Participatory Budgeting in Spain and the role of ideology: survivors and victims of the 2019 municipal elections

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Abstract

Transferability and institutionalization are considered two of the most crucial principles to pursue when designing democratic innovations (Smith, 2009; Gilman, 2016). Participatory budgeting (PB) has shown a high capacity to travel around the world (transferability and diffusion) (Sintomer, et al., 2013). Instead, the PBs survivability (institutionalization) seems to be much weaker (Alves & Allegretti, 2012; Spada, 2014). In this paper we analyse one of the most frequently causes of the instability of PBs mentioned in the literature: ruling party change. To do so, we focus on two research questions: What is the probability of continuity of a PB after the change of local government? Second, does the ideological direction of the government change affect the probability of continuity of a PB? To answer these questions, we rely on an original dataset (in process) composed of 628 Spanish municipalities. In this paper we focus on continuity (136n) and discontinuity cases (95n) of PB (total 231n) in order to find out how ruling party change -after 2019 Spanish municipal elections- has affected their continuity during the current legislature. According to our preliminary results ruling party change or continuity is not an explanatory factor itself but rather its ideological direction.

Keywords: participatory budgeting; instability; ideology; party change; elections.

Introduction

What is the life expectancy of Participatory Budgeting (PBs)? What factors affect their longevity or survival? What quality of life have they had? While there has been a growing attention to the adoption and diffusion of PBs (*policy diffusion approach*) (Ganuza & Baiocchi, 2012; Sintomer et al., 2013; Wampler, 2008), less is known about the explanatory factors that help us to understand the abandonment of PBs outside of Brazil (Alves & Allegretti, 2012). In fact, most of the literature that has addressed this complex issue relies on the Brazilian case (Avritzer & Wampler, 2008; Bezerra & Junqueira, 2022; Spada, 2014; Wampler & Goldfrank, 2022). Three decades after the arrival of PBs in Europe[1], we are in increasingly optimal conditions to analyse a large number of them and introduce temporal perspective to shed some light about their stability or continuity. The main difficulty that researchers face in taking a step further in this direction is the lack of data, particularly a census or panel of PBs. The most notable exception is the Brazilian PB census initiated by Torres Ribeiro and de Grazia (2003) and developed by Spada (2012, 2016). Currently, significant progress is being made in registering and comparing PBs in regions where this democratic innovation has a more recent development, especially in Central and Eastern European countries (De Vries et al. 2021)

This paper aims to contribute to this international trend in two ways: First, it presents the preliminary steps given for the construction of a "Spanish PB panel". Second, we show evidence about one of the factors most frequently mentioned as the cause of abandonment of PBs in Spain, but also in other countries: ruling party change. In particular, this study addresses two research questions: what is the probability of continuity of a PB after a change of government? What is the role of ideology in the stability of PBs? According to our preliminary findings ruling party change is not an explanatory factor itself but rather the ideological direction of the change or continuity.

The results rely on an original dataset (in process) composed of 628 Spanish municipalities. It contains a sample of municipalities that have never implemented a PB between 2015-2022 (labelled as *no PB*); that initiated a PB in the current legislature (2019-2023) but there is no record of another in the previous legislature (2015-2019) (*new PB*); that have developed at least once a PB in each mandate (2015-2019 and 2019-2022) (*continuity case*) and finally, that they implemented at least one PB in the previous legislature but not in the current one (*discontinuity case*). In this paper we focus on *continuity* and *discontinuity cases* (2*31n*) in order

[1] Italy recorded the first case in Europe of PB in 1994 in the municipality of Grottammare (De Vries et al. 2021)

to find out how ruling party change in 2019 has affected the PBs stability during the current legislature.

We recognize that the life history of a PB might be much more complex and turbulent than a simple *continuity vs discontinuity* approach since they can be re-adopted, transformed and undergone different up-down-grading processes (Alves & Allegretti, 2012; Sedmihradská et al., 2022). For example, a PB might continue -or resist a little longer- even though year after year the voter turnout is lower, the budget amount for PB projects decreases and the PB projects awaiting to be implemented are piling up. The opposite scenario may also happen, that is, a PB is suspended despite working apparently well in terms of turn out and its institutional design. Accepting this reductionism, our argument is that once a PB has been abandoned no direct effect - either larger or smaller - can be expected anymore. Therefore, deepening the causes of the disappearance of PBs through the analysis of a large number of them is a central question which is often relegated in favour of a diffusion approach.

In this paper we focus on a limited set of external factors such as the size of the municipalities, the revenue per capita and three variables that capture different dimensions of political competition (mayor's party change, ideological continuity and government vulnerability). All these variables are the most frequent ones when analysing the effects of external factors on the adoption and continuity of PBs (Alves & Allegretti, 2012; Spada, 2014; Wampler 2008). However, internal factors -especially those related to the institutional design- are an indelible part of the life of PBs that must necessarily be included in future analyses. The paper proceeds as follows: first, we briefly present the potential factors explaining PB abandonment focusing mainly on political competition. Subsequently, a set of hypotheses are presented. Next, data collection strategy and methods are described. The third section shows the main results. Finally, we discuss the conclusions and mention future research steps.

Explaining the abandonment of PB

An overview

A PB is a participatory tool aimed at including citizens' voice in the allocation of part of the municipal budget. There is no single model of PB, however, it is possible to identify certain patterns over time and places. For example, the Porto Alegre model is well-known for its decisional nature from its beginning, while the German model is associated with a consultative model of PB (Ganuza & Gómez, 2008: 18). The Portuguese model would have transitioned from a more consultative to a more decisional one (Alves & Allegretti, 2012), whilst in Spain and Italy PBs have traditionally been characterised by a more decisional model.

Both in these countries as in others, investigating the causes of success or diffusion has been probably more usual than analysing the failure factors. However, success and failure may be seen as the two sides of the same coin. Success can be measured by considering multiple *indicators*, for example: how the process has been developed (e.g., level of turnout), what effects it has had on the participants (e.g., level of satisfaction) or what its impact has been on public policies (e.g., level of implementation), among many other indicators to consider. In turn, the *drivers* or *determinants of success* can be classified at least on two levels: external or internal. Within the *external factors* we find some that are more stable, such as the *size and wealth of the municipality*. Instead, others are more exposed to changes such as those related to electoral competition (*ruling party change, government vulnerability, etc.*), the resources that the city council allocates to citizen participation (*political agenda or policy priority*) as well as relations or synergies with other administrations and municipalities (*policy network*).

Instead, *Internal factors* relate to the characteristics of the participatory process and design. We can distinguish those elements that have to do with the participatory process design itself: for example, how decisions are taken and how participants are selected. On the other hand, there are those internal factors that have to do with the level or perception of effectiveness associated with the process (meeting the objectives, responding to unexpected difficulties, etc.). In the case of PBs, all these aspects can influence the fate of a PB. Unfortunately, in our database, the information about the internal characteristics of the PBs is currently limited to very few variables (starting year, number of editions, and the amount spent on the last recorded PB). To date, very few studies have addressed the impact of internal and external factors simultaneously on the stability of a large number of PBs (Alves & Allegretti, 2012; Bezerra & Junqueira, 2022). Our analysis focuses on the effect of external factors. These are a type of factors on which researchers and practitioners have little or no room to intervene. However, our argument is that efforts to improve internal factors are often outweighed by the impact of external factors such as an economic crisis or political competition (Alarcón et al., 2019; Bezerra & Junqueira, 2022). Therefore, deepening the effects of political competition and the role of ideology is a crucial matter to understand the fate of PBs.

The effects of political competition

What do we know about the effects of political competition on the PBs stability when a large number of them have been analysed? Alves and Allegretti (2012) addressed this question in Portugal. They observed that most PBs were suppressed by the same party or coalition (even the same mayor) that started them (2012:12). Nevertheless, as the same authors recognize, it

does not mean that in Portugal parties do not matter but rather for the period analysed 2002-2012 other factors had a greater influence, such as the type of PB (consultative versus decisional) as well as the austerity measures due to the effects of the 2008 Great Recession.

If we expand our view to the Brazilian case, Spada (2014) observed that the continuity of government is not a guarantee of survival for the PBs. Moreover, government continuity would be an obstacle to the adoption of the PBs in Brazil (2014: 4). An interpretation widely extended behind this conclusion is that the Workers' Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores, PT*) -until its victory in the 2002 presidential election- would have promoted the PB as a strategy of social mobilisation and an example of good governance. However, once the Presidency was reached by the PT, the promotion of the PBs would progressively lose strength. This finding follows the argument developed by Wampler (2008) a few years earlier in which he stated that while the first wave of PB diffusion was driven by the PT, the second wave (1996-2004) was boosted mainly by other parties. Recent research has continued analysing the process of diffusion and abandonment of PBs in Brazil based on the PB census (Spada, 2012). For example, Bezerra and Junqueira (2022) have introduced some nuances about the arrival of the PT to the Presidency as the main explanatory factor of the PBs decline in Brazil. Their results showed that financial variables such as fiscal constraints are relevant for explaining first-adoption as well as for the continuity of PB (Bezerra & Junqueira, 2022: 3). Specifically, they observe that the decline of the PB has to do with the loss of effectiveness due to fiscal constraints but also, albeit to a lesser extent, with the negotiations with their coalition allies who bet on other participatory processes such as the national public policy councils and conferences.

As mentioned above most research on the stability of PBs -using a large n strategy- is limited to the Brazilian case. The next section addressed the different stages that PBs have experimented in Spain during the last two decades and, subsequently, the dataset and methodology are described.

PB and the electoral cycles in Spain

The beginning of the PBs in Spain took place in 2001 (Córdoba, Andalusia) with a total of 3 experiences before the 2003 local elections. All of them were implemented in municipalities governed since the democratic transition in 1979 by the left, mainly communist parties. The periods 2003-2007 and 2007-2011 meant the first two pushes in the implementation of PBs. In 2007, with the exception of 4 cases, all the PBs had been initiated by the communist party, the socialist party or by a coalition of both (Ganuza & Gómez, 2008). In 2011 the number of PBs

initiated in Spain increased significantly until they reached 150 experiences (Francés et al., 2018).

Table 1 PB diffusion and the electoral cycles in Spain.

1999-2003	2003-2007	2007-2011	2011-2015	2015-2019	2019-
The beginning: 3 cases (Ganuza & Gomez, 2008)	First diffusion: 22 cases (Ganuza & Gomez, 2008)	Second diffusion: 150 experiences approx. (Francés et al., 2018)	First Setback (López & Gil-Jaurena, 2021)	First Revival (Pineda & Abellán, 2021)	Certain continuity

The period 2011-2015 meant the first PB debacle. Some studies explain this setback due to the success of the conservative party (*Partido Popular, PP*) in the 2011 municipal elections and the effects of the austerity policies derived from the Great Recession of 2008 (López & Gil-Jaurena, 2021). A week before the 2011 municipal elections, the 15M movement (Indignados) burst onto the Spanish political scene which will be the seed for the appearance of new political parties such as *Podemos* in the next elections. In this way, in 2015, numerous citizen candidacies -linked to the 15M movement- came to power in several and emblematic town halls. This movement was known as the New Municipalism in Spain which brought in its political agenda a creation of new participatory institutions as well as the reform of existing ones (Fernández-Martínez et al., forthcoming). The 2011-2015 legislature represented a setback in the expansion of the PB (López & Gil-Jaurena, 2021), whilst the 2015-2019 legislature meant a strong revival of PBs not only in terms of number but also in terms of its format closely linked to the development of new online platforms for citizen participation.

Hypotheses

Beyond Brazil, the quantitative empirical evidence about the instability of PB is scarce. Even so, the extant literature allows to establish a set of preliminary hypotheses suitable for testing with the data available for the Spanish case during the period 2015-2022 in order to measure the effect of the 2019 municipal elections on the continuity of PBs. Next a set of hypotheses regarding political competition are developed.

First, in relation to *ruling party change*, case studies-based research has emphasised the importance of change in government as one of the main causes of abandonment of PBs. In contrast, when studies have been carried out with a quantitative approach, the conclusions do

not support this assumption. Both Spada in his study in Brazil as well as Alves and Allegretti in the case of Portugal, found that the change of government does not imply a significant change in the probability of PB abandonment. Following this argument, our hypothesis is that ruling party change or continuity by itself does not explain the PB abandonment (**H1**).

Second, in relation to *the role of ideology*, there is a growing agreement among scholars and practitioners that the adoption of democratic innovations such as PBs is a matter that nowadays calls the attention of different party's families around the world (Baiocchi & Ganuza, 2016). We agree with that statement, however, our argument here is that ideology still matters to explain the continuity of PB. Therefore, our hypothesis is that ruling party change is not itself an explanatory factor but rather the ideological direction of the change or continuity after elections. In particular, left-wing parties are more likely to continue the PB programme after the elections both when they continue and they come to power (**H2**).

Third, in relation to *government strength or vulnerability* the literature underlines the importance of coalitions both when adopting a PB and in its continuity. For example, in the case of Brazil, Bezerra and Junqueira (2022) suggested that one of factors explaining the decline of the PBs was that the participatory preferences of the allies in the coalition changed in favour of other mechanisms such as the national conferences (2022: 9). Similarly, Spada found that those governments that feel less threatened in terms of the size of the opposition are more likely to continue with the PB programme (Spada, 2014: 27). According to these studies, we expect that stable majorities favour the probability of continuity of PB (**H3**).

Data collection

To analyse the effect of party change on PBs stability in Spain, we obtained evidence using different data collection strategies. The principal source used was the online survey from the "Ideology and participatory institutions" project. The fieldwork was conducted from May, 11th to September, 15th, 2021. Below we detail the steps given during the data collection:

- The survey was addressed to participation officers, Mayors and/or city participation councilors (for smaller villages lacking a participation officer) in municipalities bigger than 1,000 inhabitants (n=684) in Andalusia and the Madrid region.[2]
- 'Off-line' municipalities and non-respondents to the online survey stage were contacted by phone.

[2] Advanced postal letters were sent to every municipality government introducing the project aims and the survey. Invitations and four reminders to participate in the survey were sent by email to those municipalities for which we were able to retrieve an online contact.

- We reached a final sample size of 351 municipalities that answered the survey questionnaire either partially (n=68) or completely (n=283).
- The questionnaire included an item asking about if their municipalities were carrying out PB at the present (2021) or not. This answer was the starting point to the process of creation of our database on PB in Spain which followed a strict protocol of data collection to ensure reliability which is described in the next points.
- When the survey answer was positive, we carried out a manual internet search to confirm the PB existence and to find out if they were 'new cases' or 'continuity cases'. We also distinguish different types of information sources from more to less reliable: official websites, official social networks and press. Similarly, when the answer was negative, we also carried out a manual internet search to determine if municipalities had PBs in their past ('discontinuity cases') or if they never implemented them ('No PB'). The database includes the weblinks to the PB information.
- Each researcher was responsible for collecting information for a similar number of cases (randomly assigned). Later one of the researchers reviewed each of the cases to ensure a homogenization of criteria in the coding process. At the end of this review process only 8 cases had to be corrected. The encodings made by each researcher in relation to the dependent variables were compared getting similar results: continuity cases (48,4 researcher 1; 51,6 researcher 2), discontinuity cases (41,2 researcher 1; 58,8 researcher 2)
- Finally, to increase the level of reliability in the case of 'No PB', a web scraping expert was asked to confirm the non-existence of PB through a systematic search on the official websites of the municipalities: 3 out of 4 municipalities did not yield any results (which confirm our previous manual search) and the remaining cases did not refer to PB but other municipal budgeting information.

In addition, from December 2021 to June 2022, the authors' paper collected data from three alternative supplementary sources and used different strategies.

- First, following a census approach, we gathered information for every single municipality considered such as 'big city' (n=45) according to the Law of Big cities in Spain ('*Ley de Grandes Ciudades en España*') as well as for those municipalities with more than 100.000 inhabitants but not considered legally as 'big city' (n=13).
- Second, we recovered 108 PBs cases from the literature review (Fillola & Ballester, 2011; Pineda & Abellán, 2021; Mayor, 2017; Gómez del Peso, 2014).

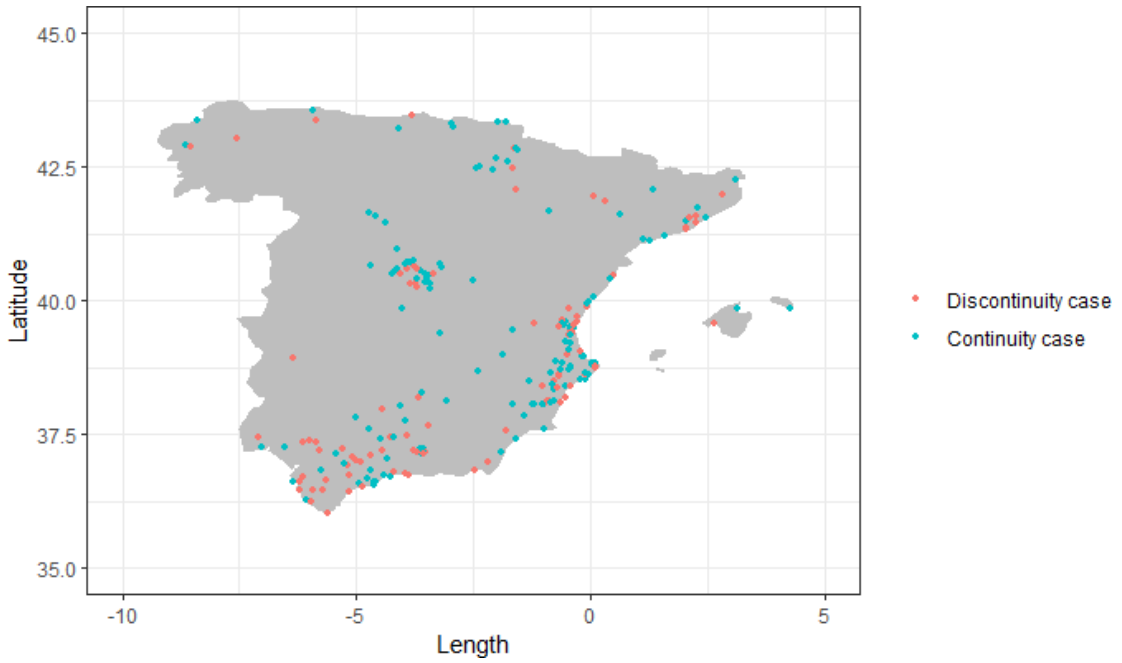
- Thirdly, we collected data for 10 PBs from official reports, specifically from Navarra's Government and Murcia's Council.
- We picked up 36 cases that we found during the process.
- Finally, we apply the same protocol of reliability described above.

Table 2 Source distribution for case selection

	Discontinuity cases	Continuity cases
Online survey	42,1	30,9
Census (Big Cities and >100.000 inh.)	13,7	14
Literature review	37,9	36
Official reports	2,1	5,9
Other cases	4,2	13,2
	100 (95n)	199 (136n)

As a result of this data collection strategy, we got 896 cases. However, since this project is still in process, we have information on 628 cases by now. We exclude from the analysis "new cases" (when they are promoted in the present legislature for the first time), 'no PB' (when there is no information about the existence of a PB). We also exclude 're-adopted cases', that is, those that have been implemented in the current legislature and were active at some point before the past legislature 2015-2019 (but not during it). Therefore, we focus on continuity (58,9%) and discontinuity cases (41,1%) (N=231). Our dependent variable considers a PB as a continuity case when a PB was implemented at least once both in the present legislature as well as in the previous one (colour light blue in figure 1). Instead, we refer to the discontinuity case when a PB was conducted at least once in the past legislature but not in the present one (colour light pink in figure 1). As can be seen in figure 1, cases of continuity and discontinuity are territorially balanced.

Figure 1. Geographic distribution of PB initiatives studied depending on continuity or discontinuity of PB cases.



Variables and analysis

Since our dependent variable is dichotomous (0 = PB discontinuity; 1 = PB continuity), we estimated the continuity of PB using a series of logistic regression models.[3] For this exploratory analysis two sets of independent variables are considered. First, contextual control variables identified in the literature review as potential factors: municipalities' size and wealth (Bezerra & Junqueira, 2022). Second, a set of factors that capture different ways of measuring political competition (political change/continuity; ideological change/continuity; government strength). The operationalization of the different variables is detailed below.

Party change/continuity seeks to capture the political change in a municipality after an election. We consider that a political change has occurred when the mayor's party is not the same in the two periods analysed (0 = no change; 1 = change).[4]

Ideological change/continuity captures the ideological direction after the last municipal elections in 2019. This variable is made up of two categories: 0 = left continuity/arrival; 1 = right continuity/arrival. The process until reaching this operationalization was as follows. Each one of

[3] Wampler (2008: 65) used the same methodology to analyse the probability of a city council adopting a PB in Brazil during 1997 and 2004.

[4] Those cases in which there has been a change of mayor during the same term were excluded from the analysis (n11, 4.8 percent).

the parties was regrouped in party families (socialists, conservatives, communists, regionalists, independents, new left/green, liberal). Secondly, socialists, communists and new left/green were recoded as 'left'; conservative and liberal as 'right' and regionalists and independents as `other'.[5] From this we obtained a final variable composed for several categories.[6] However, in favour of simplicity and due to the size of the sample, it was decided to maintain the two categories mentioned above.

The last of the variables that measures political change is *government strength/vulnerability*. This variable measures the change in the level of strength of the composition of the municipal government after the elections. This variable is made up of two categories: 0 = not stable majorities; 1 = stable majorities. The process until reaching this operationalization was as follows. For each period, information was collected on whether the local government reached the absolute majority of seats in the city council. Those cases in which it obtained an absolute majority in both periods were coded as stable majorities (value 1). The rest of the cases were collapsed into the category 'not stable majorities' (value 0), which includes different scenarios (new majority, lost majority and no majority in both periods).

Finally, we add the number of inhabitants (2021) and income per capita (2018) as control variables, both of them collected from *Instituto Nacional de Estadística* (INE). For income we distinguish between a low level of up to 8500 Euros per inhabitant (value 0), medium between 8501 and 10000 Euros (value 0.5) and high above 10001 Euros (value 1). For inhabitants we distinguish between smaller size municipalities up to 5000 inh. (value 0), small-medium between 5001 and 10000 inh. (value 0.25), medium between 10001 and 20000 inh. (value 0.5), large-medium between 20001 and 50000 inh. (value 0.75) and largest municipalities above 50000 inh. (value 1). Table 2 summarises the independent variables and their distribution for the 231 PBs which are our unit of analysis. Several logistic regression models were performed: the first using just the control variables, the second including political change/continuity, the third ideological change/continuity, the fourth government strength and finally, the full models (table 3).

[5] Bezerra and Junqueira (2022: 6) use a similar simplified classification in their study on the causes of the decline of PB in Brazil (PT, other Left, Centre and Right).

[6] Left continuity (n=313); right continuity (n=89); change from left to right (n=40); change from right to left (n=36); change among left (n=37); change among right (n=6); other changes or continuities(n=73)

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of the independent variables according to continuity or discontinuity PB cases.

Variables	Categories	%(n)	
		PB discontinuity	PB continuity
Inhabitants (standarized from 0 to 1)	Up to 5000	12,6% (12)	10,3% (14)
	5001 to 10000	15,8% (15)	15,4% (21)
	10001 to 20000	24,2 (23)	16,9% (23)
	20001 to 50000	17,9% (17)	25,7% (35)
	> 50000	29,5% (28)	31,6% (43)
	Total	100% (95)	100% (136)
Income per capita (standarized from 0 to 1)	Low	18,9% (18)	9,6% (13)
	Medium	28,4% (27)	22,8% (31)
	High	52,6% (50)	67,6% (92)
	Total	100% (95)	100% (136)
Party change/continuity*	Political change	27,8% (25)	27,7% (36)
	Political continuity	72,2% (65)	72,3% (94)
	Total	100% (90)	100% (130)
Ideological change/continuity**	Left continuity/arrival	67,9% (57)	81,5% (88)
	Right continuity/arrival	32,1% (27)	18,5% (20)
	Total	100% (84)	100% (108)
Government strength***	Stable majorities	15,6% (14)	9,9% (13)
	No stable majorities	84,4% (76)	90,1% (118)
	Total	100% (90)	100% (131)

Source: Own elaboration based on primary data.
*Totals are lower because we excluded from the analysis the municipalities that experienced a mayor party change in at least one of the legislatures analysed.
**Totals are lower because we excluded from the analysis those municipalities where the party change was between regionalists or independent and other parties. We focus on shifts between left and right parties.
***Totals are lower because we excluded the municipalities for which we have no information.

Results

Table 3 displays the results of five logistic regression models, with Figures 2 and 3 graphically representing the effect size of ruling party change/continuity and its ideological direction. In each of the models we include the *population of the municipality* and *municipality revenue per capita* as control variables. In models 2, 3 and 4 we analyse the effect of political competition by introducing a different variable in each of them (*party change*, *ideology change* and g*overnment strength*). Finally, we include all the previous variables in model 5.

Table 4: Logistic regression results.

	M1				M2				M3				M4				M5			
	Coef.	std.Err.	Sig.(*p*)	Odds R	Coef.	std.Err.	Sig.(*p*)	Odds R	Coef.	std.Err.	Sig.(*p*)	Odds R	Coef.	std.Err.	Sig.(*p*)	Odds R	Coef.	std.Err.	Sig.(*p*)	Odds R
Inhabitant	-,060	,440	,891	,942	,140	,453	,757	1,151	,271	,502	,589	1,311	,090	,453	,842	1,094	,266	,503	,597	1,304
Revenue per capita	**,961**	**,413**	**,02**	**2,614**	**,991**	**,424**	**,019**	**2,694**	**,920**	**,456**	**,044**	**2,508**	**,892**	**,435**	**,040**	**2,440**	**,893**	**,476**	**,060**	**2,443**
Political change 0 Political continuity 1 (ref. cat. continuity)					,040	,312	,897	1,041									-,012	,379	,975	,988
Left continuity/arrival 0 Right continuity/arrival 1 (ref. cat Left)									**,662**	**,35**	**,059**	**1,939**					**,659**	**,373**	**,077**	**1,934**
0 Stable majorities 0 1 No stable majorities 1 (ref. cat. no stable majorities)													,193	,442	,662	1,213	,094	,510	,854	1,098
Constant	-,309	,335	,358	,735	-,469	,416	,260	,626	-1,063	,45	,018	,345	-,495	,446	,267	,610	-1,113	,611	,069	,329
Nagelkerke	.037				.046				.077				.042				.077			
Number of cases (PB)	231				220				192				221				192			
VD (PB discontinuity 0; PB continuity 1)																				

We find that in those municipalities with more *income* per inhabitant, the probability of PB continuity is greater. Therefore, results show that having more economic resources increases the probability of continuing a PB, being statistically significant in all models (p = from .019 to .060). In contrast, the size of the *population* of the municipality does not show any relevant effect on the continuity of a PB. Both population and income remain stable in each of the models that we describe in more detail below.

At the political competition level, we find that *political change* -measured as a change in the mayor's party- has not a relevant impact (M2). Therefore, the hypothesis H1 would be confirmed since the results indicate that neither the change of government necessarily increases the probability of suspending a PB. In other words, the government continuity is not a guarantee of stability for a PB. Instead, it is interesting to observe how the *ideological direction* of the mayor's party after the elections shows a relevant effect (M3). Specifically, the results indicate that when the leftist parties continue in -or come to- power, the probability of continuity of a PB increases. Thus, the evidence would support the hypothesis H2. Regarding changes in the level of *strength or vulnerability of a government* -in terms of majorities of seats- the results do not show any relevant effect (M4) since neither having had two consecutive absolute majorities nor having lost or won the absolute majority seems to have effects on the stability of the PBs. Therefore, hypothesis 3 does not find evidence to support it.

Figure 2 Effect size of ruling party change on the probability of continuity of PBs after 2019 municipal elections.

Figure 3 Effect size of the ideological direction on the probability of continuity of PBs after 2019 municipal elections.

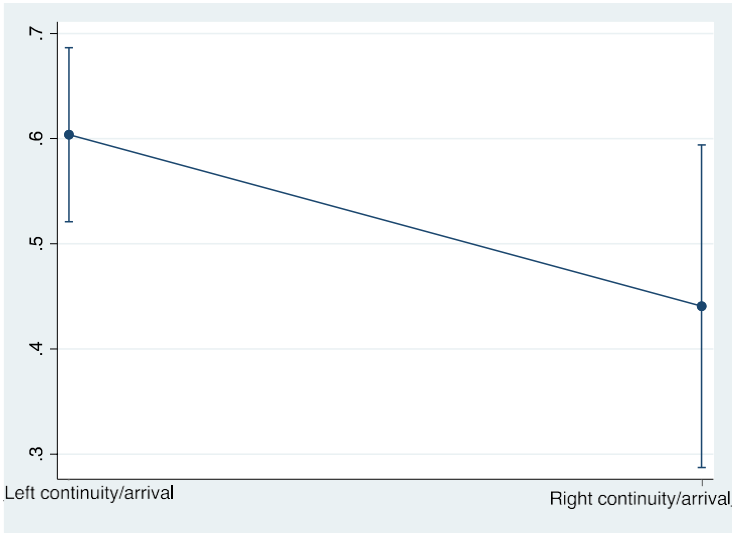
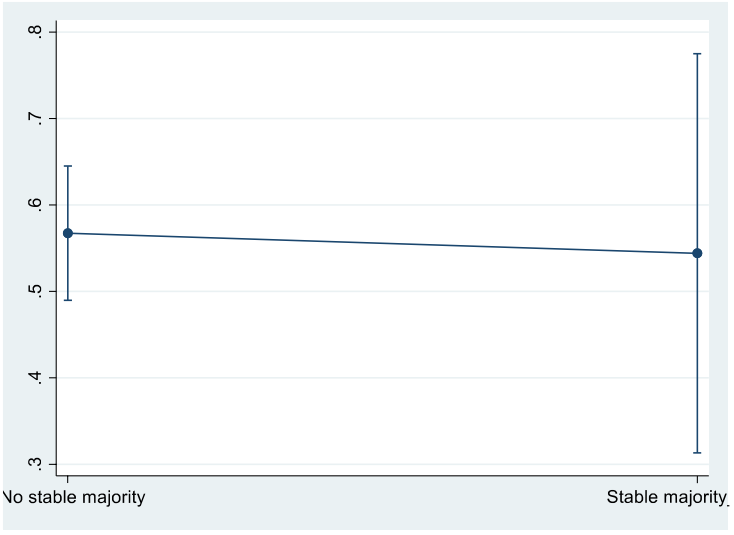


Figure 4 Effect size of the strength government on the probability of continuity of PB after 2009 municipal elections.



Finally, the full model confirms the previous results, showing only a significant effect on revenue per capita (OR=2,443, *p=.060)* and ideological direction (M5), while the rest of the variables -both control variables and the other political competition proxies- remain unchanged. Therefore, it can be assessed that leftist parties continuing in power or coming to power have twice the possibility (OR=1,934, *p=.077*) of continuing with the PB in comparison with right parties. Figures 2, 3 and 4 show in more detail the effect size of political competition variables.

Discussion

There is a suspicion within both academics and practitioners that ruling party change is by far one of the main causes of disruption and abandonment of PBs, not only in Spain but also in other countries. In this paper, we have seen that the stability of PBs does not depend so much on the alternation or not between the political parties but rather on the **ideological direction** of the change or continuity. In short, the ideology of the winning party after an election influences the probability of continuity of a PB. Far from that first moment in which left parties were the ones more committed to citizen participation, we find ourselves in a scenario (worldwide, although in this case, Spanish) in which parties of all ideological families may sympathise with the idea of adopting a PB in their municipality. However, it has been seen that the leftist parties are the ones who are most committed to the continuity of PBs. This is an important aspect since the fact of maintaining the commitment acquired by other governments implies an important step, if not a decisive one, towards the institutionalization of participatory mechanisms. Therefore, according to the results obtained, the commitment to the continuity of the PBs is still a pending task to achieve the objective of greater institutionalization. Due to sample size limitation, difference among leftish parties (socialists, communists, New Green/left) or among right parties (conservative and liberal) was not analysed. Our hopes are that the larger the database, the more possibilities will open up for more detailed analyses.

The results show that revenue per capita is an important predictor of PB continuity in line with the literature review. Despite this finding being robust it should be completed with **more financial variables**. We have measured the effect of the financial capacity of a municipality (revenue per capita) considering only a single point in time. It would be interesting to find out whether the PB continuity is related to increases or decreases in the levels of income per capita. In turn, it would be also clarifying to compare the financial capacity of a municipality with the average of the province to which it belongs. These new two indicators would be useful to test the ***austerity or fiscal constraints hypothesis*** (Bezerra & Junqueira, 2022). On the other hand, PB budget variables are also relevant. For example, it should be taken into account whether

variations in the amount of PB budget -between different editions- influences the probability of PB continuity. In turn, it would be also relevant to measure the weight of the PB budget in the municipal finances, for example, the percentage of the PB budget and its variations on the total investments budget (both indicators would be proxies to test the ***down-up-grading hypothesis*****)**. Also, an interaction effect between austerity*downgrading would be also interesting to analyse). At this moment, our database contains only information about the amount allocated in the last PB registered.

In relation to **the population size,** our analysis does not yield significant results. Previous studies found that larger municipalities are more likely to adopt PB. However, there were no reasons to expect that the number of inhabitants influence the continuity of PB. On the other hand, one aspect of our methodology that differs from some previous works has to do with the population range of the municipalities included in the analysis. Most of the studies that have followed a case selection based on a census logic have focused on the largest municipalities. The most recurrent justification has to do with the advantages of controlling the heterogeneity between municipalities. However, another reason not always stated has to do with the more difficult search or access to information in smaller municipalities. This strategy has the risk of overrepresenting the most successful or exemplary experiences, which are more likely to occur in large municipalities that have more resources and also more media coverage. In contrast, other studies have opted for case selection based on stratified randomization methods (Font et al., 2020). For the data collection strategy, we have bet on combining the census logic with that of the panel studios and based on stratified randomization. In addition, following "the most likely approach" we have relied on official reports or academic research carried out between 2015-2019 to identify cases of continuity and discontinuity. Lastly, a smaller percentage of cases were identified by chance.

In relation to the external validity of the results obtained, certain similarities can be observed with the study carried out by Alves and Allegretti (2012) as well as Spada (2014). Although with important qualifications, both studies showed that, contrary to what is usually thought, the change of government does not necessarily imply a greater probability of interruption of the PB. Alves and Allegretti pointed out that most of the abandoned cases occurred with the same party that started them. Instead, these authors do not delve into the role of ideology when explaining the stability of a PB in circumstances of continuity in government. This is where our study makes the biggest contribution by showing that governments led by right-wing parties are less likely to continue with PBs both when they continue and when they come to power.

As a final reflection, note that the most studies that have directly addressed the problem of the instability of PBs (analyzing a large number of them) have been carried out precisely where PBs were born (Spada, 2012, 2014, 2016; Wampler 2008) or by researchers with strong ties with Brazil (Alves & Allegretti, 2012; Bezerra & Junqueira, 2022). This fact invites us to reflect on the research agenda and, more particularly, the perspective to be adopted in the following years. Retrospective studies have been the norm since research on participatory processes using a large number of cases began to be carried out in the last decade. Undoubtedly, retrospective studies are the necessary first step when dealing with a recent phenomenon. We need to know how they have behaved in order to predict how they will do. Given that our research question was how the 2019 municipal elections in Spain impacted the stability of the PBs, the retrospective perspective was mandatory. However, through continuous monitoring and registering we will be in increasingly optimal conditions to be able to prospectively analyse and predict the fate of PBs. The prospective approach will give us the necessary information to be able to warn in time or imagine some "hypothesis of future".

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