movement. Moreover, this seems to be a source of happiness for some:

> I think that the motive to feel as a citizen is to participate, if you're part of, if you do something to change society. […] To fight, fight, and if I don't do it, I don't feel well. When I fight I feel very good, very happy with all my peers and with everyone who fights. Because it's obvious that they share my same ideas: to contribute in changing society. (Participant D).

Finally, a particular incentive was mentioned by two participants, which is to demonstrate that they can (still) fight and contribute to society at their age:

> What really bothers me is that people want to "retire" us. […] It bothers me that except for those in charge that can keep on working until they die, everyone wants to retire the rest of us from everything: from the union, the neighborhood associations, etc. And that pisses me off. Of course I can't run like I used to, but with all my skills I can still contribute to things. (Participant A)

In the next section we describe the interviewees' feelings regarding the existence of social stereotypes of the old, and whether they perceive their activity is influencing a change in these images.

Social environment of participants

The exposure in the media –significant in their initial stages– of this protest movement mainly composed by older adults may raise varied opinions among their

close relationships as well as in society in general. Nine interviewees perceived the existence of a social stereotype against older people in a negative way. Some common perceptions were that older people are viewed as a burden, as annoying, as useless, not helpful, or bad-tempered. A few considered critically that most people associate older adults to certain activities, such as playing cards, playing "petanca" (boules), and going to social centers for the old ("Casal de gent gran"). Although distinguishing themselves from fellows who actually engage in such activities, nearly all interviewees wish they joined them to strengthen their fight:

> So, how to ask them to go out and fight? Because many times we think of going to these centers to explain them things. But what can you explain them when they're great with playing "petanca"? There are a lot of older people that gets involved, but if all the retired people did… (Participant N)

On the other hand, participants hold that people usually react very positively when realizing they are active members of Iaioflautas. Older people mobilized and engaged in the protest activities Iaioflautas carries out causes admiration in their relatives, friends, and people in general.

> Society says "Wow, this older people, instead of being peacefully at home, enjoy being with their grandchildren, they go out to the streets to defend society, the Welfare State, so that our children and grandchildren don't live in worse conditions than us." (Participant A)

Their involvement in Iaioflautas, as some interviewees assert, changes favorably the perception of others about older adults in society. Yet, this optimism is taken cautiously by five of them arguing it is being achieved at a slow pace, and that there is still much to do. Two interviewees with opposite opinions come to the same conclusion about a key factor: the media. They believe that if they had more exposure in the media, more awareness of the existence of the movement could be created in most of the

population. Nonetheless, some remain skeptical about this possibility due to a presumed unwillingness of the mass media in continuing to provide them any attention at all. Thus, it is likely that Iaioflautas will rely more on digital platforms to fulfill this aspiration.

In this line, most interviewees show skepticism on the possibilities offered by ICTs for greater political participation of older adults. Five regard favorably the enhanced availability and immediacy of information. However, three interviewees manifest certain distrust in these technologies not only arguing that they allow for more unreliable information, but also questioning their capacity to mobilize people into the streets:

> If it keeps them more informed? Yes. If it makes them participate more? I don't know if this helps. [...] I think that many young people, not only older ones, think that by "liking" an action they have participated. [...] I don't know if this will make people show up. (Participant L)

Discussion

The organizational characteristics of Iaioflautas coincide with scholarly assertions on changes in the late social movement organizations (as summarized by Garrett, 2006) since they are part of the networked social movements defined by Castells (2009). Compared to traditional social movements and institutional political organizations, Iaioflautas present innovations in their structure, power distribution, dynamics, organizational maintenance, and the technological means. It is clear there is a distribution of responsibilities, yet these do not exert authority over other fellow members. The lack of official representatives of the organization gives support to their horizontal orientation. Their non-hierarchical structure allows for simpler collaborations with other social movement organizations of the like, as seen with their close

relationship with PAH (Platform of the affected by mortgages) and Iaioflautas "replicas". ICTs have contributed to all of this and will most likely continue doing so in the future as they become part of our everyday life. One of the most salient findings is the similarities between Iaioflautas and their Canadian counterparts, the Raging Grannies. Although in the latter only older women may become members, both are mobilized in support of younger generations, act as backing activists for other organizations and actions, come up with their own terms and vocabulary, adapt famous songs to new lyrics, and make use of ICTs for communicational and organizational purposes. Moreover, none of the Iaioflautas mentioned being aware of the Raging Grannies during the interviews, whereas some did mentioned the German Gray Panthers as a resembling case.

The early stages of Iaioflautas indeed relied on the participation of recruits within the personal network range of the foundational members. Several of these pioneering participants mentioned having called friends inviting them to mobilize, and once mobilized, a few of these friends said having done the same with other friends. Once they achieved certain level of activity, they started attracting other individuals. Indeed some interviewees reported that their sympathy towards the movement led them to also take part. In fact, a sense of injustice –the primary element of Klandermans' (1997) four steps towards participation– was explicitly mentioned by all interviewees as a motive for their involvement. This supports findings of Fox & Quinn (2012) in which case older Irish activists regarded injustice as a relevant motive for taking action. Yet, the current case study contradicts results of Goerres (2009) who found that self-interest of English protesters were relevant driving forces, a motivation utterly absent in Iaioflautas' statements. Indeed, interviewees suggested that non-social selective incentives were important for their participation: Iaioflautas renders them personal

benefits such as mental and physical activity, friendship, happiness, among cited ones. Likewise, they hold collective motivations by engaging in bringing awareness to people of the decisions taken by the political elite. Based on Klandermans (1997), this responds to the expectation that the movement's goals will be reached if many others participate.

Lastly, social stereotyping among Iaioflautas did not show to be a prominent factor at impelling participation among most interviewees. Goerres (2009) found similar results, while Fox & Quinn (2012) found the opposite. In this line, Iaioflautas are different from the Raging Grannies, who among their key motivations advocate for breaking ageist attitudes (Caissie, 2006; Hutchinson & Wexler, 2007; Narushima, 2004; Sawchuk, 2009). Reactions of Iaioflautas' significant others were supportive in general (social selective incentives; Klandermans, 1997), and at the societal level, of admiration and respect. Interviewees describe a magnetic effect in younger activists as they provide security to some extent, and provoke hesitancy in the police and higher authorities. Hence, like the Raging Grannies, Iaioflautas take advantage of their grandparents' image to protect the younger generations and gain the approval of the people in general.

Although this study addresses the political participation of older adults in Barcelona, it deliberatively excludes voting behavior. We understand that voting behavior of the older people exceeds the pretentions and interests of this present article. On an additional remark, the sampling process approached highly involved participants. A future extension of this research should reach individuals holding lesser degrees of engagement with Iaioflautas. Finally, an interesting extension of this research will be an in depth comparative study of Iaioflautas and Raging Grannies.

Conclusion

Main conclusions are five. Firstly, encouraged by the current crisis and the emergence of the 15M-Indignad@s movement, the Iaioflautas social movement

represents a significant change both at the organizational and individual level. New forms of organization, new ways of political engagement, and new opportunities to participate in politics distinguishes Iaioflautas from previous political protest activities of older people. Secondly, claims of the organization are of a concrete yet socially oriented nature. Their specific set of goals as well as their ambition to benefit society at large allows for certain heterogeneity among participants and prevents self-driven interests. Thirdly, the fact of being mobilized older adults as well as the joy and happiness they emanate in their actions grants them significant social approval. It also helps in attracting fellow activists and potential members, inducing support from relatives and friends, and slowly changing stereotypes of the old. Fourthly, as it is a networked social movement supported on electronic information and communication technologies, Iaioflautas gradually increases the use and adoption of ICTs to serve their organizational and personal needs. Receiving assistance from younger generations to adopt these technologies, all interviewees make use of regular mobile phones at the least. Finally, Iaioflautas movement shows significant similarities with the Raging Grannies movement even though no reference appeared in the interviews.

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