

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

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Abstract: The question we pose in this paper is how and under what conditions parliamentary groups agree about which interest groups to invite to the parliamentary arena. According to the *information logic* approach, policy makers decide whether to invite interest organizations taking into account their capacity to provide high quality technical information about policy problems. In contrast, the *persuasion approach*—, emphasizes policy-makers are especially willing to invite their allies, avoiding their enemies as a means to reinforce their negotiation capacity in the parliamentary debate. We argue access to interest groups to the parliamentary arena is explained not only by their expertise, reputation and representativeness, but especially by their capacity to reinforce MPs policy positions about policy issues. To develop the argument we have developed a unique database, which contains information about which political party invites which interest groups to discuss a policy issue for the last four legislatures in Catalonia

The question we pose in this paper is how and under what conditions parliamentary groups agree about which interest groups to invite to the parliamentary arena. Political parties invite interest groups for quite different purposes. They organize interest groups hearings to discuss legislative initiatives, to get information and technical knowledge about specific problems and challenges the nation is facing, and to identify the flaws and shortcomings of governmental activities (Chaqués and Muñoz 2016). In doing so, parliamentary groups choose which interest groups to invite taking into account their technical knowledge and expertise, and the preferences they have about policy issues (Baumgartner et al. 2011, Hall and Deardorff 2006).

However, as we argue in the paper, most of the time parliamentary groups invite interest groups not necessary to fulfill their information needs, but especially to reinforce their persuasive capacity about the benefits of their legislative proposals, and/or to highlight their principles, values and ways to understand policy issue. This is, political parties not only take into account the informational resources interest groups may have, but especially their ideas and policy positions about issues. As a result, political parties tend to disagree about which interest groups to invite to the parliamentary arena with significant variations depending on the type of government, the type of function –legislative or oversight hearings—, and policy issues.

Parliamentary groups ability to invite their allies and avoid their enemies is not unlimited. Institutional factors like the type of government constraint the goals and strategies of political parties regarding the organization of interest group's hearings. Our results illustrate parliamentary groups tend to agree more when they are part of the same government coalition. By the same token, results illustrate consensus among parties is larger in the case of oversight activities, than legislative activities. This is consensus is more likely when hearings are aimed to highlight governmental failures and policy

shortcomings. Parties from different ideologies will be more willing to agree about which interest groups should be invited when performing oversight activities if this implies to erode the governing party and maximize electoral rewards. By the contrary, this agreement will be harder to find regarding legislative activities. When discussing bills, political parties will invite interest organizations that respond to their preferences, and that their electorate identify as their allies in the political battle. Finally, results illustrate consensus is larger when hearings deal with issues managed by a highly institutionalized policy network.

To develop the analysis, we created a novel comprehensive database containing detailed information on the appearances of all interest groups before parliamentary committees in Catalonia for the period 2003 to 2016. For each appearance there is information about the time-period, the interest 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—. From here, we developed our dependent variable –percentage of agreement among political parties about whether to invite an interest group—.

The paper provides a novel theoretical and empirical analysis about the interaction of policy-makers and interest groups in parliamentary committees, focusing on Catalonia— in which research on these matters is practically non-existent. Most research focuses mainly in the governmental arena, and this is justified by the centrality of the executive in the policy making process (Blondel 1973; Norton 1999, Helboe et al. 2014; Beyers et al, 2011; Binderkratz et al.2015). Also, most studies 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 (Beyers, 2013, 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), Switzerland (Gava and Varone 2016) or Spain (Chaqués-Bonafont and Muñoz, 2016). Finally, in this study we provide evidence about the actual interaction of interest groups and political parties in the parliamentary arena. This is a complementary approach to existing research based on survey data like the comparative interest groups survey project (see www.cigsurvey.eu, Beyers et al. 2006) in which we participate developing the survey for the case of Spain.

The paper is structured as follows. First we discuss the information and persuasion logics to the study of interest groups and political parties interactions. From here we describe the data and operationalization of variables, giving also some information about the regulation of interest groups access to parliaments. Next section explains the preliminary model to explain “agreement”, and from here we develop some concluding remarks.

1. Information versus persuasion logic

Political parties and interest groups are bound to each other. They maintain an interdependent and bidirectional relationship, in which political parties offer access to the policy making process in exchange of different type of goods (Bouwen, 2004; Klüver, 2011). Political parties seek interest groups capacity to provide information and technical knowledge about issues, and to build consensus on highly controversial issues. 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, to limit conflict before and during policy

implementation, and/or to maximize their chances of re-election (Baumgartner et al. 2009, Hall and Deardorf, 2006, Norton, 1999; Meguid 2005 and 2008).

According to the information logic, 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 or/and contribute to generate consensus among political forces, regardless party ideological preferences (Dür and Mateo 2006, Beyers et al 2008). Both left and right parties, regardless of whether they are governing or not, will invite trade unions to parliamentary hearings dealing with the reallocation of labor force in industrial declining sectors, or the future of the pension system reform as a means to get information, before and after passing legislation. By the same token, political parties will agree to invite the main professional associations 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. Interest groups will respond to this invitation sharing their expertise and information with members of parliament for a variety of reasons. In some cases they may consider hearings as an opportunity to have an influence on policy decisions—either pushing new issues and ideas, or preserving the status quo— (Baumgartner, et al 2009, Berry 1984). In others, they may feel obliged to correspond to this invitation as a means to show their actual and potential members they are an active and legitimated actor in the policy making process

However, political parties, as rational actors, allocate their efforts and time taking into account not only interest group's role as information providers, but also their role as advocates of the different views and policy positions towards issues. According to the *persuasion logic*, Parliamentary groups will invite interest organizations to

participate in the process of drafting a bill not only to mitigate their information failures, or generate political consensus among heterogeneous interest, 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). In this view, parliamentary groups tend to invite their allies, avoiding their enemies as a means to reinforce their negotiation capacity in the parliamentary debate. Also, to invite interest groups can be a strategic decision to show concern about issues their electorate consider as the most important, maximizing the chances of reelection. Once a parliamentary committee decides to organize a hearing to deal about privatization of health services, or tax reform each political parties would invite its ideological allies to participate in that discussion.

Thus, according to this persuasion logic, all things equal, one may expect consensus among parliamentary groups—measured by the percentage of parties that agree to invite an interest group to give evidence about a particular topic— about which interest groups to invite to give evidence in a parliamentary committee will be low. By the contrary, if the information logic is correct then consensus will be large as far as interest groups are capable to fulfill policy-makers information needs. From here the question is whether agreement among political parties varies depending on institutional factors, mainly the type of government, the type of functions –hearings related to legislative activities or government oversight—, and the way policy making is structured in policy communities.

Legislative and oversight functions

Parliamentary groups invite interest groups following different logics depending on the functions they perform –oversight or legislative activities—. In the case of legislative activities, policy-makers invite interest groups following a problem-solving logic

(Chaqués-Bonafont and Muñoz 2016). Parliamentary committees become arenas of conflict resolution, in which policy-makers try to reach agreements between heterogeneous preferences and to solve policy problems in an effective way (Sartori 1987; Adler and Wilkerson 2013). In this process, each political party will try to push forward their views and understandings about policy issues, seeking for the support of other parties and private actors, mainly the media and interest organizations. Political parties will try to persuade others about how to regulate a specific issue, inviting interest groups that share the same principles, and values.

In contrast, in the case of hearings oriented to monitor governmental activities, parliamentary committees become arenas of political confrontation which are not necessarily oriented to solving policy problems and promoting consensus between heterogeneous preferences, but mainly to advancing party priorities (Cox and McCubbins 2005; Damgaard and Mattson 2004). When performing oversight activities we expect opposition parties, with independence of their ideology will tend to agree on whether to invite an interest group if this increases the chances to highlight government failures and policy flaws, maximizing the chances to win electoral support. To invite interest groups to give evidence about political corruption, or the privatization of health services with the participation of interest group is an instrument for opposition parties to attract media attention, and to raise concern among citizens regarding government policy failures.

Opposition parties have a common goal –to highlight policy failures and governmental shortcomings—, and will tend to act on common bases against a common opponent, the governing party (parties). In contrast, the governing party will adopt different strategies depending on the type of government. Under majority governments, governing parties main strategy is to limit the organization of oversight hearings, using

its veto power capacity in the parliamentary arena (Chaqués and Muñoz 2016). Under minority, we expect the strategy is more oriented to build consensus among political parties, especially when they are governing in coalition. Thus, we expect consensus among political parties is larger for the case of oversight activities and among parties of the same governing coalition.

Type of government

The capacity and willingness of political parties to follow these logics varies significantly depending on the type of government. We expect overall agreement about which interest groups to invite is larger under coalition governments. Political parties of the same governing coalition will be willing to agree about which interest should be invited to debate a bill they have drafted. Thus, in the case of Catalonia, agreement will be larger from 2003 and 2010 when three parties –Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya (PSC), Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC), and Iniciativa per Catalunya-Verds (ICV-V) are governing in coalition, with more than 50% of the parliamentary seats.

This is we expect, *parliamentary groups of a governing coalition will agree about which interest groups should be invited to discuss what. Hence (H4) overall agreement will be larger during periods of coalition governments than the rest.*

Variations across issues

Interest groups-party links in the parliamentarian arena tend to reproduce the same pattern than in the governmental arena. This is also 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” (Dur and Mateo 2016, Varone and Gava 2016).

Which arguments may use a conservative to exclude major trade 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 Foment de Treball 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 (Chaqués and Muñoz 2016). 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 consensus is *larger in those policy areas governed by closed policy communities*.

Data and coding methods

To answer these questions we analyze interest groups appearances in Catalonia from 2003 to 2016. —. Catalonia is a regional parliamentary system, with its own autonomous political institutions, and a large level of political autonomy from Spain on a wide range of issues. Regarding interest groups regulation, in Catalonia, for the last decade a set of institutional reforms encourage interest groups participation in the policy making process in an open and more transparent fashion. In particular, from 2006 the rules of the Catalan Parliament establish (article 106) that 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 periodⁱⁱⁱ. By the same token, from 2016 there is a register of interest groups in the Catalan parliament (Chaqués-Bonafont 2015) oriented to increase interest groups access to the policy making process..

As a result (see table 1) the average number of interest groups appearances in Catalonia increases dramatically for the last decade from 235 from 2003 to 2006, to more than 475 right after the institutional reform. As in the case of Switzerland (Gava and Varone 2016) or Denmark (Binderkratz et al.) the increasing participation of interest groups in the parliamentary arena occurs in parallel to a major institutional transformation oriented to reinforce the role of the Catalan Parliament in the policy-making process. Also table 1 informs most appearances are dealing with legislative activities, especially after 2006. Actually, from 2006 to 2012 about 75% of interest groups appearances are aimed to discuss an executive bill, and from 2012 this

percentage decreases to 65%. Finally, as we argue in the next section table 1 already informs consensus among political parties declines dramatically after the regulatory reform of 2006, from 73% of the parties inviting an interest group to give evidence about an issue (2003-2006) to less than 20% (2010-2012).

Table 1 around here

Table 2 provides further information about the level of consensus by type of group. First, it illustrates that in most cases it is only one parliamentary group that invites an interest group (54,8% of the interest groups appearances are lead by a single parliamentary group) with important variations among type of actors. In the case of professional associations, or umbrella business organizations, most appearances are organize by one single party. By the contrary, in the case of NGO's agreement tend to be larger (only 46% of the appearances are lead by only one parliamentary group)

Table 2 about here

The database

To develop the analysis, we have created a unique and comprehensive database about all the appearances (*Comparecencias*) of interest organizations that 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 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). 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 six parliamentary terms of office (2003-2015), two governed by the center right *Convergència i Unió*—led by Arthur Mas from 2010 and 2015, from 2012 to 2015 with the non-permanent support of ERC—; and two governed by a left parties 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.

The dependent variable is calculated as follows: first, for each interest groups appearance we identified the political party inviting an interest group. The minimum is 1 party and the maximum ranges from 5 to 7 depending on the number of parties with representation in the Catalan Parliament. In the case agreement is total among all parties, the dependent variable is 1, in case only one party is willing to invite an interest group, then the value is $1/\text{number of parties}$. The independent variables are calculated as follows. For the type of function we defined a dummy variable of 0 in case the hearing is about oversight activities and 1 in case interest groups are called to discuss an executive or parliamentary bill. The variable type of government is measured taking into account the number of seats of the governing parties. Finally, to measure the “institutionalization/legitimation of interest groups” we first have identified the number of governmental committees in Catalonia in which interest groups participate. With this

information, we proceed to identify with a dummy variable whether these groups are also invited to discuss the same issues at the parliamentary arena.

Results

To respond to our research question –how and under what conditions parliamentary groups agree about which interest groups to invite to the parliamentary arena— we run an OLS model in which the dependent variable is the agreement between political parties—, and the independent variables are the type of government –measured by the percentage of seats of the governing party (or parties) ; the type of function –measured by a dummy variable 1=legislative activities and 0=implementation/monitoring activities); and the institutionalization of interest groups –measured by a dummy variable 1 in case the interest groups is part of a governmental committee dealing with this issue, and 0 otherwise—. Also, we introduce two control variables. On the one hand, we take into account the reform of parliamentary rules that took place in 2006; in other hand we control whether the hearing was finally celebrated or not. Results are summarized in table 3.

Table 3 about here

Overall, results give support to our initial hypotheses. First, positive and significant coefficients for the variable type of government illustrate consensus is larger under coalition governments. The level of consensus is larger from 2003 to 2010 when PSC, ERC and ICV are governing in coalition and from 2012 to 2016 when ERC gives non-permanent support to the CIU government. Second, the negative coefficient for the variable type of hearing indicates consensus is significantly larger for the case of the oversight hearings. As expected, in the case of legislative hearings, parliamentary

groups will invite different interest organizations as a means to reinforce their policy positions and ways of understanding of policy issues (see also figure 1).

Figure 1 about here

In doing so, political parties also highlight their connection with an interest organization, which its electorate identifies as linked to their ideological position. The conservative party, Partido Popular will invite pro-traditional family organizations when dealing with bills oriented to regulate adoption rights of same-sex marriage couples, or the introduction of sexual education in the educational curriculum of public schools. By the same token, left parties like ERC or ICV will invite lesbian-gays and transsexuals organizations to deal with the same legislative initiatives. In contrast, while performing oversight activities, political parties may temporary forget about their ideological differences as a means to achieve a more general goal. Opposition parties may agree about which interest groups to invite as a means to fight against a common adversary, the governing party; in the case of governing parties, agreement is aimed to counterbalance opposition attacks (see figure 2).

Figure 2 about here

Third, positive and significant coefficients illustrate consensus is larger in those policy areas in which there is a governmental committee, composed by public and private actors. Figure 3 informs consensus is significantly larger for the case of labour, health, rights energy and education, while the opposite occurs for the case of transportation, culture and government. As we illustrate elsewhere (Chaqués-Bonafont et al. 2013) these policy areas are traditionally governed by closed policy communities composed by a few set of interest organizations that interact vis-à-vis public authorities performing different functions (generally advisory tasks) on a permanent bases. disagreement is larger (actually for some cases correlation among parties is negative).

Figure 3 about here

Finally, results in table 3 illustrate, as one may expect, consensus is larger for those interest groups appearances that are finally celebrated (and before the institutional reform of 2006. This is, the institutional reforms significantly affect the level of consensus among political parties. As table 1 already illustrates, before 2006, parliamentary groups most of the time agree about the interest groups that should be invited to give evidence, but this percentage declines dramatically after 2006. In our view, this indicates interest groups appearances become more and more an instrument to promote the political debate about the different views and ideas that different actors may have about issues. More interest groups appearances (and less consensus) means hearings are not a pure formality parliamentary groups may fulfill in order to pass a bill into law, but an instrument that foster political interaction between interest groups and political parties in the parliamentary arena.

In short, overall, results of the OLS model give support to our initial hypothesis: consensus is larger under coalition governments; for those issues governed by closed policy communities and for the case of oversight activities. Next, we test whether consensus is larger among political parties of the same governing coalition. Figure 4 informs about the level of agreement among political parties, differentiating between coalition and single governments (measured by correlations among political parties). Recall that for each interest group appearance we have identified whether a political party invites this interest group with a dummy variable where 1 means that the political party invites the interest group, and 0 otherwise. For each appearance at least one party invites the interest group, and the maximum depends on the number of parties with political representation. High correlation means the two parties invite a similar set of

interest organizations along a legislature, while negative correlation means most of the cases both parties invite a different set of interest groups.

Figure 4 about here

As we defined in the first section, we expect correlation is higher for those political parties that are part of a coalition government. This is we expect PSC, ERC and ICV tend to agree more among them when they are part of the same governing coalition (2003-2010). At first glance results give support to this hypothesis: correlation is high and significant for the case of ICV-ERC-ICV when they are governing together from 2003 to 2010. For the rest of the period correlation is positive but much lower and in some cases not significant. In contrast, correlation between CIU and the rest of political parties is negative.

Conclusion

Parliamentary groups decide to invite interest organizations to give evidence in parliamentary committees following different logics depending on the type of government, and the type of function they perform. In the case of legislative activities, parliamentary groups invite groups to reinforce their persuasion capacity in the legislative debate. As a result, we argue consensus among political parties about which interest groups should be invited is lower for the case of legislative activities than oversight activities. In the case of oversight activities, we argue consensus is larger mainly because opposition and governing parties have strong incentives to work together in the defense of a common goal –opposition parties work together as a means to attacking the governing party, organizing hearings with interest groups to highlight governmental failures and policy shortcomings; in the case of governing parties the common goal is to counterbalance this attack, by inviting common allies.

Results also 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. Political parties tend to agree more about which interest groups to invite when they are governing in coalition and for those issues that are strongly institutionalized in the governmental arena. Further research will be oriented to better understand this link, focusing in the type of interest groups political parties invite to give evidence across policy areas and time.

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Figures and tables

Table 1. Interest groups appearances in the Basque Country and Catalonia

Period	Annual aver.	% celebrated	% legislative	governing party	% seats	governing parties	mean agreement
2003- 2006	235,7	67,75	52,1	PSC- ERC-ICV	54,8	3	73
2006- 2010	475,5	52,37	80,8		51,8	3	43
2010- 2012	472,0	43,75	77,1	CIU	45,9	1	18
2012- 2015	571,3	55,60	65,3		37,1	1 (+ERC pivot)	39

Table 2. Parliamentary groups inviting interest groups. Number of parties and percentage by type of interest group (2003-2015)

Number parties	NGOs	Trade Unions	Professionals organizations	Business Organizations	Umbrella business org.	Average %
1	46,0	59,1	68,6	56,6	66,5	54,8
2	4,3	0,4	1,5	2,0	0,0	2,6
3	16,6	13,4	12,5	10,2	10,8	14,3
4	3,0	1,5	1,8	0,0	1,1	2,0
5	17,7	11,3	5,2	22,4	13,1	14,8
6	6,7	5,0	7,4	2,4	1,7	5,6
7	5,7	9,3	3,0	6,3	6,8	5,9
Appearances celebrated	1397	462	542	459	176	3.051

Table 3. Explaining the percentage of agreement among political parties

	B	Rsq
Cons	,031 (.078)	,332
% Votes governing party/parties	,030*** (.001)	
Legislative or oversight function	-,286*** (.009)	
Governmental commission	-0,054*** (-008)	
Parliamentary rules	-.355*** (.022)	
Result (celebrated/not celebrated)	.146*** (.007)	

Note: the dependent variable is the percentage of agreement among political parties for each interest group appearance. The variable ranges from 0.15 to 0.1 (N=3056). Durbin Watson 1,810.

Figure 1. Consensus among political parties, 2003-2015

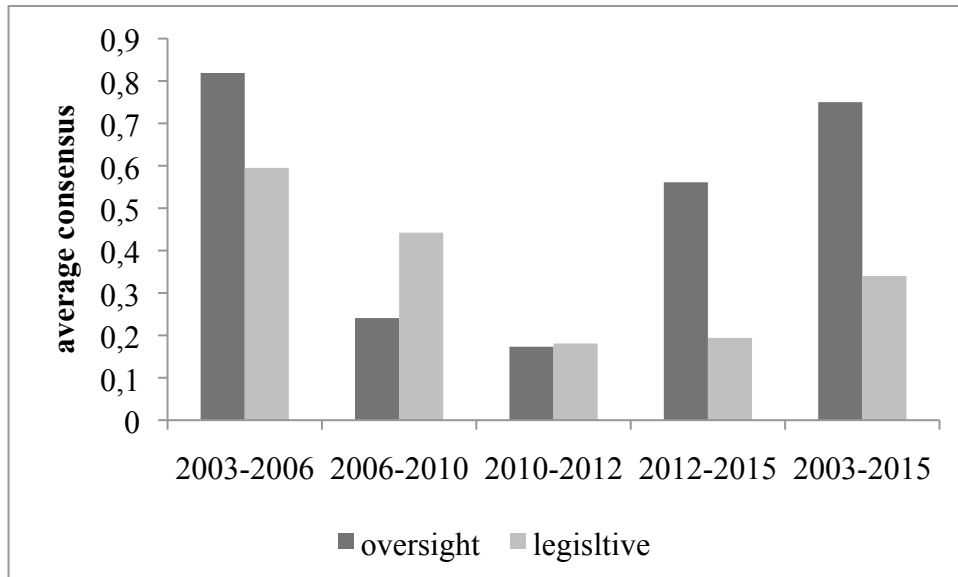


Figure 2. Percentage of Interest groups invited by political party organized by type

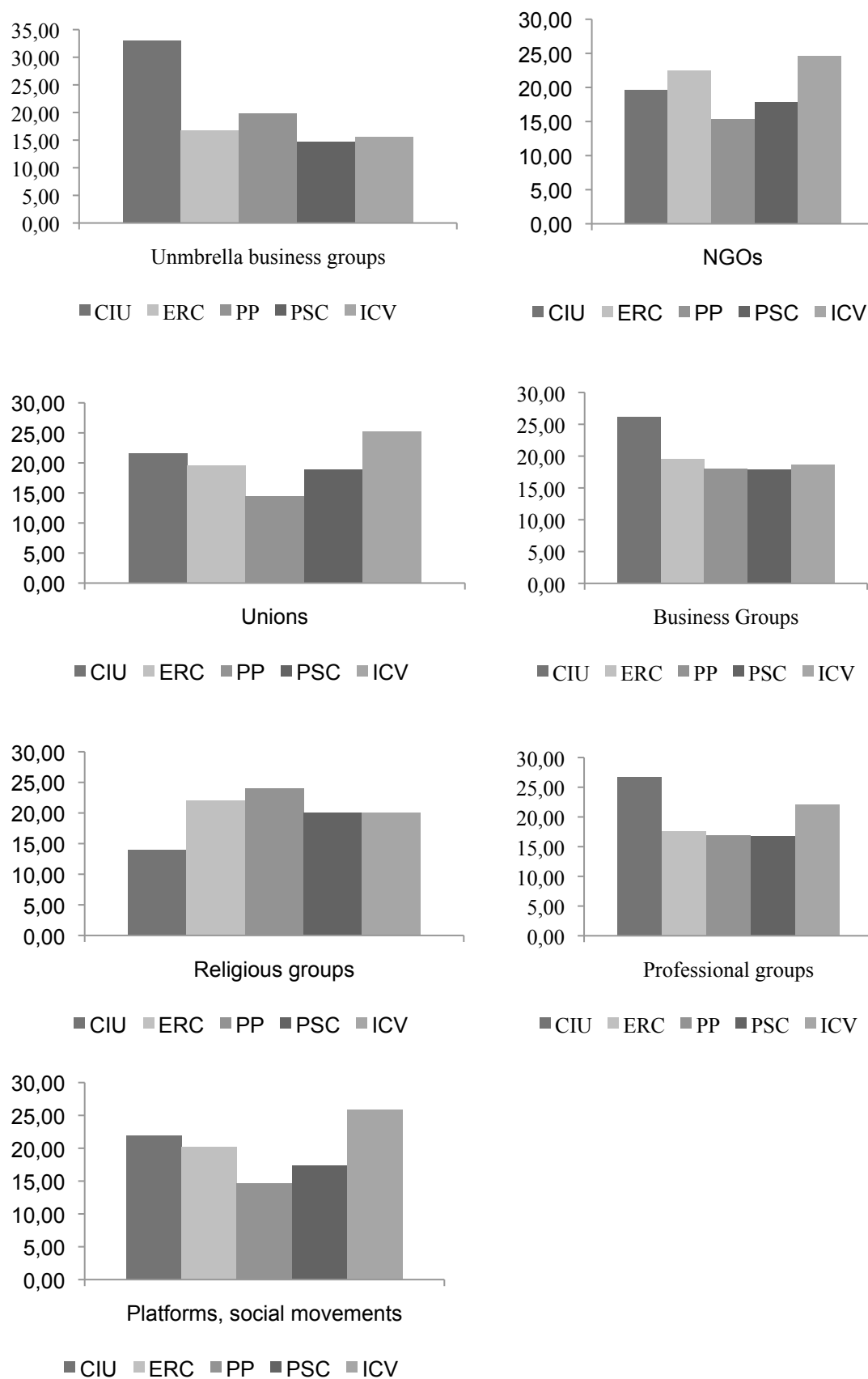


Figure 3. Agreement among political parties by policy area

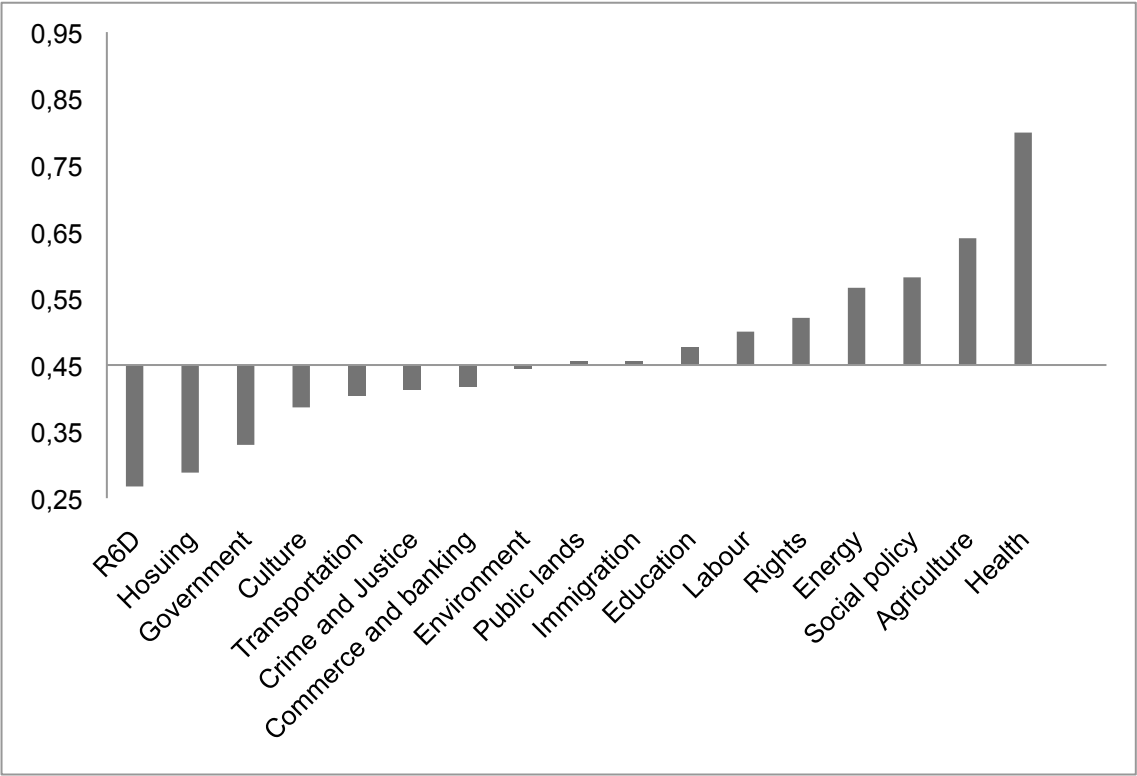
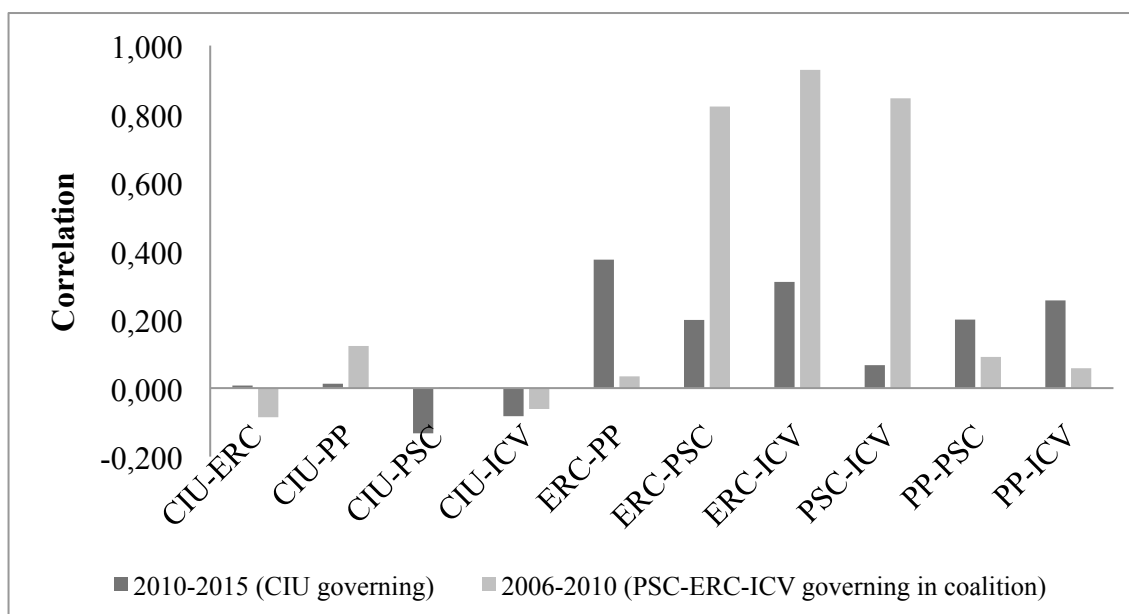


Figure 4. Agreement between parliamentary groups by type of government (correlations between parties)



Note: correlation is always significant but in the case of CIU and PSC and CIU and ICV for the period 2006-2010.

Annex**Table 1. Type of Organizations**

Code description
1. NGOs
2. Religious groups
3. Trade Unions
4. Professional Associations
5. Trade Association
6. Business Association
7. Others:

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

Table 3. Summary statistics

Catalonia	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Sig	mean dif
NGOs	1397	0,507	0,349	0,000	0,057
religious groups	15	0,432	0,213	0,754	-0,018
Trade Unions	462	0,447	0,351	0,830	-0,003
Professionals	542	0,357	0,299	0,000	-0,093
Business	459	0,468	0,369	0,287	0,018
Umbrella Business	176	0,402	0,343	0,067	-0,048
All	3056	0,458	0,347		

ⁱFor 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)

ⁱⁱNote 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.

ⁱⁱⁱ 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 committee may invite individuals and organizations 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. Note that for all cases interest groups participation is always channelized by parliamentary groups, which formally invite groups and experts to give evidence about an issue; this is, interest groups alone cannot decide to participate in the legislative process