

Explaining the link between interest groups and political parties in the parliamentary arena

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Interest groups and parties are bound to each other. Political parties need interest groups information and technical expertise to fulfill their mandate and gain re-election; while interest groups need political parties to influence policy outputs and ideally impose their particular views and policy positions to the rest of society. A vast set of research already analyzes this link, focusing mainly in the governmental arena, leaving aside the parliamentary arena. In general, misrepresentation of the study of groups-party links in Parliaments is explained by the centrality of the executive in the policy-making process. As a result there is a lack of knowledge about how interest groups interact with political parties in the legislative process in most countries, with a few exceptions (Binderkratz 2002, Pedersen et al, 2014; Binderkratz et al., 2015; Varone and Gava 2016citar)

The goal of this paper is to contribute to the study of interest groups-political parties' interaction in the parliamentary arena. First, the paper demonstrates interest groups access to the Parliamentary arena increases across time and this is partly explained by changing institutional factors. Major transformations towards re-parliamentarization –explained by transparency policies, promotion of participatory democracy, increasing MPs professionalization— generate more incentives for both parliamentary groups and interest organizations to devote their time and resources to organize hearings and discuss about policy issues in the parliamentary arena.

Second, this paper also argues increasing interest groups mobilization in Parliaments do not limit the privileged position of some organizations in the legislative process. All parliamentary groups grant more access to some interest groups than others, with important differences across types of groups. Left-wing parties grant access to platforms, social movements and NGOs than right-wing parties; and more conservative parties grant more access to business and professional associations. These differences illustrate interest groups

access to parliamentary arena is not only explained by policy-makers information needs, but party ideology. Results illustrate in many occasions, policy-makers are especially willing to invite their allies, avoiding their enemies as a means to reinforce their negotiation capacity in the parliamentary debate and their chances to reframe it. This is, expertise, reputation, representativeness are important but not sufficient factors to explain why parties invite interest groups to give evidence in Parliaments.

Finally, we argue parliamentary group's capacity to select which interest groups to invite is limited by institutional factors. First, we expect there is a broad consensus among parliamentary groups those interest groups that are already "insiders" at the governmental arena should be invited to give evidence in a parliamentary hearing. The level of agreement about which interest groups to invite is larger for those policy issues governed by small and highly institutionalized policy communities. Second, we expect agreement will be larger among those parliamentary groups that are part of a government coalition. This is, agreement among the three parties governing in coalition from 2003 to 2010 –the socialist Catalan party (Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya PSC), the nationalist-left (Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya), and the far-left (Iniciativa per Catalunya-Verds) is larger than for the rest of parliamentary groups.

To carry out our analysis, we created a novel comprehensive database containing detailed information on the appearances of all interest groups before parliamentary committees from 1995 to 2012 in Catalonia. For each appearance there is information about the time-period, the interest organization, the name of the person that represents this organization, the issue under discussion, the political party or coalition that invites an interest groups, and the result –whether it was finally celebrated or not- among other variables. All appearances are organized in hearings –defined as a set of appearances dealing with the same

policy issue in a legislature—. Each interest group is classified by type as detailed in table 1 of the annex. Also, each appearance is classified by issue following the methodology of the Comparative Agendas Project, as detailed in table 2 of the annex.

These databases are the starting point for theoretical and empirical studies of the interaction of policy-makers and interest groups in parliamentary committees, focusing on a political system in which research on these matters is practically non-existent. Most of the research about interest groups' access to the legislative arena has been carried out in the US (Hall and Deardorff, 2006; Baumgartner et al 2009) and the EU (Marshall, 2010, Chalmers, 2013; Klüver, 2013), with very few exceptionsⁱ like the case of Denmark (Binderkratz 2002, Pedersen et al, 2014; Binderkratz et al., 2015) or Switzerland (Varone and Gava 2016). The analysis is unique in covering the access of interest groups over a long time period (1995-2012), in which different political parties were in government. At present we are expanding the database about Catalonia to 2016; and we are working on the construction of a new database about the Basque Country, in order to develop comparative analysis.

How many interest groups: *Institutional factors,*

Institutional factors partly explain the link between parties and interest groups in the parliamentary arena. First, in most advanced democracies, interest groups access to the parliamentary arena is regulated in very general terms, or simply not regulated at all. Rules about interest groups participation regarding the different functions parliamentary groups perform – legislative and/or oversight activities— are meagre, and there is not a register that traces the links between parties and parliamentary groups with some important exceptions (Chiari et al, 2013;). This regulatory framework reflects to a large extend, in many advanced democracies, parliaments are not identified as important venues for interest groups mobilization. Asemphasize, interest organizations develop most of their advocacy

activities during the pre-parliamentary stages, this is before a bill is sent to parliament. The main target is the governmental arena basically because it is the venue where the important decisions are taken. (Binderkratz et al 2015; Beyers et al 2014).

However, existing research also emphasizes major transformations towards re-parliamentarization may alter this pattern (citar, Varone and Gava 2016). Growing specialization of parliamentary activities across committees, MPs professionalization, regulatory reforms oriented to promote “transparency”, and participatory democracy are the main factors explaining the increasing role of Parliaments as important venues of decision-making and deliberation (Mattson and Strom 1995, Adler and Wilkerson 2013, Cox and McCubbins 2005). This trend towards more transparency and participatory democracy is aimed, among other things, to promote responsiveness and reduce the gap between citizens preferences and policy outputs, or what Mair (2009) identified as the democratic malaise.

In the case of Catalonia, the reform of the Estatut d’Autonomia in 2006 (Catalan federal Constitution), the transparency law passed in 2014 (that among other things regulates the interest groups register) or the changes of the parliamentary rules in 2006, are three of the most significant reforms oriented to enhance the Parliament as a venue for political deliberation and participatory democracy. Actually, the new rules of the Catalan Parliament define specifically (article 106) parliamentary groups may invite interest groups to give evidence regarding any governmental or/and parliamentary bills, while in the case of oversight activities, regulations maintain a high level of ambiguity, as in the previous period. By the same token, from 2016 there is a register of interest groups in the Catalan parliament.

In short, we claim these institutional reforms encourage parliamentary groups to invite interest organizations to discuss about bills; also the new regulatory setting encourages interest groups to correspond this invitation, and to invest their resources to develop advocacy

activities in the parliamentary arena. As a result, we expect *(H1) the number of interest groups that participate in the parliamentary arena increases across time.*

How much agreement

Second, interest groups-party links in the parliamentary arena tend to reproduce the same pattern than in the governmental arena. This is explained by institutional factors. Interest groups access to the parliamentary arena is channelized through policy-specific committees which reproduce a similar division of labor as the executive's structure, with minor variations (see Mattson and Strom 1995, Adler and Wilkerson 2013, Cox and McCubbins 2005). This division of labor fosters legislator's specialization across policy areas, which become experts in the issues under their jurisdiction (see Döring et al, 2004) . It also contributes to reproduce the pattern of interest groups intermediation systems across venues. Once an interest group is identified as a legitimized actor to participate in the discussion about an issue in the governmental arena, it is unlikely political parties limit the participation of the same interest group in the parliamentary arena—. Political parties may have a hard time trying to argue the exclusion of" interest organizations that are part of the policy-making process at the governmental arena, or what we refer as "insiders".

Which arguments may use a conservative to exclude major Unions like CCOO or UGT of the discussion of a bill dealing with the labor market reform? Which arguments may use the far-left to exclude major business associations like the CEOE or the CEPYME of that debate? These are key interest groups, with a large membership, that already have been legitimized by public authorities as key information providers and/or conflict minimizers in particular policy areas. The probabilities these "governmental insiders" will be excluded from the parliamentary arena are low, especially when they are part of a closed policy communities (Rhodes, 2006, p.428; McFarland, 2004).

In the case of labor reform, we expect both left and right wing parties agree the participation of major trade unions is crucial to obtain quality information and expertise about the implications of the implementation of a new labor reform, and minimize conflict during its implementation. By the same token we expect there is a general agreement among political parties, that physician professional associations should be part of the discussion about the reform of the health system. However, in the case of other issues, like abortion, same-sex marriage, or immigration, where there is not a stable set of interest groups that participate in discussion and/or negotiation of regulatory issues at the governmental arena, agreement will be low. Thus, we expect (*H2*) *agreement between political parties significantly varies across policy areas*. As we explain in further detail in the next section, the lack of “insiders” in some policy areas generates more opportunities for political parties to follow what we call the persuasion logic.

Also, one may expect agreement among political parties of the same governing coalition is larger than with the rest of political parties. Overall, parliamentary committees reproduce the main features of the plenary in terms of composition – the seats on committees are distributed proportionally among parties to reflect the representation of the plenary – (see Döring et al, 2004, for a review Mattson and Strom 1995). As a result, under majority governments, the political party with the majority of seats in the plenary, also controls parliamentary committees. By the same token, when there is a coalition government formed by different political forces, this coalition controls parliamentary committees. In the case of the Catalan parliament, from 1995 to 2003, CIU is governing under minority, and receives punctual support of other political forces, mainly the conservatives of the PP which from 1996 to 2000 are also governing under minority in Spain with the support of CIU. From 2003 to 2010, there is a coalition government formed by three political parties –the PSC, ERC, and

ICV--. Thus, we expect (*H3*) *agreement about which interest groups to invite is larger among the parliamentary groups of a governing coalition.*

Why to grant access: *Information versus persuasion logic*

Political parties and interest groups are bound to each other. On the one hand, parties seek interest groups capacity to provide information and technical knowledge about issues, to build consensus on highly controversial issues, or/and to contribute –money and/or votes— to political campaigns. Thus, political parties have significant incentives to interact with interest groups as a means of improving the efficiency of legislation and policy decisions in general, to increase the correspondence between policy decisions and citizens’ preferences as represented by interest groups, and maximize their chances of re-election. On the other hand, political parties provide different types of goods of special interest to interest groups.

Basically, interest groups need political parties in order to get access to the policy making process, and ideally, to influence the content of the policy agenda –either pushing new issues and ideas, or preserving the status quo— (Baumgartner, et al 2009).

According to what we call the *information logic*, this interaction between parties and interest groups is contingent, and varies across time, issues and policy venues depending on the needs of information, or/and the level of conflict associated to some issues (Chalmers, 2011; Klüver, 2012, Bouwen 2004, Berry, 1989). In this view, some groups have more access than others to the policy-making process because they have more informational resources. Access is biased towards highly specialized, experienced, professionalized organizations, which devote a large share of their resources to generate information (Broscheid and Cohen, 2003, Beyers et al 2008, see Baumgartner et al. 2009 for a review). In this line, Dür and de Bièvre (2007) argue public interest groups like NGOs have limited access to EU decision-makers in relation to what they call private interest groups, mainly because “they are

compelled to constantly appeal to general principles like equity, social justice and environmental protection” making the information contribution of little value to EU decision-makers.

Political parties will invite all types of interest groups –business groups, professional associations or trade unions— to give evidence to the parliamentary arena, as far they are capable to provide valuable information about specific issues –like banking system reform, stem-cell research or immigration policy—, or/and contribute to generate consensus among political forces, regardless party ideological preferences. According to this logic, both left and right parties (or mainstream and non-mainstream parties) will invite trade unions to give evidence about the labor or/and the pension system reform as a means to get information, before and after passing legislation. By the same token, most political parties would agree to invite the main professional association representing physicians, fisherman, or/teachers to discuss about assisted reproduction techniques, the implementation of EU regulations about fishing, or the introduction of a computer techniques in public schools respectivelyⁱⁱ.

Accordingly, *we expect (H4) interest groups access to the parliamentary arena is biased.*

However, political parties, as rational actors, allocate their efforts and time taking into account not only interest group’s role as information providers, but especially their role as advocates of the different views and policy positions towards issues (Blondel 1973; Norton 1999, Helboe et al. 2014; Binderkratz et al. 2015). According to the *persuasion logic*, parties give access to interest groups not only to get information, and/or avoid political parties, but especially as a means to find natural allies in the political arena for the defense of coincident policy preferences (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Greenwood 2007, Baumgartner et al. 2009). Policy makers will select among interest groups according to their expertise, reputation and

representativeness and in doing so, they tend to invite their allies, avoiding their enemies as a means to reinforce their negotiation capacity in the parliamentary debate.

In this view, once a parliamentary committee decides to organize a hearing to deal about the pensions system, immigration policy, or the rights of the gipsy community, each political parties would invite its ideological allies to participate in that discussion. In the debate about a bill dealing with stem-cell research, the right wing party (PP) will claim for the participation of pro-life citizen's groups, left parties will be more prone to invite medical associations and patients groups affected by rare diseases, and "regional" parties will be more willing to invite professional associations and experts to inform about the benefits of political decentralization to manage the issue. Thus, according to this persuasion logic, all things equal, we expect *(H5) significant differences on how political parties are linked to different types of interest organizations.*

In sum, according to the above discussion, we expect interest groups access to the parliamentary arena is biased and increases across time, that political parties *agreement about which interest groups to invite is larger among parties of a governing coalition; and significantly varies across policy areas; and that there are significant differences on how political parties are linked to different types of interest organizations.*

Data and coding methods

To answer these questions we have created a comprehensive database about all the appearances (*Comparecencias*) of interest organizations in the Catalan Parliament from 1995 to 2012. According to article 56 of the rules of the Catalan Parliament appearances are aimed to obtain information and the testimony from three types of groups: public servants, government officials and "other personalities", which includes interest groups. Parliamentary

groups of each committees may invite individuals and organisations to participate in committee meetings to perform several functions: to contribute to developing the tasks of oversight policy implementation; to provide information about specific issues; and/or to explain specific policy positions on an issue. Parliamentary groups may grant access to interest groups to participate in research commissions, created *ad hoc* for the discussion of specific issues like corruption scandals, or focusing events. In contrast to the case of the *Congreso de los Diputados* (lower chamber of the Parliament in Spain) and most *Comunidades Autónomas*, Article 106 states parliamentary groups may invite interest groups to give evidence regarding any governmental or/and parliamentary bills.

Overall, from 1995 to 2012, parliamentary groups decided to organize 5.426 interest group appearances, of which 55% were celebrated. For each appearance the database contains information about the date the appearance is held, year, and legislature; the name of the person actually going to the meeting, the name of the organization, name and type of Committee in which appearances are held. We also gathered information about whether the appearance was finally celebrated or not, the type of hearing (legislative: the hearing is to discuss a governmental or parliamentary bill; oversight: if it is policy control or implementation discussion; or investigative: the hearing is scheduled to gather information and analyze public officials responsibility). All interest groups appearances are codified by type of actor. To do that we adapted the Advocacy and Public Policymaking Project codebook (<http://lobby.la.psu.edu/>) to the case of Spain (as defined in table 1 in the annex). We also gathered detailed information about the party (or coalition of parties) inviting an interest organization. In addition, all interest group appearances dealing with the same issue during the parliamentary term are classified in the same hearing (for example, all appearances related to the regulation of abortion are considered part of the same hearing). Overall we identified

372 hearings. Finally, each interest group appearance has been classified by issue, following the coding methodology of the comparative agendas project as defined in table 2 in the annex.

The period covers five parliamentary terms of office (1995-2012), three governed by the center right CIU – led by Jordi Pujol from 1995 to 2003, and Arthur Mas from 2010 and 2012—; and two governed by a left-right coalition formed by PSC, ERC and ICV, led by Pascual Maragall from 2003 to 2006, and by José Montilla from 2006 to 2010. All governments of this period were minority governments. Note that from 1995 to 2003, CIU was governing with the punctual support of the conservative Partido Popular, while from 2010 to 2012 the support came mostly from the left-secessionist party, ERC.

Explaining interest groups access to the parliamentarian arena

Figure 1 illustrates interest groups appearances increase across time.

The number of hearings tends to increase under minority government (coefficient is negative). As argued before, in a context in which one party has the majority of seats, opposition parties may have fewer incentives to devote their time and resources to organize a hearing to discuss an executive bill, while the governing party may have a larger capacity to impose its veto, limiting the organization of some hearings, especially those dealing with issues potentially more harmful for its electoral purposes. However, the coefficient is not statistically significant, at least to explain the evolution of the number of hearings scheduled.

Also, in this model we control for two additional variables, the election year and the amount of bills parliamentary groups have to deal with in the same legislature. As one may expect the number of hearings decrease along election years among other things because the legislature is shorter and MPs has less time to organize hearings. Actually, results indicate the

number of hearings decrease by 6,3 during election year (significant .000). Finally, we take into consideration whether the number of hearings is linked with the number of bills introduced in a single legislature. One may think that the number of hearings increase as a response of the amount of work MPs has to deal with in each legislature, independently of other institutional factors or party preferences. Results indicate that there is a positive relationship between amount of bills and numbers of hearings but coefficients are not statistically significant.

In short, this first model gives partial support to initial hypothesis The number of hearings increase as the number of permanent committees increases, and the party in government do not has the majority of seats, but results are only significant in the first case. Next question is whether the chances to organize a hearing, and thus to invite interest organizations vary across issues.

Differences across issues

According to Hypothesis 3, the number of hearings will be especially high for conflicting issues for which there is an important ideological divide among citizens and political forces. To test this, we compare the mean number of executive bills with and without a hearing across issues. Note that (as explained above), we have created a dummy variable that identifies whether a hearing was organized (or not) to discuss an executive bill (1 in case the bill had associated a hearing, and 0 otherwise). Results are summarized in table 3.

Table 3 about here

Mean differences are significant for all issues but rights, education and housing. This is, the mean number of bills about macroeconomics (and most other issues) without a hearing, and thus without an open discussion with interest organizations, are significantly larger than

the mean number of bills with a hearing associated. By the contrary, in the case of rights, education and housing there are no significant differences between bills and without hearing. Following previous research about issue conflict in Spain (Fernández-Albertos and Manzano, 2012), we conclude that these results give support to our initial hypothesis.

As we argued in the first section, in a context of scarce resources, MPs decide whether to organize a hearing about some issues instead than others taking into account their need of information and especially, the potential impact of this action on policy decisions and reelection. MPs, as rational actors strategically select among issues, prioritizing those that are of special interest for their constituency or/and have more capacity to erode the party in government. This is, MPs will concentrate their efforts to give visibility to those issues with a larger ideological divide across parties and their constituencies.

In contrast to other countries, in the case of Spain, the ideological divide across issues is not that much focused on redistribution policies, but especially right issues, and political decentralization. According to Fernández-Albertos and Manzano (2012) ideological differences between the PP and PSOE are especially important for the case of rights issues like immigration, moral issues like abortion, or state-regional relations. In this regard, Chaqués-Bonafont, Palau and Baumgartner (2015) already demonstrate these issues (moral issues, immigration, political decentralization) are especially relevant for opposition parties to attack the governing party in the parliamentary arena, with the support of the mainstream newspapers.

Our results indicate mean differences are no significant for the case of state-regional relations (included in governmental issues in our databases), basically because the participation of interest organizations in parliamentary committees is almost inexistent. In contrast, table 3 illustrates for the case of rights and education interests organizations are

called to participate for the discussion of an important share of bills. All in all, these are preliminary results. From here we need to develop further this idea taking into account other institutional variables mainly the type of legislature procedure to deal with these bills (urgent, lecturaúnica, etc) and the EU content (whether a bill is transposing a EU directive).

Explaining the number of appearances per hearing

The last two hypotheses state the number of interest organizations per hearing increase under minority governments, as the size of committees increases, when discussing bills, and that it is inversely related to the concentration of seat in a single committee. To test these hypothesis we run a second OLS regression model in which the independent variables are the type of government (dummy variable with value 0 during minority governments and 1 when the executive is governing with the absolute majority of seats); the committee size measured by the number of MPs per committee, type of hearing (1 for hearings discussing bills and 0 for hearings about policy implementation) and Representation measured using Herfindhal index as defined above. Note that we run two separate OLS regressions, one for the case of “traditional” interest organizations and the other for the case of experts. We expect that participation of experts and “traditional” interest organizations will follow different logics. In the case of experts, their participation may be understood as more linked to the information needs of legislators, and thus less affected to institutional factors like the type of government, or the bargaining power of parliamentary groups in each committee, or even the expected rewarding to invite a reputed or resourceful organization.

Results are summarized in table 4. As expected, significant and positive coefficients indicate that the number of “Traditional” interest groups invited to participate is larger for the discussion of bills, than any other function performed by a committee. This is,parliamentary

groups are especially willing to invite their allies regarding the discussion of bills as a means to reinforce their negotiation capacities, and increase their chances to successfully pass an amendment. Also, as expected the average number of appearances related to a hearing increases as the number of seats in each committee becomes more evenly distributed across parties. This is, in those committees in which there is a larger concentration of seats by the two large state-parties, it is more difficult for the rest of parties to add their allies in the discussion. Those parties that control the committee may impose a veto to the entry of some interest organizations, either for ideological reasons –ban access to those groups that directly do not share their interest—, or simply, for more practical reasons –avoid to devote time and resources to that action they do not prioritize—.

Coefficients are statistically significant for all variables in the case of interest groups, but not in the case of experts. Actually, in both cases coefficients follow the same trend, this is the average number of experts also tends to decline as the size of the committee decline, as seats are increasingly concentrated across parties, for the case of hearings dealing with implementation, and under majority rule. However, the type of government is the only coefficient statistically significant. From here, we need to go further in the analysis and explain in full why these differences exist between these two types of actors.

Concluding remarks

In this paper we present preliminary results about how and why parliamentary groups decide to invite interest organizations to give evidence about policy issues in parliamentary committees in Spain. The paper is aimed to contribute to a growing theoretical debate about the role of interest groups in the policy making process. It builds on what we called –the

persuasion approach—, according to which policy-makers are especially willing to invite their allies, avoiding their enemies as a means to reinforce their negotiation capacity in the parliamentary debate (see Baumgartner and Leech 1997). Access to interest groups is explained not only by their expertise, reputation and representativeness, but especially by their capacity to reinforce MPs policy positions about policy issues. At the same time, we demonstrate that this persuasion logic is constrained by institutional factors.

Our results illustrate participation of interest organizations in the parliamentary arena vary across time, and issues and this is related not only to a functional logic oriented to fulfill MPs need of information regarding specific issues, but especially institutional factors and party preferences. Our preliminary results demonstrate the number of hearings tend to decrease under majority governments, during election years and as the number of parliamentary committees decrease. Also, we demonstrate MPs tend to organize more hearings about bills dealing with highly conflictual issues like moral issues and immigration, or education policy. Finally, preliminary results indicate the number of appearances of interest organizations increase under minority governments, for the case of hearings dealing with the discussion of bills, and as the size of committee's increases. Also, results indicate increasing concentration of seats in a single committee is inversely related with the number of appearances per hearing: the more the concentration of seats across parliamentary groups, the less the chances for some interest groups to invite their ideological allies to give evidence about issues.

Figures and Tables

Figure 1. Average number of appearances per hearing organized by type of organization by legislature

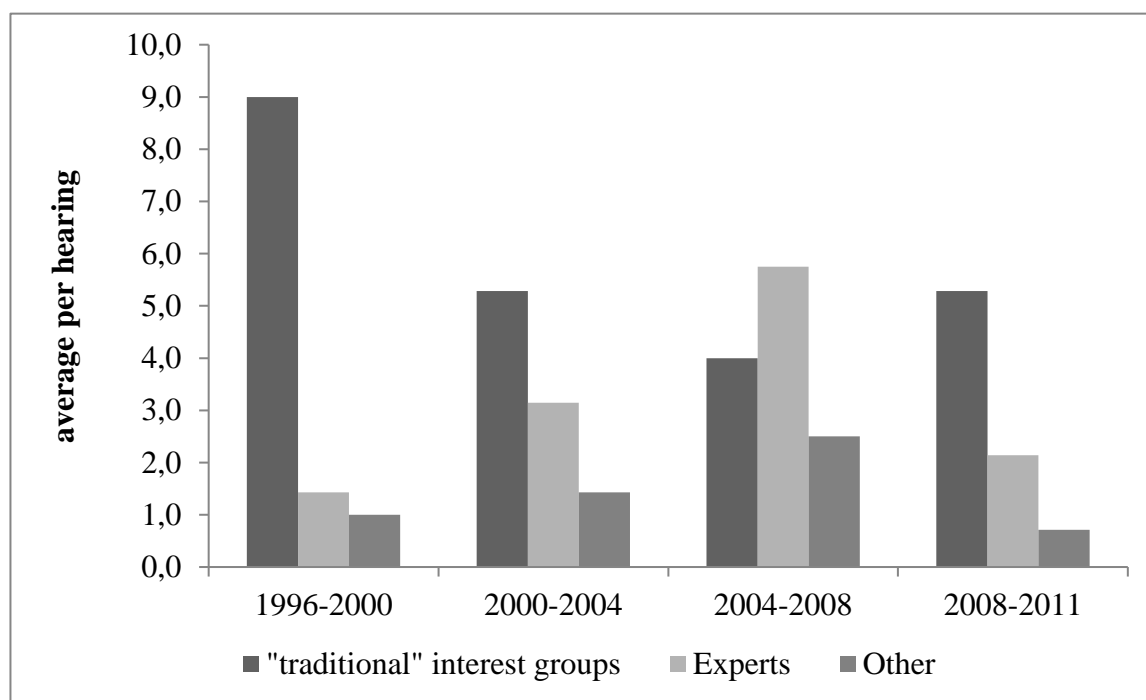


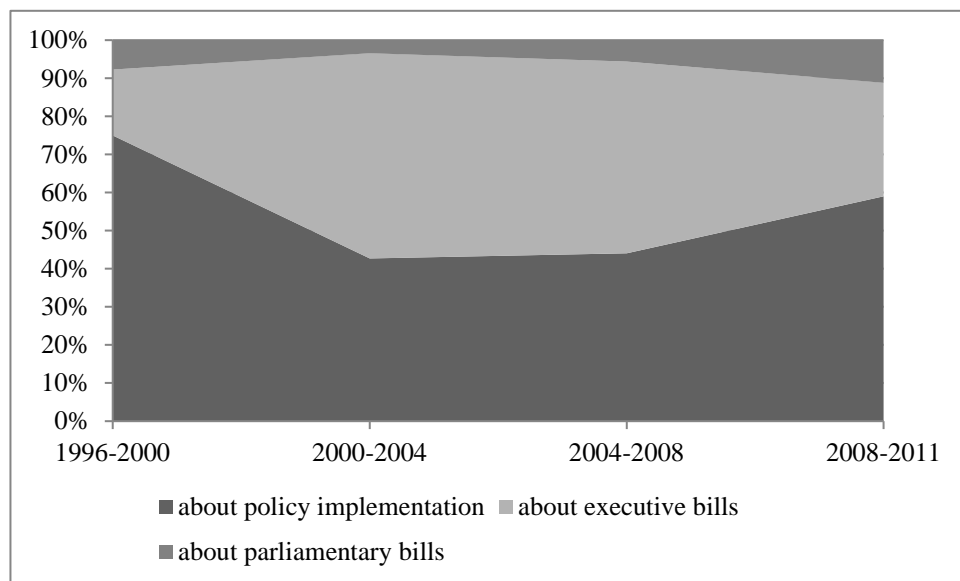
Figure 2. Hearings by type of activity

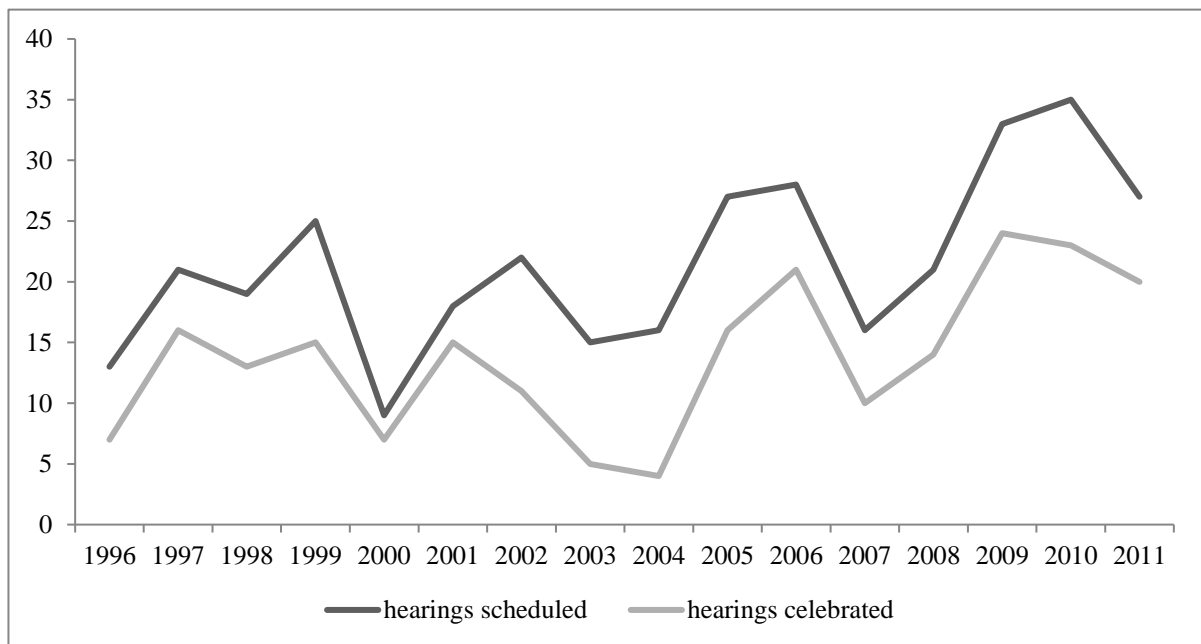
Figure 3. Number of hearings, 1996-2011

Figure 4. Evolution of Appearances, 1996-2011

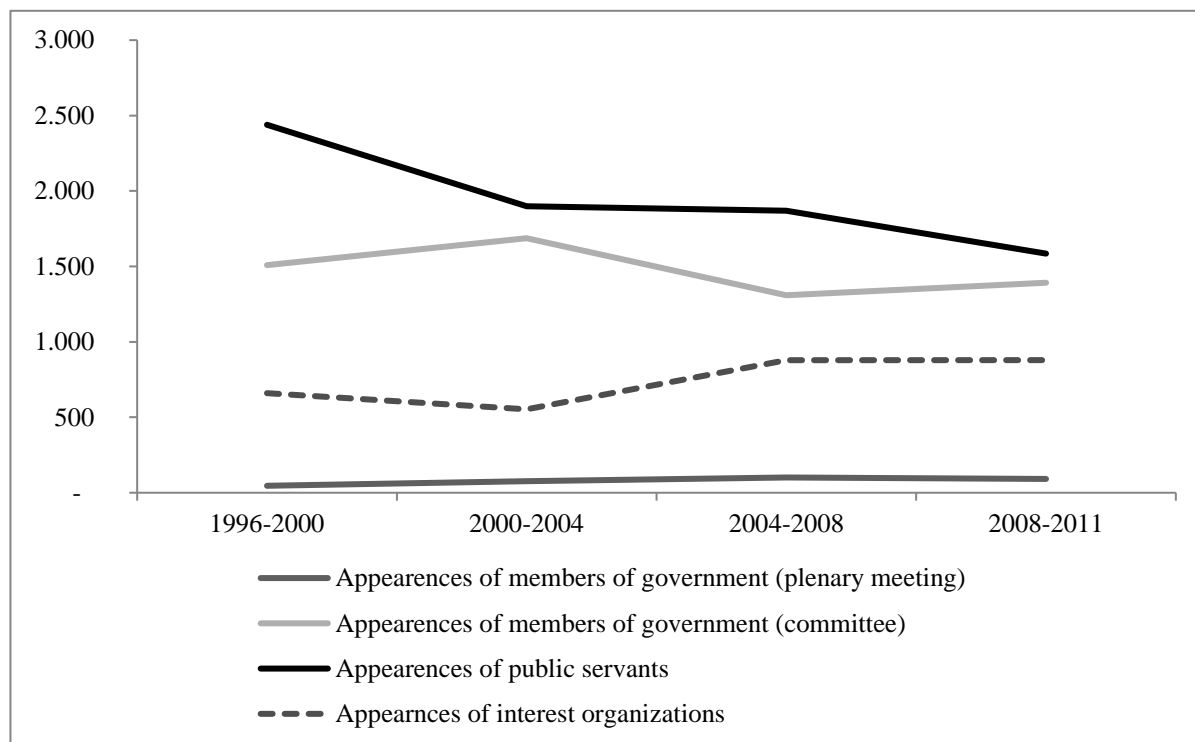


Table 1. Summary information about appearances and hearings

Legislature	1996-2000	2000-2004	2004-2008	2008-2011
Party governing	PP		PSOE	
Type of government	Minority	Majority	Minority	Minority
Hearings scheduled about:				
Policy implementation	63	49	62	95
Executive bills	11	13	21	18
Parliamentary bills	4	2	4	3
All hearings	78	64	87	116
Hearings celebrated about (%)				
Policy implementation	58,7	51,0	46,8	64,2
Executive bills	90,9	92,3	95,2	94,4
Parliamentary bills	100	50,0	50,0	100
All hearings celebrated/total scheduled	65,4	59,4	58,6	69,8
Appearances scheduled:				
Interest groups (average per hearing)	6,38	7,67	2,50	4,19
Experts (average per hearing)	1,00	5,67	1,56	1,57
Appearances celebrated (average per hearing)				
Interest groups	9,0	5,3	4,0	5,3
Experts	1,4	3,1	5,8	2,1
Appearances interest groups about				
Policy implementation (%)	75	42,7	44,0	59,0
Executive bills (%)	17,3	53,9	50,3	29,8
Parliamentary bills (%)	7,7	3,4	5,6	11,2

Table 2. Explaining the number of hearings from 1996 to 2011

Explanatory variables:	B	Sig	Rsq
Constant	-20,790	,055	.757
Type of Government	-2,322	,348	
Election year	-6,303	,030	
Number of permanent legislative committees	2,534	,000	
Bills	,121	,146	

Note: The model shows an OLS regression predicting the number of hearings scheduled. The independent variables are the type of government (dummy variable with value 0 during minority governments and 1 when the executive is governing with the absolute majority of seats); election year (dummy variable with value 1 the year of election and 0 otherwise); the number of permanent legislative committees each legislature, and the number of bills introduced by the executive each legislature.

Table 3. Executive Bills with and without Hearing across issues (mean differences)

Topic		Mean	Sig.
Macroeconomics	hearing	7,1250	,000
	no-hearing	,0625	
Rights	hearing	1,1250	,270
	no-hearing	,6250	
Health	hearing	,9375	,053
	no-hearing	,2500	
Agriculture	hearing	1,3125	,002
	no-hearing	,2500	
Labour	hearing	2,1250	,000
	no-hearing	,0625	
Education	hearing	,8125	,208
	no-hearing	,4375	
Environment	hearing	1,8750	,000
	no-hearing	,3125	
Energy	hearing	,5625	,026
	no-hearing	,0625	
Transportation	hearing	2,0000	,000
	no-hearing	,1875	
Crime and Justice	hearing	5,0625	,000
	no-hearing	,6875	
Social policy	hearing	,3750	,022
	no-hearing	,0000	
Housing	hearing	,2500	,681
	no-hearing	,1875	
Commerce and Banking	hearing	5,5000	,000
	no-hearing	,6250	
Defense	hearing	1,2500	,001
	no-hearing	,1875	
R&D	hearing	1,3125	,031
	no-hearing	,3125	
Foreign Trade	hearing	,2500	,033
	no-hearing	,0000	
Foreign Affairs	hearing	2,0000	,002
	no-hearing	,0625	
Governmental issues	hearing	2,8125	,002
	no-hearing	,1250	

Note: The period covered is 1996 to 2011. Topic 21 public lands here it is merged with topic 7 environmental issues

Table 4. Explaining the number of appearances per hearing scheduled, 1996-2011

	Interest groups			Experts		
	B	Sig	Rsq.	B	Sig	Rsq
Cons.	1,965	,671	.123	1,304	,646	.041
Representation	-6,982	,057		-,815	,735	
Committee size	,157	,007		,026	,458	
Type of government	-4,210	,020		-2,312	,037	
Type of hearing	4,275	,001		,807	,321	

Note: The model shows an OLS regression predicting the number of appearances per hearing scheduled. The independent variables are the type of government (dummy variable with value 0 during minority governments and 1 when the executive is governing with the absolute majority of seats); the committee size measured by the number of MPs per committee, type of Hearing (1 for hearings discussing bills and 0 for hearings about policy implementation) and Representation measured using Herfindhal index (the larger the index the more concentration of seats in a committee across parties).

Annex

Table 1. Type of Organizations

Code description
<p>A. Traditional interest groups</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Citizen, ideological, or cause-oriented group 2. Foundations, non-profit providers, etc. 3. Religious 4. Trade Unions 5. Professional Association (members individual professionals) 6. Trade Association (members corporations or businesses) 7. Business Association (such as the Business Round Table or the Chamber of Commerce; business groups not associated with one particular industry) 8. Corporation – for profit <p>B. Experts</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Think Tanks 10. Individual Outside Expert <p>C. Others</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. UNN and other international organizations 12. Others: judiciary, local government, public institutions

Note: this coding scheme has been adapted from the Advocacy and Public Policymaking Project Codebook (Baumgartner et al. 2009)

Table 2. List of Major Topic Codes in the Spanish Agendas Project

Topic	Description
1	Economy
2	Rights
3	Health
4	Agriculture
5	Labor
6	Education
7	Environment
8	Energy
10	Transport
12	Justice
13	Social
14	Housing
15	Business
16	Defense
17	Science
18	Foreign Trade
19	International
20	Government
21	Public Lands

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ⁱ For example, studies in Denmark indicate that groups use the parliamentary arena as a venue for voicing discontent and defending gains achieved in the administrative arena (Pedersen et al, 2014; Binderkratz, 2002)

ⁱⁱ Note many professional associations have the monopoly of interest representation.

This is not only explained by the capacity of these interest groups to overcome collective action dilemmas, but also formal rules that reinforce their monopoly power.