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The Effect of Ideological Distance on Voting Behaviour in Parliament Under Changing Economic Conditions: A Comparison Between Portugal and Spain

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ABSTRACT

In this article we empirically test the impact of ideological distance between opposition parties and incumbents on consensus in parliament in two different countries, Portugal and Spain, amid changing economic conditions. To do so, we employ the Comparative Manifesto Project database and develop a measure of ideological distance on the left-right and the centre-periphery dimensions based on parties' preferences as expressed in their manifestos. We demonstrate that the economic crisis had different effects in the two countries. In Portugal, it amplified the negative impact on consensus of ideological distance between the incumbent and opposition parties. As expected, parties more distant from the incumbent on the left-right continuum were more likely to vote against legislation. In Spain, by contrast, changes in the party system forced traditional mainstream parties, especially the socialists, to increase their opposition in parliament. Moreover, the crisis amplified the effect of the centre-periphery dimension on parliamentary conflict. As a result, not only parties ideologically distant from the incumbent on the left-right continuum were more likely to vote against legislation.

KEYWORDS

Political parties; parliamentary opposition; voting behaviour; ideological distance

Introduction

The behaviour of opposition parties in parliament has been proved to be affected by a number of different factors, which can be internal – like the rules of the parliamentary game or the institutional settings of a country (Helms, 2008); external – like the supranational institutions, which have increased their influence in recent times (Goetz, 2014; Laffan, 2014; Winzen, 2017); systemic – such as the features of the electoral and party system (Duverger, 1951; Sartori, 1966); or non-systemic – like parties' policy preferences. Extant research has also demonstrated that the level of consensus among opposition parties tends to decrease as the distance between the government and the opposition parties on the left-right continuum increases (De Giorgi & Marangoni, 2015). Contingent factors, such as the outbreak of the euro crisis, have also proved to influence the behaviour of parliamentary actors and, in particular, the opposition's consensus in parliament (De Giorgi & Ilonszki, 2018; Maatsch, 2016; Palau et al., 2015).

In this study, we verify whether a contingent variable, i.e., the economic condition of a country, can affect not only the opposition's behaviour in parliament, but also the impact of another (usually more) constant variable on that behaviour, i.e., party ideology. The ideological position of a party is not normally subject to radical variations, but it is not a static component either. When parties write their election manifestos, they consider many internal and external factors in making commitments to voters in regard to the next legislature. Analytical tools such as those developed by the Manifesto Project (Volkens et al., 2019) are designed to empirically locate such movements along the ideological spectrum. The questions are these: to what extent do parties' preferences, as presented during the election campaign, influence their voting behaviour once they are in parliament; and to what extent do contextual factors contribute to moderating the effect of the ideological distance between the incumbent and opposition parties expressed during the election campaign. We will try to answer these questions by analysing patterns of voting behaviour in parliament in Portugal and Spain during, before, and after the so-called Great Recession.

This study aims at making two contributions. First, it intends to re-examine the impact of some of the main factors thought to influence the (more or less) consensual conduct of the opposition in parliament. In particular, it will test the effect of a significant but contingent factor – the economic crisis – on the strength of left-right ideological distances between the incumbent and the opposition parties in explaining the behaviour of the latter. In Southern Europe, in fact, the left-right cleavage was given new salience by the crisis (Morlino & Raniolo, 2017). Data from the Manifesto Project (Volkens et al., 2019) provide strong evidence of a substantial growth of this specific cleavage in terms of salience after the onset of the crisis, with Greece being the country where that was deeper, followed by Italy and Portugal. In Spain, the cleavage was generally weaker, but its growth after the beginning of the crisis was greater than in Italy and Portugal. As a result, an amplified effect of the ideological distance on the opposition parties' behaviour could be expected.

However, the results show different patterns in the two countries. In Portugal, as expected, parties more distant from the incumbent on the left-right continuum were significantly more likely to vote against government legislation. In Spain, changes in the party system forced all parties, and not only those more ideologically distant from the incumbent, to adopt a more adversarial strategy. This study consequently tries to understand what explains such a difference between countries that apparently have many features in common. This, therefore, is the second contribution of this article: it demonstrates that in Spain the crisis also amplified the impact of the distance along the centre-periphery continuum between government and opposition parties, highlighting the importance of adopting a multidimensional perspective when exploring the impact of ideological distance on parliamentary behaviour. The importance of immigration, cultural, social or moral issues as determinants of party competition has received increasing scholarly attention, but further non-economic issues such as territorial conflicts are still understudied (Amat, 2012), even though such conflicts have resumed in many European countries, as the cases of Scotland and Catalonia demonstrate. To the best of our knowledge, no other study has explored the impact of this dimension of party competition on parties' voting behaviour in parliament.

The article is divided into three sections: the first one presents the theoretical argument and the main hypotheses we intend to test. In the second one, the data and methods employed in our analysis are described. The third section presents our models and results, and then concludes.

Theoretical Argument and Hypotheses

The ideological distance between parties is negatively related to consensus in parliament. In other words, the level of consensus of opposition parties tends to decrease as the distance between the government and the opposition parties on the left-right continuum increases (De Giorgi & Marangoni, 2015). As Field (2016, p. 40) argues, ideological distance between parties influences their ability to reconcile their policy goals, which may explain why radical right or left parties, ideologically distant from mainstream incumbents, are more likely to adopt a conflictual stance in parliament. Indeed, the importance of the left-right placement on the behaviour of parliamentary party groups (PPGs) has been validated by a number of studies over time and across countries (e.g., Budge et al., 2001; Gabel & Huber, 2000; Hix, 2001). The left-right heuristic is a reliable guide for voters, who may have poorly structured belief systems (Fuchs & Klingemann, 1990), but also for political parties that make promises during electoral campaigns after trying to ascertain what their voters want on key issues, notably economic redistribution. The redistributive and economic dimension at the basis of the left-right cleavage has proved to be one of the most important aspects of party competition in Europe at both the electoral and the parliamentary levels (Rohrschneider & Whitefield, 2012; Rose, 1984).

However, the focus on the left-right continuum runs the risk of simplification because, as Albright (2010) argues, a single dimension fails to capture much of the variance in the issue positions of parties, especially in decentralised states. In the latter, in fact, parties must move around in a policy space characterised by a territorial dimension alongside a left-right one (Alonso et al., 2015; Elias et al., 2015). Massetti and Schakel (2016) argue that, in decentralised political systems, regional parties position themselves on the left-right dimension, but they are mainly concerned about regional identities, cultural traits and languages, pressing for more political autonomy or even total secession. Massetti & Schakel's analysis confirms that regional parties incorporate the left-right dimension into the centre-periphery one. While such parties take a position on the left-right scale mainly as a result of idiosyncratic critical junctures related to historical events (Erk, 2005) and context-dependent factors, such as the economic status of their region, their main interest is to push the territorial dimension onto the agenda (Massetti & Schakel, 2016). However, other authors (Alonso, 2012; Field, 2016) have pointed out that, while the centre-periphery dimension is relatively more important to regional parties, an analysis of their manifestos shows that they devote more attention to the left-right dimension. In any case, the existence of a second dimension of party competition may impact on parties' legislative behaviour in the national parliament. Even if regional parties agree on the policy goals set by a particular policy reform promoted by the central government, they may vote against it if they perceive it as threatening their region's political or fiscal autonomy. The political conflict resulting from disagreement on territorial aspects may spread to other issues, resulting in systematic patterns of opposition, particularly if regional parties do not have the capacity to influence the

parliamentary majority and cannot exchange support for legislation for more political autonomy (Field, 2016). The previous literature shows, in fact, a diminishing effect of minority governments on parliamentary conflict (Christiansen & Damgaard, 2008; Mújica & Sánchez-Cuenca, 2006; Palau et al., 2015).

That said, the present work focuses on how the economic conditions of a country impact on government-opposition dynamics, and it also examines the effect of the ideological distance between government and opposition parties on those dynamics. Do the economic conditions – one of the strongest explanatory factors of an opposition's behaviour, particularly in hard times – also affect the impact of ideological distance on such behaviour? In order to answer this question, we developed two hypotheses on the interaction between a country's economy and the distance between parties on both the left-right and the centre-periphery dimension.

In periods of economic prosperity, parties are better able to respond to their true preferences (Przeworski et al., 1999). In these circumstances, as stated above, we expect the opposition parties' voting behaviour to be negatively affected by the distance from the incumbent on the left-right dimension. By contrast, under critical junctures, there may be a realignment of party preferences both during the elections and throughout the legislature, with parties finding it more difficult to respect their actual preferences and policy pledges. In this regard, we expect to find important differences both between right-wing and left-wing parties and between mainstream and radical parties. Based on the issue ownership literature, some authors argue that in bad economic times left-wing parties, especially if they are in opposition, will be more likely to direct attention to redistribution and inequality issues because they have a better reputation for dealing with such matters (Tavits & Potter, 2015). In the parliamentary arena, this would lead to more confrontational behaviour by these parties, which would oppose decisions taken by right-wing incumbents in order to increase their chances of entering office in the next elections. By contrast, right-wing parties would be more likely to shift attention to non-economic affairs under scenarios of bad economic performance and high inequality, especially if they are in office. In opposition, right-wing parties would be less likely to show total opposition to redistribution programmes if the number of voters lagging behind in income distribution increases, but they would certainly appeal to their better reputation in dealing with the economy to defeat a left-wing incumbent. That said, the nature of parties constitutes another crucial variable that helps explain the behaviour of oppositions in parliament. In particular, significant differences have been found between the so-called 'radical parties' – that is, parties proposing extreme societal changes, which are usually permanently in opposition – and the 'mainstream' parties – that is, parties with a more moderate stance and government aspirations (Moury & De Giorgi, 2015). We expect this difference between radical and mainstream parties – parties that are ideologically distant by definition – to play a crucial role in the decision to either support or oppose the executive in parliament in bad economic times. In this context, we expect that:

H1: Amid bad economic conditions, the ideological distance on the left-right dimension between the incumbent and the opposition parties has a greater effect on the likelihood of voting against the government's legislation.

However, to fully understand the effect of ideological distance on parties' voting behaviour in bad economic times, we need to consider also the centre-periphery dimension of

party competition. In contrast to Portugal, this cleavage has for long been important for understanding both the form and content of party competition in Spain, where the Catalan conflict instigated what was possibly one of the most severe crises of Spanish democracy (Mendes & Dennison, 2021, p. 4). The crisis peaked in 2017 when the independence referendum took place, but it began in 2010, when the Constitutional Court issued its decision on the Catalan Statute, doing so when the economic crisis was erupting. Even though most nationalist or secessionist movements are driven by identity and partisanship, economic considerations play a role in explaining their emergence and development (Muñoz & Tormos, 2015). The economic downturn reinforced at this time the use of remedial and instrumental arguments by nationalist or separatist parties to affirm, among other things, that the granting of more political and fiscal autonomy (or total secession) would offset ‘fiscal plundering’ by the state, making it possible to deal better with the economic crisis (Dalle Mulle & Serrano, 2019, p. 11). The crisis also reinforced blame-shifting strategies on the part of regional parties, which took the opportunity to blame the central government for their having to implement unpopular decisions in their regions, accusing it of being a poor negotiator in Brussels (Palau, 2018). Yet, regional parties were not the only entrepreneurs of the territorial conflict (Pardos-Prado & Sagarzazu, 2019). The literature has already demonstrated that, regardless of their ideology (left or right wing), incumbent parties pay closer attention to economic issues when the economic situation is good, in order to secure re-election. Instead, they try to shift attention to other issues when the economic situation is bad (Petrocik, 1996). In this regard, Pardos-Prado and Sagarzazu (2019) illustrate how incumbent parties in Spain, and especially the conservatives during the 2011–2016 term, have drawn attention and contributed to the politicisation of the territorial question as a strategy to divert attention and avoid electoral punishment. The Catalan conflict, an issue that sets the Spanish case apart from the Portuguese one, made the centre-periphery ... dimension consequential in the voting booth (Mendes & Dennison, 2021; Vidal & Sánchez-Vitores, 2019). The rise of radical parties – Podemos and Vox – at a time when the consequences of the crisis were still very visible also contributed to increased voter’s territorial polarisation (Garmendia Madariaga & Riera, 2022). Overall, for the reasons explained ... above, we expect that the centre-periphery ... dimension affected parties’ voting behaviour in parliament following the outbreak of the euro crisis. Thus, our second hypothesis states that:

H2: Amid bad economic conditions, the ideological distance on the centre-periphery ... dimension between the incumbent and opposition parties has a greater effect on the likelihood of voting against the government’s legislation.

Data and Methodology

Case Selection

In order to test our hypotheses, we selected two countries which have significant similarities and, at the same time, important differences: Portugal and Spain. These two countries, in fact, were particularly affected by the Great Recession, but they experienced two very different post-crisis scenarios. While the global onset of the crisis dates back to 2008, it impacted both countries in around 2009–2010, while a socialist government was

in office for a second consecutive term. In both cases, the incumbents resigned in 2011 and were replaced by two centre-right governments, which started approving a series of severe austerity policies while protests arose from large sectors of civil society.¹ Thereafter, a bifurcation occurred: between 2013 and 2014, new political forces appeared in Spain – notably *Podemos* (We Can) and *Ciudadanos* (Citizens) – and started challenging the established political parties, while in Portugal the usual political actors kept competing at the polls, with some minor exceptions.²

Spain had four general elections and three different cabinets in less than four years: the first two elections (in 2015 and 2016) saw the victory of the centre-right *Partido Popular* (Popular Party, PP), while the third and the fourth ones (in 2019) saw the return of the *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (Socialist Party, PSOE). In Portugal things went very differently: a socialist minority government replaced the centre-right incumbent in late 2015, thanks to the external support of the radical left parties – *Bloco de Esquerda* (Left Bloc, BE), *Partido Comunista Português* (Portuguese Communist Party, PCP) and *Partido Ecologista 'Os Verdes'* (Ecologist Party 'The Greens', PEV) – and ended its first legislature in office in late 2019. At the next election, in 2019, the Socialist Party (PS) was confirmed in office, obtaining 20 more seats in parliament compared with 2015 (Jalali et al., 2020), but still falling short of gaining a majority in parliament. New agreements of external support were not signed between the PS and its left-wing former partners. The consequence was an increase in political tensions that culminated with the PS's inability to secure parliamentary support for its annual budget of 2022. Nonetheless, a snap election held in January 2022 yielded a parliamentary majority of seats for the PS.

In economic terms, both countries started to recover in 2014 and emerged from the crisis. Similarities at the economic level were accompanied by important differences in terms of institutional frameworks. The two countries had some remarkable similarities throughout the twentieth century, both of them being authoritarian regimes for four decades and reaching a turning point with the transition to democracy in the 1970s. Thereafter they followed different paths that led to the formation of their current democratic systems (Fernandes, 2015; Fishman & Lizardo, 2013). The Spanish political elite agreed to establish a parliamentary monarchy, while Portugal became a republic. Spain developed a quasi-federal system, while Portugal was resistant to decentralisation (Nanetti et al., 2004). Indeed, in comparative terms, the inability or unwillingness of Portuguese decision-makers to reform the subnational structure of governance produced one of the most centralised state structures in Europe (Teles, 2022). This administrative feature is manifest in the financial dependence of the local level on the national one, the absence of an intermediate tier of subnational government, and the lack of organisational capacity to provide high quality public services (Teles, 2022).

Fishman (2019) argues that the model of democratic transition has left a cultural imprint on the political practice of both countries that extends beyond the institutional configuration. A more inclusive and egalitarian pattern is apparent in the Portuguese case, while it is less inclusive and hierarchical in the Spanish one, which explains Portugal's greater capacity to include the demands of peripheral actors. In the Spanish case, the hierarchy creates a symbolic and formal separation with actors defending peripheral causes such as national identities or minorities. The centre-periphery ... dimension is one of the most important components of party division in Spain, and especially so in

the last decade because of the Catalan secessionist movement. In Catalonia, during the period 2006–2014 the number of those supporting an independent state tripled from 14 to 45 per cent (Muñoz & Tormos, 2015).

The Dependent Variable

Our dependent variable consisted of the voting choice of all opposition parties with regard to government bills. Because we wanted to explore what explains conflict or consensus in parliament, we created a dummy variable with value 1 if groups voted against legislation. The Spanish database included information about the final votes for all the organic laws approved and the validation votes for all the decree-laws passed between 1996 and 2019.³ In Spain, there is not a final vote on ordinary laws, so these were not included in the analysis. A total of 135 organic laws and 347 decree-laws were coded and analysed.⁴ The Portuguese database comprised information about the PPGs' voting behaviour upon the final passage of government bills from 2002 to 2018.⁵ The database included all the bills initiated by the government – giving origin to both ordinary and organic laws⁶ – and approved by the parliament in the above-mentioned period. As far as the Portuguese case is concerned, a total of 788 laws were consequently coded and analysed.

Overall, the database comprised a total of 1270 initiatives (482 for Spain and 788 for Portugal). Because we collected information on all parties' voting behaviour on each piece of legislation, the database included a total of 2412 observations in the Spanish case and 3912 in the Portuguese one. Given the discussed above, one obvious limitation of this research was that we were not comparing the same type of laws in the two countries. Therefore, we ran parallel analyses of the two cases and interpreted the empirical results with this consideration in mind. Nevertheless, we can say that in Spain the use of decree-laws has significantly increased over time, in some legislatures accounting for more than 60 per cent of the total legislation passed. In addition, they are used to regulate a broad range of issues, including ones like labour market reforms, which have nothing to do with an urgent necessity and that cause significant political controversy (Chaqués-Bonafont et al., 2015). Therefore, even though we did not have data on ordinary legislation for Spain, we think that, by considering decree laws, we were able to capture parties' voting behaviour on significant left-right issues regulated over the period of analysis.

The Independent Variables

Our first independent variable, the unemployment rate, was meant to measure the impact of bad economic times. Theories of economic voting have demonstrated that citizens punish incumbents on the basis of their macroeconomic performance, especially when unemployment rates are high (Blount, 2002). In Southern European countries, in particular, persistent unemployment rates are strongly associated with citizens' frustration and represent the measure that best forecasts rising levels of political disaffection (Muro & Vidal, 2014). Other economic indicators, such as GDP growth, are not good indicators of citizens' economic anxieties (Fitoussi & Martine, 2018), so they are less appropriate for testing the impact of changing economic conditions on parties' legislative

behaviour. The second independent variable had to do with the opposition parties' ideological distance from the incumbent. On the left-right dimension, this variable is computed by considering the standard left-right scale (Rile index) developed by the Manifesto Project (Volkens et al., 2019). The Rile index is a measure that ranges from – 100 – if all of the sentences of the manifesto are devoted to left categories – to 100 – if they are devoted to right categories.⁷ To calculate the ideological distance, we subtracted the Rile index of the incumbent party (or of a weighted average of the coalition government parties, as happened in the case of Portugal between 2011 and 2015) from that of each opposition party, considering the electoral manifestos related to the corresponding legislature.⁸ In the case of Spain, to measure parties' position on the centre-periphery ... dimension we applied the same methodology based on the federalism index as developed by the Manifesto Project. High values for this index indicate support for federalism or decentralisation of political and/or economic power. Even though the literature has identified limitations in the capacity of the Manifesto Project data to measure party positions and directions accurately (e.g., Benoit & Laver, 2006; Pelizzo, 2003) alternative measures such as the log-ratio measure (Lowe et al., 2011) neither cover the whole period included in our analysis nor include information on the centre-periphery ... dimension.

Our regression models also included a number of control variables. First, we controlled for changes in the party system. To do so, we used the variable 'party system fragmentation', which included the vote share of the two main parties with parliamentary representation in the elections preceding the legislature. Second, we considered the opposition parties' capacity to influence the parliamentary majority. Minority governments may attenuate the impact of ideological distance on legislative behaviour because parties can exchange support for policies closer to their preferences along both dimensions of party competition (e.g., Christiansen & Damgaard, 2008; Field, 2014). We consequently considered whether parties were 'supporting parties' and identified them as such if they either gave external support to the government by signing a formal agreement or voted in favour of the executive in the vote of confidence and then supported legislation based on ad hoc agreements. In the period analysed in this paper, several minority governments took office in both Spain and Portugal. In Spain, all governments were single-party minority governments with the exception of two absolute majorities of the conservatives (Aznar legislature 2000–2004 and Rajoy 2011–2016). In Portugal, there were two Socialist minority governments (Sócrates II, 2009–2011 and Costa, 2015–2019), two centre-right coalition governments (formed by the PSD and CDS-PP) and one single-party majority government (José Sócrates 2005–2009). Finally, we also included the type of government as a control variable, with value 1 indicating a (one-party or coalition) majority government and 0 otherwise.

Before the results of the regression models are presented, Figures 1A to 6A in the methodological appendix provide a brief description of the evolution of parties' ideological positions based on the Rile and Federalism indices, and of ideological distances from the incumbent. This descriptive information is particularly interesting because the economic crisis forced parties to adopt more extreme positions (Garcia et al. 2018). Increases in perceived ideological polarisation are related to austerity measures and bad economic times (Huebscher et al, 2020), and lead (among other factors) to higher levels of affective polarisation: that is, partisans' resentment toward political opponents (Gidron et al.

2020). In Spain, affective polarisation reached its highest peak in the 2015 election, which was marked by the impact of austerity policies and the emergence of the radical left-wing Podemos (Torcal & Comellas, 2022, p. 11). According to the comparative analysis conducted by Gidron et al. (2020), Spain, followed by Portugal and Greece, is among the countries with the highest rates of affective polarisation. In this regard, it is particularly interesting to see whether parties moved to more extreme positions during the economic crisis.

In the case of Portugal, the Rile index not surprisingly shows that the parties more on the left are the PCP and the Greens – which always form an electoral alliance (CDU) at the polls and then split into two different PPGs in parliament – and the Left Bloc. More moderate but still on the left of the political spectrum we find the PS, with a progressive shift towards the centre over the years. Finally, moderately but progressively more on the right we respectively find the PSD and the CDS-PP, and in 2019 the emergence of a radical-right party, Chega (Enough), reaching a previously vacant ideological spot?. In terms of evolution over time, we can see that there was a widening of the ideological spectrum from the end of the 1990s until 2011, when the parties on the right and even the typically centre-left PS adopted some of the pro-market rhetoric as a response to the financial crisis and the urgent need to sign a memorandum of understanding with the so-called ‘Troika’ consisting of the International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank, and the European Commission (Moury & Stranding, 2017). In exchange for the payment of the agreed financial tranches, the Troika officials essentially supervised the action of the Portuguese government from 2011 to 2014. In the 2011 elections, both radical right and radical left parties adopted positions significantly more extreme than in previous elections. Interestingly, the 2015 Rile scores show that the PSD and CDS-PP electoral coalition (*Portugal à Frente*, PaF) shifted to the centre when compared to the individual parties’ positions in the previous elections, possibly because of the more comfortable macroeconomic context.

In the case of Spain, for the time span under analysis, the Rile index shows that the PP was the party situated more on the right.⁹ *Podemos* and the traditional radical left (IU, the former Communist Party) were those situated more on the left. More moderately on the left, the PSOE represents the mainstream party of that area in the Spanish party system. Remarkably, most parties moved to the left in the 2008 elections, just before the outbreak of the economic crisis (Figure 4A). The euro crisis accentuated this trend, particularly among the radical left in the 2011, and particularly the 2015 elections, following the austerity policies implemented first by the socialists and later by the conservatives. Accordingly, the ideological distances on the left-right dimension were particularly lengthy in the legislatures following these elections but did not reach unprecedented levels (with the exception of the radical left). Overall, a comparison between the two countries illustrates that in Portugal the economic crisis induced both left and right parties to move to more extreme positions on the left-right dimension of party competition (mainly the BE and CDSPP), while in Spain this was only the case of left parties, and particularly the radical left.

As regards the federalism index, regional parties (ERC, CIU, PNV and CC) are obviously those with higher values. The PSOE has always held a position more open to decentralisation than that of the PP. Yet, after 2008, following the introduction of the identity dimension into the electoral process by the PP in response to the statutory

reforms initiated in many regions in 2006 and 2007, both moved towards more centralised positions, notably the conservatives. The foundation of *Ciudadanos* in 2006, a party born to combat Catalan nationalism; the electoral consolidation of the radical right VOX, a radical right party that calls for the strong centralisation of the Spanish state; and the Catalan secessionist process: these developments further promoted the politicisation of the centre-periphery ... dimension and the polarisation of positions (Torcal & Comellas, 2022). This trend towards more centralised positions can also be observed in the case of the radical left, which had traditionally adopted positions slightly more decentralised than those of the socialists and especially the PP, thereby evidencing a structural process of political polarisation on territorial issues, especially after the 2011 elections. The Catalan secessionist left party (ERC) is the one that took up more extreme positions in almost all elections. Interestingly, the index significantly increased in the case of the Catalan party, CIU, which moved from being a nationalist party to one openly advocating for the independence of Catalonia. On the contrary, in the case of the Basque Nationalist Party (PNB), a historical secessionist party, the index decreased, although it still maintained significant differences from the values of state-wide mainstream parties.

Analysis

Given that our dependent variable was a dichotomous variable (with value 1 if parties cast a negative vote and 0 otherwise), the empirical model used to test our hypotheses was a logistic regression model. Since the N was unbalanced and we were analysing different types of laws, we calculated distinct models for each country (see regression results in Table 1). Model 1, in both countries, presents the results of a raw model (without interactions). Model 2 tests, based on interactions, the effect of ideological distance on parties' voting behaviour under different economic circumstances as defined in our hypotheses, considering the left-right dimension in the case of Portugal and also the centre-periphery ... dimension in that of Spain. The rest are those defined as control variables.

Table 1. Regression results: Spain (1996–2019) and Portugal (2002–2018)*.

	Dependent variable: negative vote			
	Portugal (Model 1)	Spain (Model 1)	Portugal (Model 2)	Spain (Model 2)
Unemployment	0.105*** (0.027)	0.092*** (0.012)	−0.004 (0.040)	0.002 (0.045)
Ideological distance (F-U)		−0.037*** (0.011)		−0.172*** (0.042)
Ideological distance (L-R)	0.027*** (0.004)	0.032*** (0.007)	−0.031* (0.016)	−0.0001 (0.028)
Party system fragmentation	0.051** (0.021)	0.016** (0.008)	0.032 (0.021)	0.018** (0.008)
Majority government	0.660*** (0.179)	0.344** (0.144)	0.845*** (0.189)	0.449*** (0.148)
Supportive party	−0.514** (0.213)	−1.078*** (0.191)	−0.331 (0.219)	−1.016*** (0.195)
Unemployment*				0.007**** (0.002)
Ideological distance (F-U)				
Unemployment*			0.004**** (0.001)	0.002 (0.002)
Ideological distance (L-R)				
Constant	−6.050*** (1.664)	−4.475*** (0.709)	−3.621** (1.787)	−3.087*** (0.969)
Observations	3,912	2,412	3,912	2,412
Log Likelihood	−2,521.710	−985.831	−2,515.087	−979.248
Akaike Inf. Crit.	5,055.421	1,985.663	5,044.173	1,976.497

*Note: $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.

For the case of Spain, the results in Model 1 (without interactions) show that ideological distances on the left-right dimension of party competition significantly influence parties' voting behaviour in parliament. The variable 'ideological distance L-R' is positive and statistically significant. The descriptive data in Table 2 corroborate this positive effect. In Spain, the radical left shows, on average, the higher percentage of negative votes from 2008 to 2019. The probability of IU (together with *Podemos* after 2016, when they formed an electoral and parliamentary alliance) voting against legislation was especially high when the conservatives were in government (legislatures 2000–2004, 2011–2016 and 2016–2018) and ideological distance reached its peak. On the contrary, when the Socialists were in government, the radical left adopted a more consensual stance, because ideological distance decreased, but also because it could influence the parliamentary majority (as happened in 2004–2008 and 2008–2011). The variable 'supporting party' is negative and statistically significant in all models, signalling the importance of the pivotal status of parties.

Interestingly, in some legislatures, and especially the one in which the conservatives held an absolute majority (2000–2004), the behaviour of the radical left was quite close to that of the mainstream PSOE, even though the ideological distance of IU from the incumbent was much greater. Both parties voted against a significant number of legislative proposals. This can be explained by the fact that in this legislature the so-called 'politics of polarization' started (Gunther & Montero, 2009; Chaqués et al., 2015). The Aznar government shifted markedly to the right, cutting taxes and government spending, and it took highly unpopular decisions, like sending troops to Iraq. It also abandoned party unity against ETA terrorism, and politicised religion, a highly sensitive issue. This was partially interpreted as a strategy directed against the PSOE, which was accused of weakening the nation (Gunther & Montero, 2009, p. 139). On the contrary, when the socialists were in government, between 2004 and 2011, the conservatives opted for a rather less conflictual opposition. Between 2016 and 2019, the level of parliamentary conflict generally decreased, except in the case of *Podemos*, which cast a high number of negative votes, especially in the first part of the legislature, when the conservatives were governing. It is also interesting that *Ciudadanos*, which in the first part of the last legislature (until the censure motion of June 2018) was a pivotal party, never cast a negative vote when Rajoy was prime minister. By contrast, when Sánchez entered office

Table 2. Parliamentary groups' mean percentages of negative votes per legislature in Spain (1996–2019).

	1996–2000	2000–2004	2004–2008	2008–2011	2011–2016	2016–2018	2018–2019
PP	0	0	29	12	0	0	18
PSOE	28	37	0	0	54	6	0
CC	1	0	0	–	–	–	–
CIU	0	6	6	2	33	–	–
Cs	–	–	–	–	–	0	12
ERC	–	–	5	–	–	27	3
IU-UP	34	30	6	26	57	33	12
PNV	5	13	5	17	25	9	0
UPD	–	–	–	–	43	–	–

Note 1: The table shows data for parties that had their own parliamentary group in the Chamber during the period under analysis.

Note 2: We split the 12th legislature (2016–2019) into the periods before and after the censure motion against the Rajoy Government.

in 2018, it opposed 12 percent of legislation. This further confirms the importance of the pivotal status of parties as a variable that moderates the influence of ideological distance on voting behaviour.

Interestingly, the regression results corroborate that regional parties are likely to support legislation despite their sizable distances from the incumbent on the centre-periphery ... dimension. The coefficient for the variable ‘ideological distance (F-U)’ in model 1 is negative and statistically significant. Thus, the centre-periphery dimension of party competition does not significantly influence the voting behaviour of Spanish parties in routine (non-crisis) times. Although CIU and PNV adopt positions on decentralisation issues significantly different from that of the PP, because they share with the conservatives a right-centrist orientation, they both strongly support legislation passed by the conservatives when the economic situation is good. In the 2000–2004 legislature, for example, when the PP was governing with an absolute majority, these regional parties provided significantly more support for legislation than left parties did. Interestingly, when the socialists entered office in 2004, this did not translate into more conflictual behaviour. This was mainly because the PSOE, as a minority government, was obliged to reach *ad hoc* legislative agreements (including regional parties) to pass legislation. In addition, negotiations to reform regional statutes of autonomy, including the Catalan one, started during this legislature. The main characteristic of the Spanish multi-level governance system is that parties take advantage of minority governments to exert pressures in support of additional transfers of authority and resources from the central government to the autonomous communities (Field, 2014; Gunther & Montero, 2009). This prevents differences on the centre-periphery ... dimension from translating into conflictual parliamentary behaviour under minority governments. Yet, as we will explain later, the situation changed radically with the outbreak of the economic crisis and the absolute majority of the conservatives.

In the case of Portugal, the results also corroborate that ideological distances on the left-right dimension matter. In model 1, the variable ‘ideological distance (L-R)’ is positive and statistically significant. The descriptive data in Table 3 corroborate the more adversarial behaviour of the radical opposition parties – i.e., the BE, PCP and PEV – in all the legislatures under analysis, but notably in the period 2009–2011 and 2011–2015; that is, after the outbreak of the economic crisis and, in particular, after the bailout was signed (2011) and the government majority changed. Their level of conflict was almost equally high during the first majority government led by the socialist José Sócrates (2005–2009), while it slightly increased during the following minority

Table 3. Parliamentary groups’ mean percentages of negative votes per legislature in Portugal (2002–2018).

	2002–2005	2005–2009	2009–2011	2011–2015	2015–2018
BE	53	52	63	61	14
CDSPP	0	24	13	0	21
PAN	0	0	0	0	5
PCPCDU	46	49	69	71	20
PEVCDU	46	54	63	70	18
PS	30	0	0	29	0
PSD	0	24	0	0	20

Note 1: The table shows data for parties that had their own parliamentary group in the Chamber during the period under analysis.

government, led again by the PS. This suggests, as we explain below, that the onset of the crisis and the consequent tough measures approved had a significant impact on the opposition's behaviour. In Spain, by contrast, the highest level of conflict is recorded during the centre-right government that took office right after the socialists lost elections in both countries. Finally, in 2015, a new Socialist minority government was formed thanks to the external support of the far-left parties, and this obviously explains the drastic fall in their level of conflict in the period 2015–2018. An important difference between the two countries consists in how the radical left behaved strategically in Portugal, in late 2015, by facilitating the formation of a socialist government to prevent the return of a centre-right government (De Giorgi & Cancela, 2021), while in Spain it continued to be more conflictual, even blocking the investiture of Pedro Sánchez following the April 2019 election.

We now explore whether changing economic circumstances affect the impact of ideological distance on parliamentary behaviour in both countries in the direction expected by our hypotheses. The first finding is that regression coefficients confirm what we already know from previous research: in bad economic times, parties behave in a more adversarial manner when voting on legislation. Model 1 shows that increases in unemployment rates translate into a more negative voting behaviour in both Spain and Portugal. However, our goal was to go beyond this and determine the extent to which the impact of ideological distance on both dimensions of party competition is amplified when the economic situation is bad – a question addressed by Model 2 for both countries.

In the case of Portugal, as expected, the economic crisis strengthened the effect on parliamentary behaviour of the distance on the left-right dimension (H1). The interaction term between the variables 'unemployment' and 'ideological distance (L-R)' is positive and statistically significant. In Model 2, the coefficient of the constitutive term (distances on the L-R), which measures the effect of the variable when the conditioning variable (unemployment) is zero, is negative and statistically significant. Because a situation with zero unemployment is hard to imagine in a real-world situation, [Figure 1](#) plots the predicted probabilities that parties will vote against legislation at different levels of unemployment and with different values of ideological distance. The results show that those parties more ideologically distant on the left-right dimension from the incumbent (green line) are more likely to vote against legislation than are those ideologically closer, notably when unemployment rates are high. In Portugal, higher levels of unemployment are associated with negative voting, and this is especially true (statistically significant) for parties which are more ideologically distant from the incumbent on the left-right dimension of party competition. The BE, PCP and PEV raised the percentage of negative voting above 60 per cent of total legislation during the 2009–2011 legislature. As regards mainstream parties, the Portuguese Social Democrats behaved quite cooperatively at the very beginning of the crisis, when the PS of José Socrates formed a minority government. This cycle eventually ended at the beginning of 2011, when the Socialist government lost the support of both sides of the political spectrum and was forced to resign. Once in opposition, however, the PS, contrary to the Spanish socialists, adopted a cooperative stance in its confrontation with the government until the end of 2012, when it finally changed strategy and voted against the 2013 budget (De Giorgi et al., 2015). By contrast, the radical left parties, PCP, PEV and BE, appeared markedly more likely to vote against

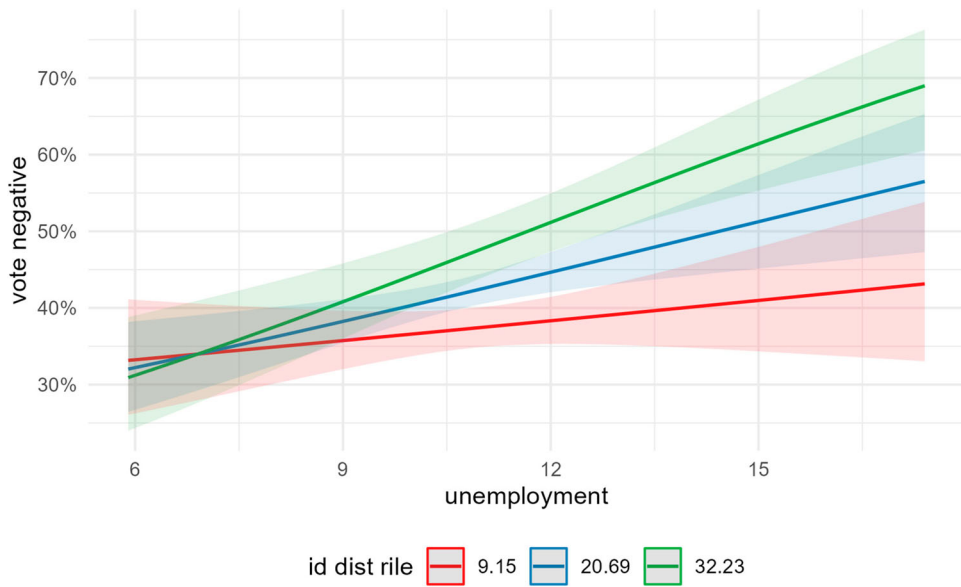


Figure 1. Predicted probability of negative vote by unemployment and Left-Right distance (Portugal)*.

*Note: The three coloured lines represent predicted probabilities for different levels of L-R distance. Red: mean – standard deviation; Blue: mean; Green: mean + standard deviation).

rather than in favour after the start of the crisis and the bailout. To control for the behaviour of radical parties, Table 1A in the methodological appendix sets out the results of a model including the Rile index (and its interaction with unemployment) as independent variables. The coefficients indicate that left-wing parties (with negative Rile values) are more likely to vote against legislation than are right-wing parties, especially when the economic situation is bad.

In Spain, rising unemployment levels amplified the effect of ideological distances on the left-right dimension on the likelihood of voting against legislation; but in this case, the coefficient is not statistically significant. The predicted probability plot (Figure 2), illustrates that, when unemployment rates increase, all parties (those more ideologically distant from the incumbent (green line) but also those more ideologically close to it (the blue and especially the red line)) vote more against legislation. The non-statistical significance of the coefficient signals that those parties with larger distances do not vote significantly more against legislation than do others under low unemployment rates, as is the case in Portugal. This is because when the economic situation deteriorates, and especially when conservatives are in government, regionalist parties close to the incumbent on the left-right dimension (notably CIU and PNV) increase their share of negative votes (as we explain below mainly as a result of the amplifying effect of distances on the centre-periphery ... dimension), and also because radical but also mainstream left parties behave in a more conflictual manner. Following the outbreak of the economic crisis, the radical left opposed legislation to the greatest extent (57 per cent of total legislation in the 2011–2016 legislature). But the negative vote on legislation also reached unprecedented levels for the other opposition parties, including the socialists. Even though it was a mainstream party,

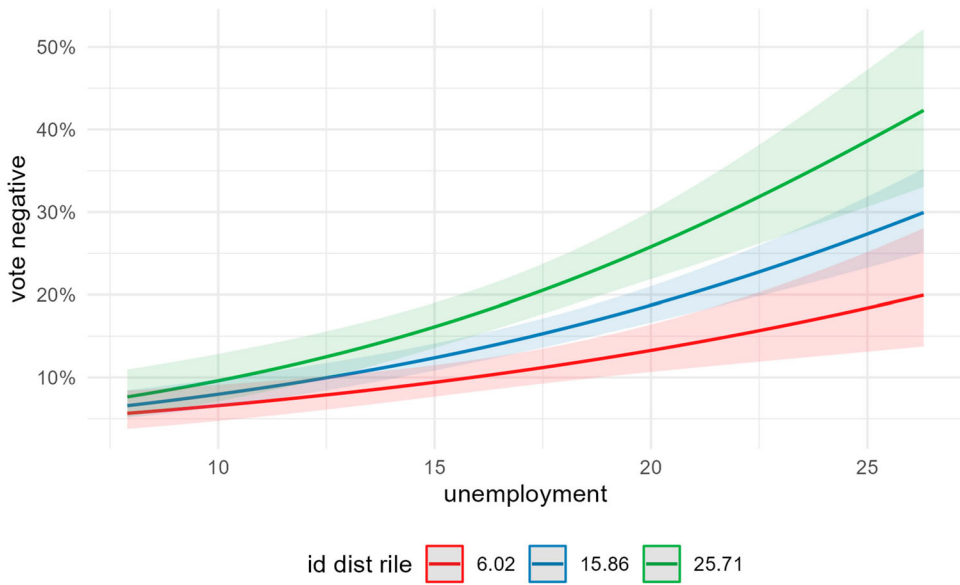


Figure 2. Predicted probability of negative vote by unemployment and Left-Right distance (Spain)*. *Note: The three coloured lines represent predicted probabilities for different levels of L-R distance. Red: mean – standard deviation; Blue: mean; Green: mean + standard deviation).

the PSOE adopted a rather conflictual strategy, especially during the crisis, compared to the conservatives. In Spain, the interaction term between unemployment and the Rile index in the regression Table 1A (methodological appendix) is also statistically significant, but as the predicted probability plot in Figure 7A illustrates, when the economic situation deteriorated both radical (red line) and moderate (blue line) left parties were more likely to vote against legislation during the crisis than were right parties (green line).

At that time, the conflictual behaviour of the PSOE could be explained as an electoral strategy in response to the entrance of new actors, oriented to avoid the risk of vote drain towards new political forces (like Podemos) in the competitive scenario. These new actors showed, oriented to signal their strong opposition to the government's policies because of the serious social consequences of the measures implemented. In Spain, contrary to what happens in Portugal, the impact of changes in the party system on parties' voting behaviour is corroborated by the positive and statistically significant coefficient of the variable 'party system fragmentation' in the model with interactions (Model 2). Interestingly, once IU and *Podemos* had formed an electoral (and later parliamentary) alliance, the radical left moved to positions more radical than those of the socialists. In the post-crisis scenario, when the PP was again in office (2015–2018) and after the failed '*sorpaso*' of *Podemos*, the PSOE opposed only six per cent of government initiatives, while *Podemos* opposed 33 per cent. *Podemos* opposed a significant percentage of legislation (12 per cent) even when the PSOE was in government, from June 2018 to mid-2019, especially as elections were approaching (reaching 33 per cent in 2019).

Finally, as expected, the economic crisis in Spain amplified the effect of the centre-periphery ... dimension on parties' likelihood of voting against legislation (H2). The

interaction term between the variables ‘unemployment’ and ‘ideological distance (F-U)’ is positive and statistically significant. The coefficient of the constitutive term corroborates that this positive effect does not exist when the economic situation is good. The predicted probabilities in [Figure 3](#) confirm that the likelihood of voting against legislation increases when parties have substantially different views on decentralisation and when unemployment rates are high. Overall, the results indicate that distances from the incumbent on the centre-periphery ... dimension do not influence parties’ voting behaviour unless the economic situation is bad.¹⁰ In the 2011–2016 legislature, when the bank bailout was approved, CIU, the Catalan regional party, opposed 33 per cent of the total legislation, thus reaching unprecedented levels of opposition to national legislation. This happened because the economic crisis exacerbated the historical fiscal grievance suffered by Catalonia, fuelling sentiments in support of secession based on the idea that the region would perform better economically if it was an independent state (Muñoz & Tormos, 2015; Boyland, 2015).

The crisis had an amplifying effect because the territorial conflict had started somewhat before the outbreak of the crisis following the reform of the Catalan Statute of Autonomy. From this ensued the following developments: the rise of the secessionist movement, leading to a massive demonstration organised in 2012; the CIU’s switch from being a nationalist party to one openly advocating secession; the call for a first referendum of independence organised in 2014; and the culmination of the process in 2017, with a signed and suspended independence declaration after a new referendum held on October 1th. In this context, the outbreak of the economic crisis was used by both regional and mainstream parties to their advantage. Regional parties employed, among

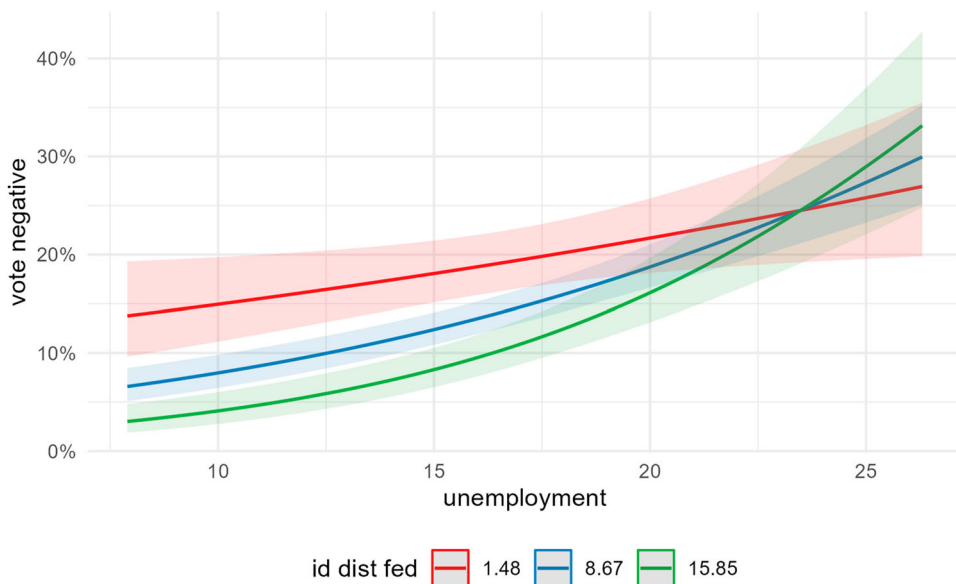


Figure 3. Predicted probability of negative vote by unemployment and distances on the centre-periphery ... dimension (Spain)*.

*Note: The three coloured lines represent predicted probabilities for different levels of F-U distance. Red: mean – standard deviation; Blue: mean; Green: mean + standard deviation).

other rationales, economic arguments to voice their call for independence, and mainstream parties strategically used the centre-periphery ... dimension to deviate attention from the harsh social consequences resulting from cuts in social spending and thereby avoid electoral punishment (Pardos-Prado & Sagarzazu, 2019). Our analysis demonstrates that this electoral strategy resonated also within the parliamentary arena, with parties holding significantly different views on decentralisation behaving in a substantially more conflictual manner. The outbreak of the territorial conflict in this context also explains why other regional right-wing parties, the PNV, also increased the percentage of negative votes on legislation to unprecedented levels during this legislature (25 percent of total legislation).

Conclusions

In this article, we have tested the effect of ideological distance on parties' voting behaviour in parliament under changing economic conditions. To do so, we have considered two dimensions – the left-right and the centre-periphery ... ones – through analysis of two different cases: Spain and Portugal. The regression results confirm that the impact of ideological distance on the likelihood of voting against a government's legislation increased amid bad economic conditions, but with an important difference between the two countries.

In Portugal, the economic crisis amplified, as expected, the impact of the left-right divide. Parties more distant from the incumbent on this dimension were more likely to vote against legislation. In Spain, on the contrary, all parties behaved in a more conflictual manner. The fact that the left-right divide did not have the same effect in the two countries can be partially explained by the fact that, in Spain, the mainstream PSOE adopted a quite adversarial strategy during the economic recession that was close to the one displayed by the radical left. In Portugal, conversely, mainstream parties in opposition adopted behaviour more consensual than that of the radical parties, even when the economic situation deteriorated. In Spain, immediately after the outbreak of the financial crisis, the PP behaved in a consensual manner while in opposition, mainly opting for abstention, but in 2011 the PSOE chose conflict when the PP entered office. Despite being in the same situation, the Portuguese PS did not follow the same strategy, notably between 2011 and 2012. This can be read as a response to the transformation that occurred in the Spanish party context, which Portugal did not experience: namely, the emergence of new challenger parties disputing the electoral space of the socialists which resulted in a much more polarised environment and a more conflictual opposition in parliament than in Portugal. These results evidence that changes in the party system and electoral strategies resonate within the parliamentary arena, influencing parties' likelihood of voting against legislation. This highlights the importance of linking two different strands in the literature – one about legislative behaviour, the other about parties and party system – which so far have been often considered separately. Even though our results are compatible with previous explanations based on path-dependent national differences that lead to more consensual politics in Portugal (Fishman 2021), they also signal the importance of considering contextual and political variables in order to provide a better account of parties' legislative behaviour in both countries.

Yet, the paper's contribution goes beyond this finding. In fact, it also highlights the importance of considering the centre-periphery ... dimension of party competition when exploring the effect of ideological distance on voting behaviour in parliament. The results confirm that in Spain the economic crisis exacerbated the territorial conflict, with parties more distant from the incumbent on the centre-periphery dimension being more likely to vote against legislation. From previous research, we already knew that while most secessionist or nationalist movements have their roots in identity-related factors, economic considerations are also among the determinants of their support (Muñoz & Tormos, 2015). We also knew that regional parties are not the only entrepreneurs of the territorial conflict: during the economic crisis, governing parties, regardless of their ideological orientation, may have sought to ... exacerbate the territorial conflict as a strategy to deviate public attention and avoid electoral punishment (Pardos-Prado & Sagarzazu, 2019). What we learn from this work is that, holding the effect of other variables constant, the centre-periphery dimension also influences parties' voting behaviour on legislation in bad economic times.

Further research is undoubtedly required to confirm the results obtained so far, and to corroborate our findings. First, in both Spain and Portugal the entry of radical-right parties in parliament – respectively, VOX and Chega – provides an interesting scenario in which to further explore the impact exerted by changes in the party system and party competition on parties' legislative behaviour, notably that of the right-wing, with which they dispute the electoral space. Second, the present study should be replicated in further national cases, which may differ from the ones considered here in either the impact of the economic crisis or the organisation of the state. A comparison with Germany, a country where the economic crisis had a lower impact and the distribution of competences across levels of government is far less open-ended than in Spain, or with the United Kingdom, where Scotland has also experienced increasing support for independence in recent decades, would yield interesting comparative findings.

Notes

1. In Spain the 15-M movement, also known as the 'indignados' movement, and in Portugal the 12-M movement (or 'struggling generation') are organised without support from political parties or labour unions.
2. At the 2015 elections the only novelty was the entrance in parliament of one MP of the new Animalist party PAN (People-Animals-Nature), while at the 2019 elections a few more new parties entered parliament (among which the populist radical right party Chega, for the first time), but again with only one MP each. Only at the snap elections held in 2022 did Portugal register a significant success of new parties, but in the context of the victory of the Socialist party, which obtained the absolute majority of seats in parliament.
3. Until the end of the 2016–2019 legislature (March 2019).
4. Organic laws require an absolute majority to pass in the Congress. They are limited to the regulation of certain issues, i.e., the exercise of fundamental rights and public liberties, the general electoral system, the approval of the regional statutes (*Estatutos de Autonomía*), and other procedures mentioned by the Spanish Constitution, including the regulation of the Constitutional Court, the Ombudsman (*Defensor del Pueblo*) and the states of alert, emergency or siege. Decree-laws are provisional regulatory acts passed by the executive in the case of extraordinary or urgent necessity, or when exceptional circumstances impede the implementation of ordinary legislative procedures. In accordance with the Spanish

Constitution, decree-laws cannot affect the regulation of basic State institutions, rights, duties, and liberties of citizens, the Estatutos de Autonomía, or the general electoral system. Decree-laws have to be submitted for debate and voted by the entire Congress, within thirty days from their promulgation. The Congress has to adopt a specific decision on their ratification or revocation in the same period, with the option of processing them as executive bills.

5. As regards the 2015–2019 legislature, the analysis stops at the end of 2018.
6. In Portugal, both ordinary and organic laws – which, as well as in Spain, are limited to the regulation of specific issues (according to art.166 of the Constitution) – must pass a parliamentary vote to enter into force, while decree laws are not voted on. Decree laws, in fact, are voted by parliament only when there is a majority (against them) that asks for a vote. This is why they are not included in the Portuguese database and the number of laws initiated by the government (and voted) seems lower than expected.
7. See Mölder 2016 for a discussion about the validity of the index.
8. For example, in Spain in the previous legislature (2016–2019) we considered the information provided by the 2016 party manifestos. The governing party, the PP had a Rile index of –3.45. The PSOE scored –27.23, so the ideological distance between the PP and the PSOE was 23.78.
9. The radical right, VOX, did not enter parliament until the 2019 elections.
10. The regression model in the methodological appendix (Table 1A) also corroborates that parties with more extreme values on the federalism index were more likely to vote against legislation during the economic crisis.

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Methodological appendix

Table 1A. Regression results: Spain (1996–2019) and Portugal (2002–2018)*.

	Dependent variable: negative vote	
	Portugal	Spain
Rile index	−0.013 (0.010)	0.016 (0.017)
Unemployment	0.093*** (0.031)	−0.047 (0.029)
Federalism		−0.186*** (0.030)
Party system fragmentation	0.021 (0.020)	0.048*** (0.010)
Majority government	0.872*** (0.171)	0.005 (0.162)
Supportive party	−0.530** (0.212)	−1.179*** (0.195)
Rile index* Unemployment	−0.002* (0.001)	−0.003*** (0.001)
Federalism index* Unemployment		0.009*** (0.002)
Constant	−3.898** (1.638)	−4.308*** (0.845)
Observations	3912	2412
Log Likelihood	−2,467.888	−974.315
Akaike Inf. Crit.	4,949.776	1,966.631

*Note: * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.

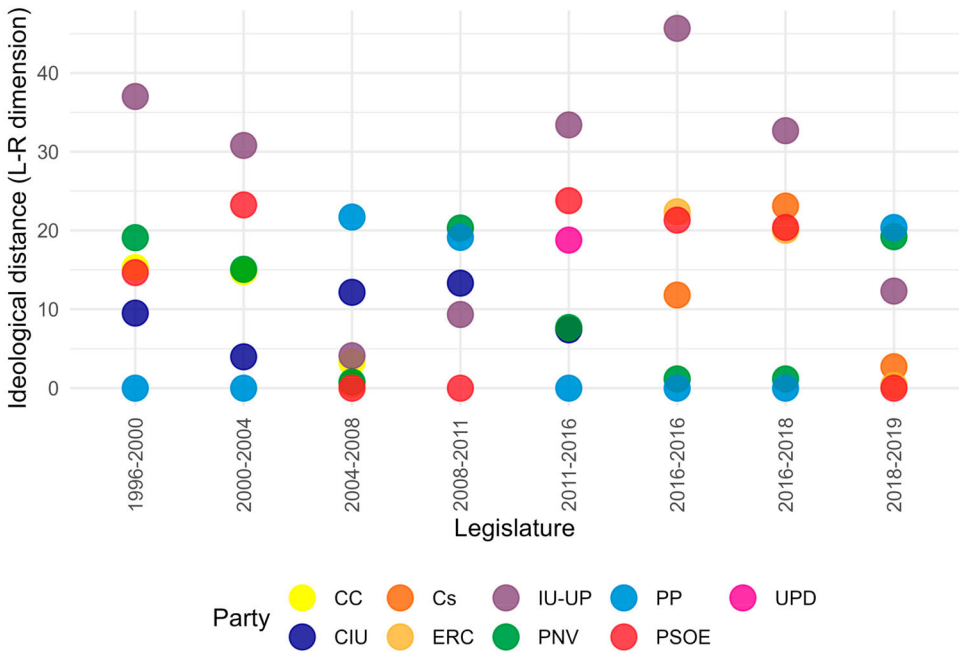


Figure 1A. Ideological distances on the Left-Right (L-R) dimension across legislatures: Spain*.

*The figure shows data for parties able to cast an independent vote on legislation, i.e., those that had a parliamentary group in the Chamber.

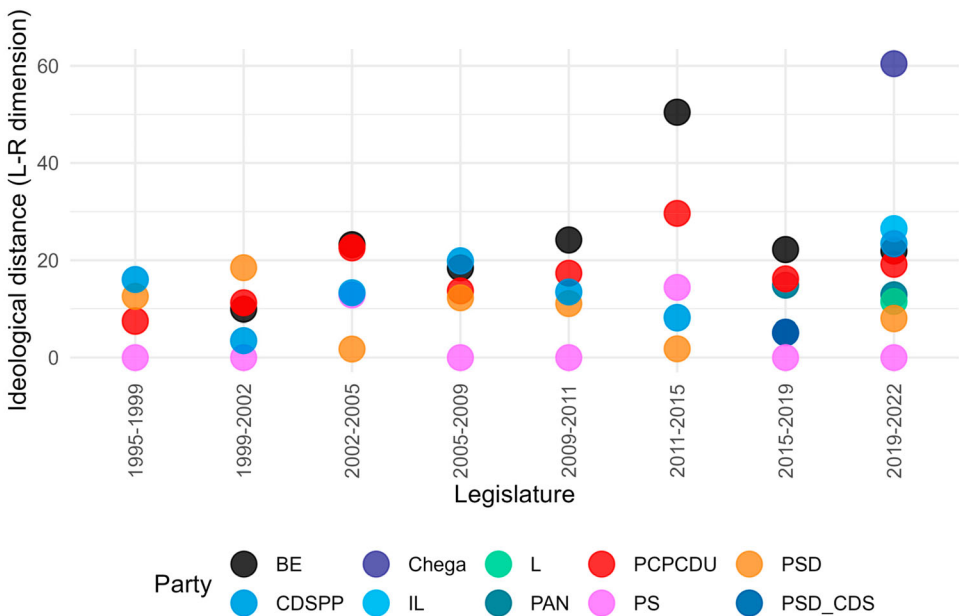


Figure 2A. Ideological distances on the Left-Right (L-R) dimension across legislatures: Portugal*.

*The figure shows data for parties able to cast an independent vote on legislation, i.e., those that had a parliamentary group in the Chamber.

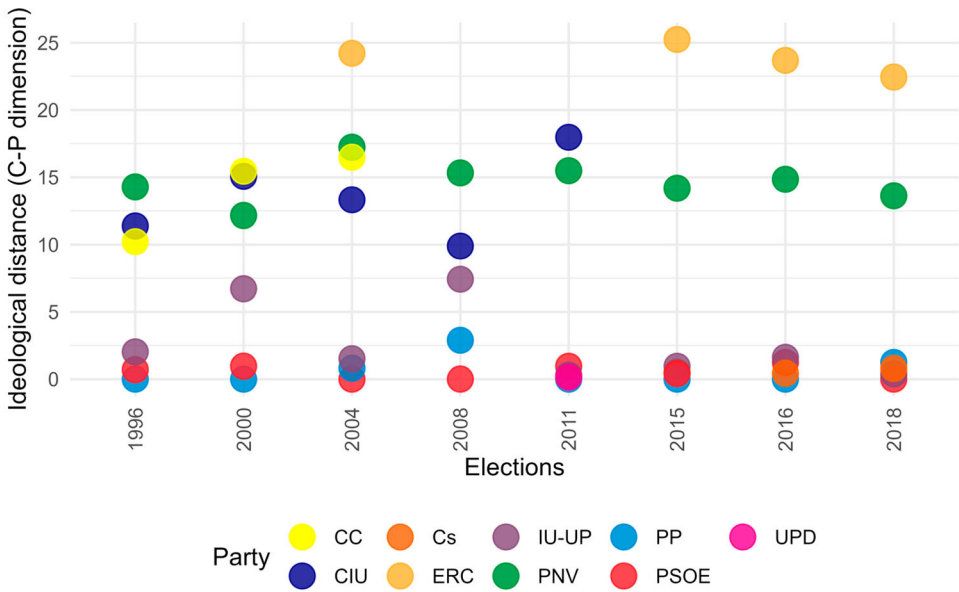


Figure 3A. Ideological distances on the centre-periphery (C-P) dimension across elections: Spain*.

*The figure shows data for parties able to cast an independent vote on legislation, i.e. those with a parliamentary group in the Chamber.

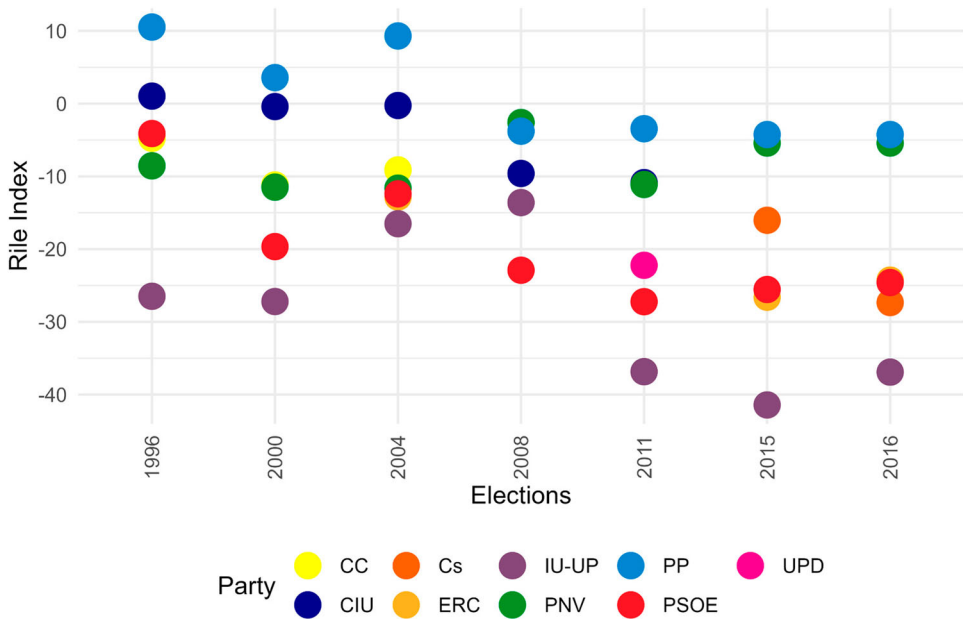


Figure 4A. Rile Index across elections: Spain*.

*The figure shows data for parties able to cast an independent vote on legislation, i.e., those with a parliamentary group in the Chamber.

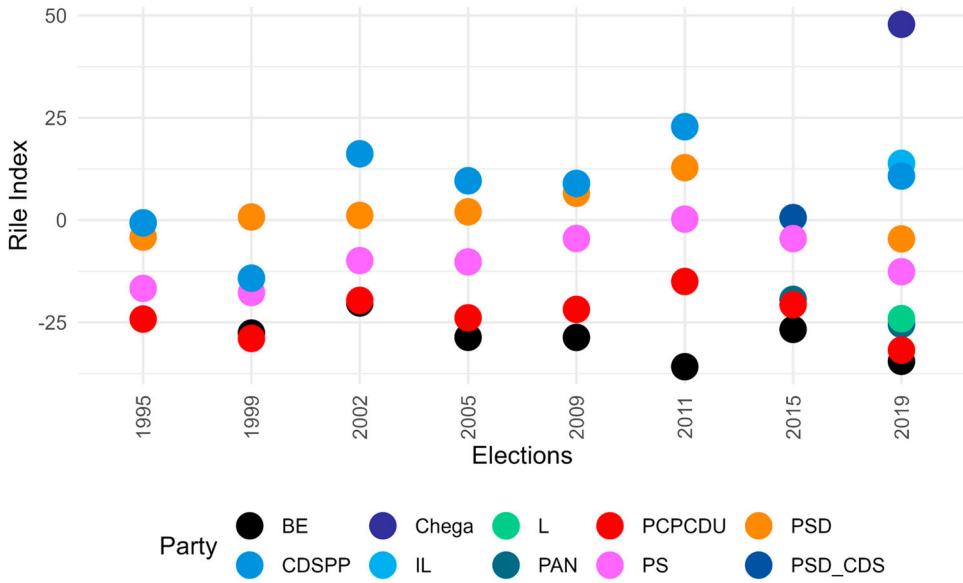


Figure 5A. Rile Index across elections, Portugal, 1995–2019*.

*The figure shows data for parties able to cast an independent vote on legislation, i.e., those with a parliamentary group in the Chamber.

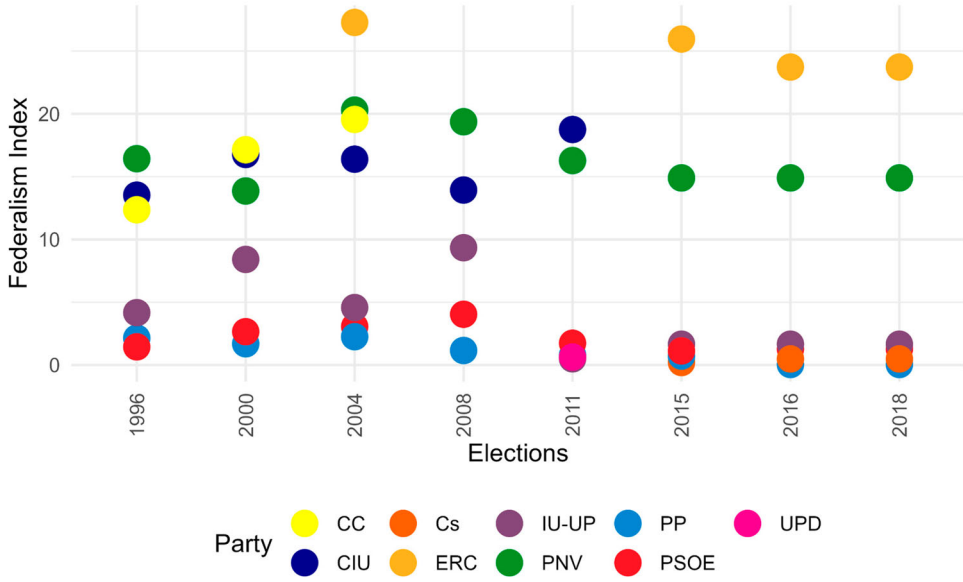


Figure 6A. Federalism Index across elections: Spain*.

*The figure shows data for parties able to cast an independent vote on legislation, i.e., those with a parliamentary group in the Chamber.

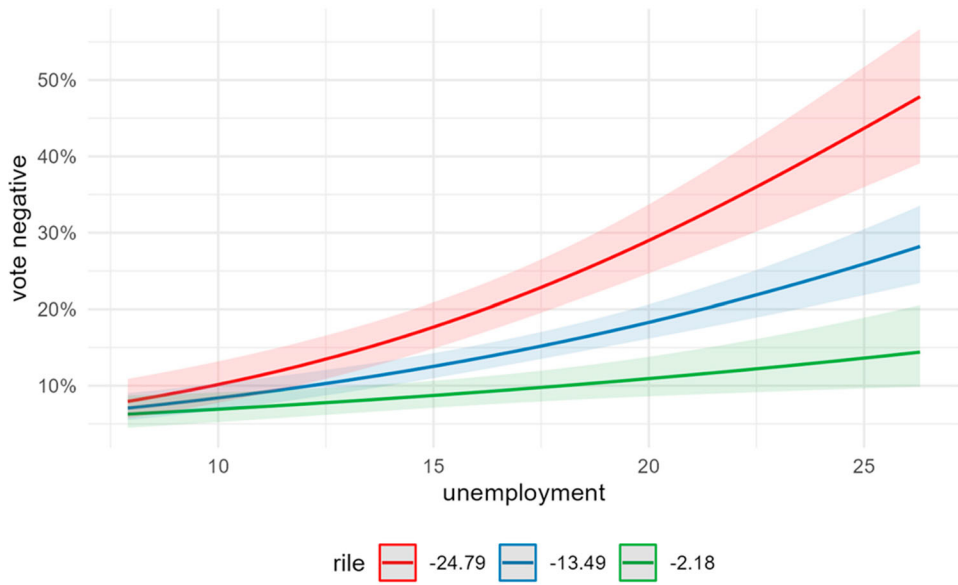


Figure 7A. Predicted probability of negative vote by unemployment and Rile index (Spain).

*Note: The three coloured lines represent predicted probabilities for different levels of the Rile Index. Red: mean – standard deviation; Blue: mean; Green: mean + standard deviation).