One World, One Struggle?
Protest Participation in the Age of Austerity

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PhD Thesis

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Abstract

This dissertation explores under which conditions the implementation of austerity measures leads to the increase in protest participation by comparing the implemented austerity measures, and the subsequent cycles of contention in two pairs of countries: Spain and Portugal, and Croatia and Serbia. The main aim of the dissertation is to unravel the mechanisms that enable and disable the birth of contentious responses to austerity measures in particular national contexts. Additionally, the thesis investigates the effect of the economic shock on the individual propensity to participate in protests in those contexts where levels of mobilisation increased during the Great Recession.

The empirical strategy is sequential and combines different methodological approaches. In the first phase, it combines process tracing and cross-case analysis to map the structure in which contentious actions happen. In the second phase, it uses protest events analysis to assess relational, processual, and dynamic components of internal mechanisms of protest events in a particular national setting. In the third phase, to explore the behaviour and attitudinal changes of individuals during the outbreak of the Great Recession in Spain, it employs panel data analysis.

The thesis proves that the policy responses to the crisis were the same in different national settings. However, despite the similarities in remedies for the Great Recession, the nature of the anti-austerity cycles varied depending on two key factors. On the one hand, the openness of the political system. On the other hand, the movements are able to connect country-specific grievances to the globally articulated claims against the neoliberal capitalist system that endangers democratic principles. The analysis of changes in the propensity for protest participation among citizens attests to the claims that the Great Recession was a multifaceted crisis. The motivation for the citizen's participation in the protests was coming not only from the sudden deterioration of their economic status. The political discontent played a crucial role in the citizen's mobilisation. While political discontent and dissatisfaction with personal economic situations served as mobilisers, their effect subdued over time. However, the thesis shows that direct exposure to the austerity measures prolonged the chance for protest participation.

Resumen

Esta tesis explora las condiciones en las que la aplicación de medidas de austeridad llevó a un aumento de la participación en manifestaciones entre la población. Para ello, comparamos las medidas aplicadas y los ciclos de agitación en dos pares de países: España y Portugal, y Croacia y Serbia. El principal objetivo de este estudio es descubrir qué circunstancias generan –y evitan– respuestas conflictivas a las políticas de austeridad en los contextos de cada uno de los cuatro países. Adicionalmente, la tesis investiga el rol que la crisis económica juega en lo propenso que puede ser un individuo a manifestarse políticamente, en aquellos contextos en los que los niveles de movilización se han incrementado durante la crisis.

La estrategia empírica es secuencial y combina distintos enfoques metodológicos. En la primera fase, combina el seguimiento de procesos y el análisis de casos cruzados para mapear la estructura en la que se producen los conflictos. En la segunda fase, utiliza el análisis de manifestaciones para evaluar los componentes relacionales, procesuales y dinámicos de los mecanismos internos de los eventos de protesta en cada país. En la tercera fase, para explorar el comportamiento y cambios de actitud de los individuos durante el estallido de la recesión en España, se utiliza el análisis de datos de panel.

La tesis demuestra que las políticas de respuesta a la crisis fueron las mismas en distintos entornos nacionales. A pesar de la similitud en las formas de solucionar la crisis, la naturaleza de las reacciones antiausteridad dependía de la apertura del sistema político y que los movimientos pudieran conectar sus agravios concretos con las reivindicaciones articulades en todo el mundo contra el sistema capitalista neoliberal que pone en peligro los principios democráticos. El análisis de los cambios en la propensión a la participación de la ciudadanía en la movilización da fé de que la Recesión fue una crisis con diversas facetas. La motivación de la participación ciudadana en las protestas no sólo venía del repentino deterioro de su situación económica, sino que el descontento político tuvo un papel crucial. Aunque el descontento y la insatisfacción con las situaciones económicas personales sirvieron como movilizadores, su efecto se redujo con el tiempo. Sin embargo, la tesis muestra que la exposición directa a las medidas de austeridad alargó las posibilidades de participación en las protestas.

Resum

Aquesta tesi explora les condicions sota les quals l'aplicació de mesures d'austeritat va dur a un augment de la participació en manifestacions entre la població. Per fer-ho, comparem les mesures aplicades i els cicles d'agitació en quatre països agrupats en parells: Espanya i Portugal, i Croàcia i Sèrbia. L'objectiu principal d'aquest estudi és descobrir quines circumstàncies generen respostes conflictives a les polítiques d'austeritat –i quines les poden evitar– en els contextos particulars de cadascun dels quatre països. Addicionalment, la tesi investiga el rol que la crisi econòmica juga en com de propens pot ser un individu a manifestar-se políticament, en aquells contextos en què els nivells de mobilització s'han incrementat durant la crisi.

L'estratègia empírica és seqüencial i combina diferents enfocaments metodològics. En la primera fase, combina el seguiment de processos i l'anàlisi de casos creuats per cartografiar l'estructura en què es produeixen els conflictes. En la segona fase, utilitza l'anàlisi de manifestacions per avaluar els components relacionals, processuals i dinàmics dels mecanismes interns dels esdeveniments de protesta en cada país. En la tercera fase, per explorar el comportament i els canvis d'actitud dels individus durant l'esclat de la recessió a Espanya, s'utilitza l'anàlisi de dades de panell.

La tesi demostra que les polítiques de resposta a la crisi van ser les mateixes en diferents entorns nacionals. Malgrat la similitud en les maneres de solucionar la crisi, la naturalesa de les reaccions anti-austeritat depenia de l'obertura del sistema polític i que els moviments poguessin connectar els greuges específics del país amb les reivindicacions globalment articulades contra el sistema capitalista neoliberal que posa en perill els principis democràtics. L'anàlisi dels canvis en la propensió a la participació de la ciutadania a la mobilització dóna fe que la Recessió va ser una crisi amb diverses facetes. La motivació de la participació ciutadana en les protestes no només venia del deteriorament sobtat de la seva situació econòmica, sinó que el descontentament polític va tenir-hi un paper crucial. Si bé el descontentament i la insatisfacció amb les situacions econòmiques personals van servir com a mobilitzadors, el seu efecte es va reduir amb el temps. Tanmateix, la tesi mostra que l'exposició directa a les mesures d'austeritat va allargar les possibilitats de participació en les protestes.

Acknowledgements

This is Ground Control
to Major Tom
You've really made the grade
And the papers want to know whose shirts you wear
Now it's time to leave the capsule
if you dare

This is Major Tom to Ground Control
I'm stepping through the door
And I'm floating
in a most peculiar way
And the stars look very different today

Space Oddity, David Bowie

Doctoral candidates usually write their acknowledgments right at the end of the thesis writing path, somewhere between the 101st proofreading and the final formatting. I started writing them one humid June night during the first year of my PhD. I thought they should be written and ready, motivating me to write the thesis itself. In the end, the approaching final deadline for the submission was the best motivation I needed. Everyone mentioned in upcoming paragraphs knew that would be the case. Both the thesis and the acknowledgments went through several revisions, but now I have to let them go. I have to be Major Tom and step through the door of my safe capsule.

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when the babies were born, parents were sick or new partners were introduced, but I know you are there and that we care for each other deeply. That is what friendship is about.

I like to think **my grandmothers Ana and Anka and my grandfathers Rade and Eduard** would be proud of me today as they were in the picture depicting them around me while I was blowing the candle on the cake made for my first birthday.

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Chapter 1: Recession and Contention in the European Semi-Periphery

1.1. Introduction

I celebrated my 22nd birthday in October of 2011 on the premises of the Ministry of Education in Donje Svetice, a neighbourhood in Zagreb. Donje Svetice used to be a workers' neighbourhood which started to be redeveloped into an affluent part of the city that started to be a home of international companies, famous hotel chains, expensive resident buildings, posh gyms, and burgeoning start-ups in the early 2000s. Back then the Ministry was surrounded by the construction sites. The state, the city authorities, and various investors were building the "newest" Zagreb. I was not there to protest against the wild and uncontrolled real estate market. We fought that fight elsewhere in the city.

We were there to defend the right to universal and free higher education. The right that we gained after occupying universities just two years before. The right that the then incumbent government led by the Croatian Democratic Union saw as a privilege that needed to be abolished in order to keep the public finances in order. We students marched from our faculty buildings to the ministry to surround it with a human chain. We knew the minister was in the building. We wanted to be heard. When the public servants were about to finish with their working day, we organised sit-ins on all exits. The workers tried to leave the building jumping over us and saying we were spoiled brats. We were reminding them they were going to need us to protest with them when the government decided to cut their salaries and benefits under the same pretexts. "One world. One

struggle.", we were saying while letting them pass by. A peaceful protest was abruptly ended by the anti-riot police, and we went back to the afternoon classes, some with a couple of bruises or with twisted arms.

Fast forward to the winter of 2014 when I started working for the Ministry of Social Policy which shared the building with the Ministry of Veteran Affairs. A month before I started to work there, the Homeland War veterans, with the help of the far-right organisations and, now in opposition, the Croatian Democratic Union, organised an encampment to challenge an announcement of the centre-left government to cut the scope of the benefits veterans had 20 years after the end of the war. The encampment lasted 555 days. My colleagues and I could never be sure if on the way out from work we were going to be verbally assaulted, physically threatened, or we could not leave at all because just that day the veterans decided to threaten everyone with a detonation of gas tanks in one of the busiest streets in Zagreb.

On the "verbal assaults days", we were called spoiled brats who never fought for Croatia. Their world was not my fight. I quickly forgot the "One world. One struggle." cry that guided me through my twenties. When I replied that I fought for universally accessible public services, and not for the welfare state captured by a bunch of bullies, they called the police on me. They came immediately. They were already at the premises. Eating beans and drinking beer in the tent with the protestors.

Both of these illustrations represent protest events that happened in the shadow of the Great Recession in a country on the European semi-periphery. Both were motivated by the threats of the government to cut public spending. Both of them were contentious

responses to the idea of austerity. The idea that dominated both policy making and public jargon since the onset of the economic crisis in 2008. The idea that was supported by the governments of the opposing ideological stances. The idea that was criticised by all social movements that could be seen flooding the streets across the world. At first glance, the demands expressed on the streets were astonishingly similar, if not the same. "One world. One struggle".

All of them agreed on several main points. The political elites failed us. Supposedly democratic institutions actually do not represent the wishes of the majority. The regular citizens bear the pressure of the economic crisis, while the real culprits are being bailed out by the national governments by order of the international financial institutions.

How is it then possible that the actors formulating these demands and their allies can be as different as in the examples I described above? Are these demands really universal and able to attract an unprecedented number of citizens to the streets or can they mobilise only specific groups of people? Why do some of these events barely last a couple of hours, while others keep attracting citizens over several months? In general, are the contentious responses to austerity and their political consequences really as similar as we thought? If they differ that much within one national context and within a relatively condensed time frame, can we talk about one universal anti-austerity cycle of protests that spanned over several years?

This thesis represents my attempt to shed some light on this conundrum. It compares the contentious responses to governmental reaction to the Great Recession in two pairs of countries: Spain and Portugal, and Croatia and Serbia. The overarching research question

it aims to answer is: Under which conditions the implementation of austerity measures leads to the increase in protest participation?

The present chapter serves as the introduction to the thesis. First, I place the research question within the discussion on the roots of economic and social crises that intertwined during the Great Recession. Second, I am explaining the concept of European semi-periphery. Third, I introduce the concept of cycles of contention which is useful as the conceptual tool to explain occurrence and subsidence of collective actions. Fourth, I discuss the necessity to approach the object of my research, protest participation, through multiple theoretic lenses. Finally, the chapter concludes with the outline of the thesis, the aims of each of its parts, and its overall contribution.

1.2. The Great Recession

What we call today the Great Recession of 2008 has been analysed by scholars coming from different disciplines and therefore interpreted in a multitude of ways. In one of the first volumes that had offered a comparative analysis of the effect the Great Recession had on the social movements in the European Periphery, della Porta (2017: 5) underlines the necessity to start any similar analysis by asking the broadest question first: what is it a crisis of? She stresses out that the answer is expected to determine the nature of grievances and claims expressed in the protests happening in the shadow of the Great Recession. Thus, I start with the same question, and in this part of the introductory chapter I briefly summarise the roots of the 2008 economic and social crises that had far-reaching consequences for people around the world.

The crisis started as a financial breakdown in the US market caused by a combination of factors, including a housing bubble, excessive risk-taking by banks and other financial institutions, and lax regulations (Iversen and Soskice 2012). From the US, it spilled over to Europe, especially affecting its peripheral countries. One of the key factors that contributed to the crisis was the expansion of the housing market, which was driven in large part by government policies which helped to keep interest rates low for an extended period of time and, consequently, made it easier for citizens to borrow money to buy homes. This, combined with the banks loosening their lending standards, led to a rapid increase in the number of people having mortgages, especially in countries such as the US, Spain and Ireland (Scharpf 2011). The increase in the levels of borrowing were not seen only in the private sphere, but also among private companies and public entities (Armingeon and Baccaro 2012) which led to the overall rise in both private and public debt. At the same time, interconnectedly, the financial sector was undergoing a period of rapid growth ever since the early 1980s. The growth was partially based, especially in the US, on the deregulation of the national markets which allowed for development of highly speculative financial products and instruments and led to the increase in risky investments. According to Streeck (2014), this banking crisis was the trigger for the deeper crisis and one of the three pillars of the Great Recession.

The second stage of the crisis Streeck (2014) identifies as a fiscal crisis, provoked by, not only by the high level of the public debt in some countries before the crisis, but also by the attempts of governments to limit the impact of the banking crisis by bailing out the banks. In order to do so, numerous governments tried to boost their public expenditure (Ortiz et al 2015) in what could be labelled as the Keynesian (Della Porta et al. 2017) or the expansionary phase (Ortiz et al 2015) of the Great Recession.

The short-lived attempt to prevent recession by increasing the levels of public investment ended up after the outbreak of the Greek crisis, and the governments were advised by the international organisations such as International Monetary Fund, and by the European Union, to decrease their public spending. That was the moment in which Streeck (2014) claims that a real-economy crisis started. This phase was marked by skyrocketing levels of unemployment, overall stagnation of production, and decrease in public revenues. The recommendation to decrease public spending was about to be done by implementing "the same structural adjustment programme centred on public sector cuts, pension reform, easing of employment protection legislation, wakening of unemployment insurance, and flexibilisation of collective bargaining (Armingeon and Baccaro 2012: 182)". The "one size fits all" solution did not take into account that the programme was going to be implemented by governments from both sides of the political spectrum, who have different levels of political strength, and different capabilities and willingness to negotiate with social partners. The idea that the same type of any, and especially austerity driven, reform was applicable in several countries was proved to be dangerous and ineffective, as it was seen in the previous decades in Latin America and in post-socialist countries (Bohle and Greskovits 2012).

With the rising unemployment, citizens became unable to pay their mortgages which led to the increase in the number of evictions, and eventually, to the higher homelessness rate. The cuts in health care provision and social services ment that those in need could not count on the help of the state. Even if they retained their jobs they were faced with a sudden drop in the wages. On the macroeconomic level, this led to reduced domestic consumption, while increasing the overall levels of risk of poverty and exclusion. (Bremer

and Vidal 2018, Della Porta et al. 2017). The sudden drop in the living standard, and risk of becoming impoverished were combined with the sharp decline in levels of political trust, trust in institutions and political parties (Kriesi 2014). Citizens became aware that the high-level decisions were taken on the European level (Carvalho 2019) and lost trust in democratic procedures upon seeing that their chosen representatives are complying with recommendations of supra-national non-elected institutions that directly endanger the citizens' well-being. These were the roots of a social crisis that transformed into a political one that is in the focus of the present work.

To sum up, what started as the global financial crisis, turned into a economic crisis in Europe, endangering the until then dominant idea of the eurozone. The economic downturn brought to light the problems many of the eurozone members had with the public debt and liquidity (Hobolt and Leblond 2014) which threatened the sustainability of the European monetary union (Kriesi 2014). After the failure of the initial attempt to stabilise the national economics by bailing out the financial institutions and by trying to stimulate economic growth using expansionist fiscal packages (Della Porta et al. 2017, Kriesi 2014, Ortiz et al 2015), the European Union institutions and the IMF decided that the most appropriate way to stop the further increase of the public debt by implementing austerity policies in an attempt to control their growing budgets (Kriesi 2014). Despite the fact that the majority of the costs of the crisis were felt and dealt with on the national level with some room for the governments to choose the mechanisms to tackle it, the high level decisions were taken on the European level (Carvalho 2019). The inability of the national governments to control the crisis, and to resist the EU proposed solutions, led to decrease in the trust in institutions and, ultimately, to the profound political crisis. On the one hand, the crisis was a crisis of redistribution in which states reduced provision and scope of social services (Della Porta et al. 2017), while on the other hand, non-elected

institution, decided on the direction of the economic and social policy-making instead of citizens and their representatives (Sánchez-Cuenca 2014).

Not only aforementioned inability of the national political elites to impede the implementation of the proposed policies, but also their unwillingness to protect the existing social rights galvanised political reactions to the crisis. The scope of the consequences was broad - increase in the electoral volatility, creation of the new parties, a rise of the extreme parties, an increase in the levels of political polarisation - and, central for this dissertation, an appearance of numerous protest events that took the dissatisfaction with the institutions to the streets. Such a complex change that happened in a relatively condensed time frame calls for a holistic approach to the emergence of the protest events. Thus, in the dissertation I study it in the broader historical context, taking into account the interactions among political structure and political actors' agency, and considering the possibility that different factors are drivers for the increase in the protest participation for the individuals and the collectives. With that in mind, in the upcoming sections of this chapter, I present the theoretical framework for the analysis.

1.3. The European Semi-periphery

This part of the introductory chapter helps me to delimit cases to be explored further in the thesis as it shows that countries of European semi-periphery are distinguishable from other parts of Europe economically, politically and socially.

Wallerstein (1976) for the first time defined semi-peripheral countries in the times of the 1970s recession which he described as a crisis of the capitalist world-economy based on "the antinomy of class (bourgeois-proletarian) and function in the division of labour (core-periphery)" (1976: 462). For Wallerstein semi-peripheral countries are countries that lie somewhere on the spectrum between core and peripheral countries. While the former are countries with high concentration of profit, technology, wage rates, and very diversified production, the latter are their opposite. Due to their production diversification that is higher than in the peripheral countries, and distinctive social structure and internal politics, they are able to serve as core countries to some of the peripheral ones, and as peripheral to some of the core ones (Wallerstein 1976). At the time when Wallerstein presented this typology, it seemed that this unique position should help semi-peripheral countries to have more flexibility in times of economic downturns. In the contemporary iteration of that idea, Morales Ruvalcaba (2020), identifies two opposing and polarising forces that shape the semi-periphery:

> "...on the one hand, periphery dynamics that subordinate these zones to the needs of the core states, subtracting their autonomy; and, on the other hand, the nationalist efforts to increase autonomy, to keep the state at an intermediate point in the hierarchical continuum and eventually to dispute the centrality of the system. Being composed of a specific combination of core and peripheral processes, the semiperipheral areas are the most dynamic areas of transit, interconnection and flow with specific characteristics (2020: 22)"

Using the eight characteristics Morales Ruvalcaba (2020) identified as the main determinants of semi-peripheral countries, I show why Spain, Portugal, Croatia and Serbia should be considered as countries of European semi-periphery. It is important to highlight that they do not have to exhibit all stated characteristics in order to be characterised as such. Most importantly, semi-peripheral countries have

> "…structural, functional and geographical position between the core and the periphery, their economies are in the process of industrialization; their state apparatuses, which are there, are in the process of modernization; they show high socio-economic inequality and strong disparity in their internal regions… (Morales Ruvalcaba 2020: 23)"

In the cases I am interested in, geographically they all lie on the European periphery. Spain is the closest to the core being the strongest economy and biggest country out of four, but also being a part of the EU 30 years longer than Croatia. Due to inability to fulfil pre-accession criteria in several fields (economy, rule of law, democracy) Serbia remains the closest to the periphery. Although all of their economies are industrialised, Spanish, Portuguese and Croatian ones rely heavily on the revenue from tourism, activity that Morales Ruvalcaba (2020) sees as distinctive for semi-peripheral countries, while Serbia is investing efforts into attracting FDIs that would help them with revitalising the export-oriented industry. Public services in all countries are often described as overly bureaucratised, difficult to navigate, and in some instances, corrupt (Mungiu-Pippidi 2013). The rise of inequality in society happened in Spain and Portugal in the shadow of the Great Recession, while in Croatia and Serbia it is mostly related to the consequences of the transition and war in the 1990s, although the inequality rate grew during the last economic crisis. In all four countries there is a sharp contrast between the levels of development of the capital city and other parts of the country. Capital, investment, main industries, and human capital are concentrated in Madrid, Lisbon, Zagreb and Belgrade.

In the Spanish case, unequal development of different autonomous communities and the concept of "España vacia" - parts of the country emptied from any significant economic activity, where people migrate from, and that are not well connected to the other parts of the country - represent problems that form part of the current policy agenda. Similar situation is observed in Croatia, Serbia and Portugal where regions that do not gravitate to the capital or are not reliant on tourism are characterised by the alarming demographic trends due to emigration and negative birth rates (Giannakis and Brugemman 2019). In socio-cultural terms, there is a sharp divide between the population living in the urban and rural areas that has been one of the main drivers of the polarised party systems.

1.4. Cycles of Contention

The literature on protest participation and social movements in general, is mostly based on studies in "advanced democracies, with expanding welfare provisions and well-established political parties and representative institutions (Della Porta 2017: 262)". In one of the earliest works which gave a critical overview of studies which focused on movements of affluence, Kerbo (1982), put an emphasis on distinction between movements of affluence and movements of crisis. He presented six significant differences between these movements, their participants, organisational structures and repertoires.

For movements of crisis to happen, the precondition is found in threatening political and/or socioeconomic crises, while movements of affluence happen in stable and relatively good political and economic periods. In movements of crisis, participants are oriented towards one specific movement, and they engage in collective action only if they directly are going to benefit from the fulfilment of their demands. Au contraire,

participants in movements of affluence can be interested in numerous movements and are conscious of different social issues they tend to address in their collective engagement. Regarding organisation, movements of crisis are usually relatively unorganised and happen spontaneously, while movements of affluence begin with a social movement organisation and clear leadership structure. Due to that, usually in their early stages, movements of crisis tend to use more violent repertoire and express more hostile outbursts towards authorities, while movements of affluence are less likely to do so and use more traditional protest repertoire. Finally, movements of affluence systematically use individual rewards and coercion to promote active participation, while movements of crisis are not able to do so until (and if) they consolidate.

To be able to distinguish if this distinction holds for the protests that occurred in the period of the Great Recession and over different national contexts, it is necessary to develop a framework for that type of analysis.

As protest events are regarded as a focal point of contentious politics, in many instances they are often treated as independent events that can be understood separately from their spatial and historical contexts and disconnected from the other types of political actions (Koopmans 2004). Koopmans (2004) argues that this partially happens due to two dominant tendencies in the field of social movements literature. On the one hand, a quantitative research stream uses country-by-year measures to analyse whether a specific phenomenon increases or decreases occurrence of protest events, simply by correlating them as if results of correlation were, not only comparable to, but interchangeable with, those obtained in other points in time and space. Second research stream uses a case study approach to study single events or movements. Seemingly, this

approach tends to be more sensitive to spatial and temporal interpolation, exchanging assumption of interchangeability which is dominant in the first approach for the one of ahistorical uniqueness. Out of necessity to explain collective action in a historically and spatially connected manner, taking into account relational, processual and dynamic nature of protest events, the idea about cycles (Tarrow 1993) or waves of contention (Koopmans 2004) was born.

Tarrow (1993, 2012) defined a cycle of contention as a phase of heightened conflict in the social system which is characterised by a rapid diffusion of collective action from more mobilised parts of collective to less mobilised ones, the innovation in forms of collective action, the appearance of new demands and framing, the cooperation between emerging unorganised actors with existing organised ones, and the increase in contention between challengers and defenders of status quo.

Although Koopmans (2004) agrees with Tarrow's definition, he prefers calling the same phenomenon "a protest wave" or "wave of contention" because a cycle "suggests a periodically recurring sequence of phenomena […]. The wave metaphor does not imply such assumptions of regularity, and simply refers to the strong increase and subsequent decrease in the level of contention. (Koopmans 2004: 21)."

Tarrow's concept of "cycle of contention" relates to the idea that complete socio-economic systems are based on cyclical dynamics. Following his approach based on work of Tilly (1986) which assumes that changes in contentious politics result from changes in states and capitalism, I use the concept of "cycle of contention" throughout my dissertation

because I argue that the Great Recession can be seen as a deep shock to the global economic system.

Shallow observations could lead to wrongful conclusions that cycles emerge out of nowhere and uncontrollably spread across space and society. Tilly et al (1975) showed that we cannot talk about spontaneous outbursts of rage and discontent provoked solely by profound social-structural changes. They claimed that emergence of cycles of contention is mediated by changes in power relations, which are consequences of changes in political alignments.

Cycles are formed by the periods of expansion (across new participants – both individuals and collectives, across new policy areas, and sometimes across national borders), transformation (mostly of forms of collective action and alliances between actors, but sometimes as well as of identities) and eventually, contraction (Koopmans 2004). Tarrow (1983, 1989) claimed that in the first phase of the cycle these novelties stimulate people to participate in protest actions: they are attracted by the proliferation of actors who are using innovative repertoire to reach the maximum diffusion of the movement.

Some authors claimed that European anti-austerity protests formed part of an unique global cycle of protests that emerged after the Great Recession (Della Porta 2017, Flesher Fominaya 2017). They have seen this cycle as the continuation of sorts of the Global Justice Movement, the movement that developed in the early 2000s as the response to the neoliberal order, globalisation, and ineffective representative democracy (Flesher Fominaya 2017: 2). Although in both cases the participants criticised the dominant socioeconomic order, the main difference between these two cycles was that the targets

in the anti-austerity cycle protest were national elites who created a specific set of policies. Thus, the nation state got the central place in collective actions unfolding in that period.

Based on that idea, and previous work by Carvalho (2019), I claim that in the anti-austerity cycle of contention we cannot talk about one uniformed global cycle, but rather we should observe each country as a context for a particular cycle of contention that has its own nature and distinguishable dynamic.

1.5. Explaining the Protest Participation: A Necessity for an Integrated Approach

Political participation is considered essential for the legitimacy of democratic political systems (Kern et al 2015). Verba (2003) saw citizen's political involvement as a crucial part of modern democracies. In the earlier works he and his colleagues proclaimed that "democracy is unthinkable without the ability of citizens to participate freely in governing processes" (Verba et al 1995: 1). Political participation should be understood as a tool to facilitate the equal opportunity of every individual to be heard in competition for allocation of power and resources (Schumpeter 1942). However, although everyone should have an equal right to participate, the willingness to be a part of political decision making is ultimately the individual's choice which is determined by the broad set of factors (Verba et al 1995).

To delimit the research object of this work, it is important to highlight that in democracies the repertoires of political participation differ. They have been expanding continuously and, in the process, covered activities such as voting, protesting, volunteering, boycotting or blogging (Theocaris and Van Deth 2016). With this expansion "protest participation", and consequently "protest politics" or "contentious politics" in general, became common

features of modern democracies. As such, protests, being a form of a collective action, are no longer seen as a threat to the political system. Rather, they are perceived as a demonstration of a healthy and engaged civil society. In combination with more institutionalised repertoires of political participation, protests lead to higher levels of accountability of elected representatives. Protests primarily serve as a tool to put specific issues to political agenda, to ask for changes in governance, and to advocate for social change in general (Quaranta 2016). Protests are used both as a means of communication and as an instrument of influence – they question the existing state, articulate interests, demand changes, aim to influence public opinion and to open public debates, and – maybe most importantly - they transmit dissatisfaction among citizens to the elites (Della Porta and Diani 2006, Snow, Soule and Kriesi 2004, Tilly and Tarrow 2006).

In that sense, in this dissertation the term *protest (event)* is regarded as any event making political claims in public, on behalf of an individual or a collective, tied together by a shared objective of changing the existing state. The term *protest participation* is used here when exploring individual motivations for engaging in protest events. Following Grasso and Giugni (2016) my research aims to address specifically this form of political participation, without creating indexes or scales to include other forms of non-institutional participation such as boycotts, petitions, contacting politicians etc. For the analysis on aggregate level, I use terms *level of protest mobilisation* when exploring the magnitude of protest events, and *contentious politics* when assessing relational, processual and dynamic components of internal mechanisms of protest events in a particular national setting (Carvalho 2019).

Although unarguably protests form an important part of democratic practices, citizens are still not as equally engaged in protest participation as they are in conventional

repertoires. As mentioned before, protest participation is determined, in a similar way as the conventional one, by a broad set of factors. The propensity to participate in protests is determined not only by the individual characteristics of citizens, but also by the specific features of macro-context within which citizens live (Quaranta 2016). I proceed by presenting two dominant approaches that give possible explanations for this variation: a grievances approach, and a political process approach. One of the goals of this dissertation is to demonstrate that these two approaches need to be integrated in order to be able to comprehensively explain differences in individual protest participation, as well as variation in levels of protest mobilisation across countries.

Grievances have been a central concept in the classical collective behaviour models, which became known as strain and breakdown theories (for overview see Büchler 2004, 2013). In the middle of the twentieth century, common grievances, their causes, and possible ways to reduce them were seen as preconditions for the emergence of social movements (Gurr 1970, Opp 1988). Gurr (1968) conceptualised grievances through the concept of relative deprivation which he defined as the discrepancy between individual expectations and possibility to satisfy them. For Gurr, grievances represent an outcome of unfavourable economic and political conditions followed by experienced or perceived inequality.

The grievances lie at the heart of every protest (Klandermans 1997). Although it is difficult to argue against this statement, it has to be noted that the emergence of a protest event is not happening just because citizens share grievances and beliefs about them. The protests are more likely to appear when a sudden increase in the extent or intensity of grievances or deprivation, and the development of ideology occurs (McCarthy and Zald 1977). The development of ideology can happen through a political discussion with and

within networks or organisations that can transform particular grievances into shared ones. The emergence of the group-based anger is precondition for all protest action (Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans 2013). This notion prompted opponents of the approach to think that collective behaviour is primarily spontaneous, irrational, lacking structure and organisation, and as such disruptive and dangerous for democratic society (Büchler 2004). Tilly et al (1975) and McCarthy and Zald (1977) claimed that social movements should be explained by their solidary nature and tendency to have an enduring character and stable organisational structure, and not by insufficient organisational capabilities and difficulties to integrate their members (Portos García 2020).

The rise of political process theory which stressed the importance of resources, political opportunities, and framing (McAdam et al 1996, Tilly 1978) for mobilisation has led to decline in relevance, and, subsequently, to perceived disappearance of grievances from the mainstream social movement studies. Additionally, the emergence of the new social movements' theory led to the generally accepted idea that economic growth and wealth accumulation foster the rise of protests addressing non-material issues (Kriesi et al 2020).

Tarrow (1993) used Zolberg's (1972) phrase on "moments of madness – when all is possible'' to introduce idea that in times of crisis the possibility of mobilisation increases because in a nutshell "contentious politics is triggered when changing political opportunities and constraints create incentives to take action for actors who lack resources on their own (Tarrow 2012: 6)". Although some attempts to bring grievances back into the social movements mainstream existed (Piven and Cloward 1977, Klandermans 1997, Snow et al 1998), the proliferation of work that aimed to re-introduced grievances as a possible explanation for emergence of protest events

happened in the shadows of economic crisis and anti-austerity protests (see Flesher Fominaya 2017, Galais and Lorenzini 2017, Grasso and Giugni 2016, Kern et al 2015, Kurer et al 2019). The revival of grievances was sparked by an inability of the political process theory to offer a complete explanation on the success of protests addressing socio-economic inequality, material security, and redistribution, or economic issues in general (Giugni and Grasso 2016, Kriesi et al 2020). As expected, the return of grievances brought back to the surface theories suggesting the opposite – the grievances can demobilise citizens. Rosenstone's (1982) famous "withdrawal hypothesis" argued that due to complex and unfavourable socio-economic and psychological reasons, grievances prevent citizens from participating in electoral, but also in contentious politics. Researchers found evidence for this hypothesis on both individual and societal level. At the individual level, citizens who struggle in everyday life lack capacities needed for political involvement. At the societal level, an economic crisis can prevent citizens from participating due to collective experience of disempowerment (for overview see Kriesi et al 2020). The inconclusive findings about the direction of the effect grievances might have on the protest participation in the shadow of the Great Recession are one of the literature gaps this thesis aims to fill.

Grievances are not formed in a vacuum. To address that, one needs to use learnings coming from a political process theory. The advocates of this theory put an emphasis on a change in a "political opportunity structure" (Eisinger 1973) and distinguish between "open" and "closed" structures which enable or disable collective action. Such a broad and convenient theory that could be used to explain the emergence of a vast array of collective actions led to its overall dominance in the social movements' literature. Goodwin and Jasper (1999:28) took this notion step further and observed that this theory has become

"the hegemonic paradigm". Kriesi (2004) claimed that the noted dominance has led to the blurring of most of its key terms to the point where ''political opportunity'' suffers from "definitional sloppiness" and ''conceptual stretching'' (Kriesi 2004: 68). Despite this, political process theory provides a useful framework for the research on the political context in which contentious politics is unfolding. Depending on the specific research questions, particular elements of political context are selected to be able to study the chosen political opportunity set (Kriesi 2004). Based on Della Porta (1996), Kriesi (2004) states that usually three sets of variables are used: structures (made up by political institutions), configurations of power (shifts in the configurations of political actors) and interaction contexts (mediation between structural opportunities and agency).

As this thesis aims to explore which political and institutional factors provide a possible explanation for cross-national variations in the nature of anti-austerity cycles of contention, a political process-based approach can help to unravel the evolution of particular cycles of contention. Constraints for collective action formed by political and economic contexts can be explored by looking into above mentioned changes in the structure, configurations of power and interaction between structural opportunities and agency. On the other hand, it is important to analyse when grievances lead to protest and when they restrain individuals from protest participation. To do so, it is important to go back to the seminal work of Piven and Cloward (1977) on mobilisations of deprived groups. They stressed the scope within which the context limits opportunities for insurgence and sustainability of protest events. Their main conclusions which can serve as a framework for the analysis of the contentious politics and protest participation in the aftermath of the Great Recession were summarised by Büchler (2004):

> "If social institutions typically preclude opportunities for protest, then it is only under rare and exceptional circumstances that deprived groups will be in a position to pursue their grievances. Thus,

> major social dislocations are necessary before long standing grievances can find expression in collective defiance. It is here that they point to social breakdowns in society's regulatory capacity and everyday routines as providing rare but potent opportunities for mass defiance. But breakdown is not enough; people must also see their deprivations and problems as unjust, mutable, and subject to their action. Such insights are likely only when the scale of distress is high or when the dominant institutions are obviously malfunctioning. Societal breakdown thus not only disrupts regulatory capacity and everyday routines; it also opens a cognitive space in which people can begin to consider and pursue alternative social arrangements. When protest happens, it is shaped by the institutional structures in which it occurs as people choose targets, strategies, and tactics. Mass defiance will be effective to the extent that it disrupts institutions that are important to elites (Büchler 2004: 55)".

Until recently, their and similar approaches were considered as flawed. There were no attempts in developing an encompassing theoretical approach that would enable integration of political process and grievances approaches in the study of contentious politics and protest participation in the aftermath of the Great Recession. Works by Kriesi et al (2020), Muliavka (2020) and Portos García (2020) make a ground-breaking effort to develop an integrated framework to study mutual adaptability and compatibility of these approaches.

In this dissertation, I define grievances as exogenous shocks (e.g. – on the level of socioeconomic system sudden decrease in the growth rate, increase in level of unemployment, or inability to access social services and benefits; or on the individual level change in employment status, or significant decrease in income level) that have attitudinal and behavioural impact on individuals by potentially disrupting quotidian routines, practices and social networks, and can be impulses for (de)mobilisation (Kriesi 2012, Snow 2013). Following Muliavka (2020) who states that

> "Grievances should also be differentiated through two principal dimensions: disadvantaged conditions on the structural level and cognitive perceptions about economic, social and political issues on the level of attitudes. Conditions of grievance could be measured on micro and macro-level. Micro-level indicators of conditions of grievance reflect individual assumptions about the economic, political or social status when macro-level indicators are closer to objective measures of conditions in a certain society regardless of individual experiences and interpretations (Muliavka 2020: 4).",

I argue that these two dimensions of grievances are necessary to grasp the complexity of mechanisms that influence mobilisation, and additionally help us disentangle the direction in which grievances can influence mobilisation on both levels of analysis. Further, I claim that, on the individual level, grievances are multifaceted - each of them is a product of specific circumstances and disrupts citizens' life in a particular manner.

In the continuation I explain the structure of the dissertation, and how each of its parts aims to add to the development of the framework that helps us understand the importance of both approaches when studying contentious politics and protest participation.

1.6. Contribution and structure of the dissertation

Overall, this dissertation aims to add to different bodies of literature. First, I underline the need to reconcile different theoretical approaches to study protest participation. Starting from Piven and Cloward's (1977) idea that the vast array of both individual and collective grievances is a common occurrence, but that they translate to the protests only exceptionally - when the opening in the established institutional framework happens, I claim that the Great Recession was a "major social dislocation" (Büchler 2004) that opened a space for the increased magnitude of protest events addressing mainly political and economic demands.

Second, I add to the literature discussing if grievances that are a product of economic shock that disrupted quotidian routines, practices and social networks are impulses for mobilisation or demobilisation (Kriesi 2012, Snow 2013). I add to the literature that recognised importance of studying the effect grievances have on the behavioural and attitudinal changes in individuals' propensity for protest participation in the times of rapidly deteriorating economic conditions (Flesher Fominaya, 2017; Galais and Lorenzini,

2017; Grasso and Giugni, 2016; Kern et al., 2015; Kurer et al., 2019; Muliavka, 2021; Portos García, 2020; Rüdig and Karyotis, 2014). The thesis contributes to the approach of researching grievances as a multifaceted phenomenon (Muliavka, 2021; Portos García, 2020), and calls attention to the interplay of their objective and subjective dimensions. This approach enables us to explore if the exposure to economic shock indeed has an effect on political participation and, if so, whether the effect lasts.

In the last place, I contribute to the literature exploring the nature of the anti-austerity cycle of contention (Della Porta et al 2017, Flesher Fominaya 2017). Following on Carvalho (2019) who studied different countries as particular cycles of contention, the thesis claims that the dynamics of anti-austerity protests should be studied within the scope of the national state. The Great Recession was primarily the crisis of redistribution (Della Porta et al 2017) as the implemented austerity measures imply a political choice about which social groups should withstand the burden of the economic crisis (Muñoz et al., 2014). Regardless of the fact that the content of policies was decided by the supranational institutions, it were the national political elites who implemented them in order to preserve their own political agenda and status quo.

The challengers who appeared, first in the contentious sphere, and later, in some cases contested the elections, shaped their demands based on the dormant socio economic cleavages that were specific to each national context. Although they framed their demands within the global crisis of neoliberalism and connected national demands to the universal claims for more democracy, more political responsiveness, less inequality and poverty, the contentious actions were a product of the opening in the unique political opportunity

structure shaped by country specific heritage - of institutional politics, of welfare state, and of economic integration to the EU.

The thesis is structured as follows. Chapter two includes the methodological framework and the research design employed to address the overarching puzzle in three consecutive phases. Chapters three to five present the core part of the thesis, each of them covering different dimensions of the main argument. Chapter three focuses on the differences in structure in which contentious politics happens in order to explore the political opportunity structure the potential challengers have to overcome if wanting to engage in protests. It gives an overview of the institutional politics and of the nature of the welfare state before the Great Recession in each of the observed countries before proceeding to the analysis of impact of the economic crisis on national economics and exploration of the undertaken austerity policies. Chapter four explores cross-national variations in the nature of anti-austerity cycles by tracing differences between protest magnitudes, nature and salience of demands, and levels of disruptiveness and innovation of methods used during the cycles. Chapter five delves into factors behind the individuals' propensity to engage in protests upon experiencing an economic shock, and discusses the longevity of the shock effect on the changes in political behaviour. Finally, chapter six summarises the findings of the previous chapters, discusses their relevance and limitations, and opens a space for the potential future research ventures.

Chapter 2: Methods

2.1. Introduction

As stated in the introductory chapter, the overarching research question of this thesis aims to explore under which conditions the implementation of austerity measures leads to the increase in protest participation. Given the complex nature of the question, it is necessary to assess it in the phases, trying to encompass it from different perspectives. To do so, in this chapter I describe the research design I followed, and I reflect on the tools used in the process.

When designing the ideal approach to the research, one has to take into account how each of the steps fits into a bigger picture, and how each methodological tool helps answering the main research question. I had set up the research design to address the overarching puzzle in three consecutive phases which are going to be explained in detail in the rest of the chapter.

In its entirety the dissertation is based on the juxtaposition between two paired comparisons, the one between Spain and Portugal, and the second one between Croatia and Serbia. Following the dissertation structure outlined in the previous chapter, I first aim to map the structure that determined contentious politics in all countries during the Great Recession. In order to explain how the implementation of austerity policies changed "the frozen landscapes" of both political systems and the welfare state to open a window in the political opportunity structure, I use process tracing. Second, in the central part of the thesis, using protest event analysis, I map the agency of different political actors in the

specific protest events to unravel cross-national variations in the nature of anti-austerity cycles of contention. Third, using panel data analysis, I map the behavioural patterns of Spanish citizens to explore when economic shock leads to protest and when it restrains individuals from protest participation.

2.2. Mapping the Structure: Process Tracing

As I am interested in explaining both within-case (each country as a context for a particular cycle of contention) and cross-case (paired comparisons of two contexts of contention cycle formation) particularities of changes in protest participation, in the empirical chapters I rely on the small-N analysis. This approach allows for a systematic process analysis of the cases (Hall 2003) as well as the usage of historical-interpretative reasoning (Ragin 2014). Additionally, it helps to elaborate how mechanisms of change interact with specific contextual conditions over time (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001), how each of these unique trajectories developed, and to detect possible critical junctures (Collier 2011, Kay and Baker 2014). As this thesis is aiming to show that the changes in the levels of mobilisation and in individual protest participation were incited by the exposure to the austerity policies, I combine comparative methods from the small-N studies with the use of a specific type of process tracing in the first empirical part of the dissertation - theory building process tracing (Beach and Pedersen 2019) .

In general, process tracing is a research method commonly used in comparative politics to study the causal mechanisms behind political phenomena. It involves in-depth examination of a single case or a small number of cases, using multiple sources of evidence and rigorous empirical analysis to establish a detailed understanding of how a particular outcome was produced (Beach and Pedersen 2019). One of the key advantages of process

tracing is its ability to capture the complexity of social and political processes by examining a vast range of variables which may have an impact on the phenomenon that is being researched. Process tracing can be remarkably useful method to be applied to the policy studies as "between-case analysis of different causal paths in small-N case study research, including long and complicated causal chains with perhaps disproportionately large or small effects as well as the contingencies involved in different outcomes from very similar combinations of contexts and causal drivers (Kay and Baker 2014: 1)". The method is especially suitable for the present study because a portion of literature on the effect of the policy responses to the crisis on changes in mobilisation puts an accent on the variation in the socioeconomic context across different European countries, as well as on the divergence in the type of policy solutions implemented in the period (Grasso and Giugni 2016). Policies also represent an important constituent of political opportunities structure (Meyer 2004) so the exploration of the context in which they were implemented and effects they had on, not only targeted policy areas and social groups, but on the system as such have to be traced.

For Key and Baker (2014) the main methodological advantages of using process tracing in policy studies are: (1) ability to encompass the inherent complexity of time, and (2) complementarity with comparative case studies. First, the relevance of time is particularly important in the policy fields such as social policy that are intrinsically path dependent. Second, complementarity with case studies enables researchers to pay attention to specific configurations of mechanisms that lead to "particular policy events at particular times in particular places" (Key and Baker 2014). When combined, these specificities can be used for a theory building, as they are easily translated to other cases.

As aforementioned, in the thesis I use the type of process tracing that is intended for theory building. In this type of process tracing, researchers use an inductive approach to generate new theories based on the causal mechanisms identified from the empirical evidence in particular case(s) (Beach and Pedersen 2013, Falleti and Mahoney 2015, George and Bennett 2005, Key and Baker 2004). A comparison built on these grounds should provide an insight (1) into the effect the implementation of similar policies in relatively analogous contexts had on their political systems and welfare states, and (2) into the subsequent divergence in the nature and magnitude of protest events.

2.3. Mapping the Agency: Protest Event Analysis

In the last couple of decades, PEA has become one of the most important methods used in social movement studies. The "eventful turn" (Tarrow, 2012) in social sciences has brought the focus back to the event as a theoretically relevant concept. No matter the specific method or technique applied, qualitative or quantitative, PEA represents a helpful tool in systematic gathering and organisation of the data on protests. As such, it remains central to the study of protest mobilisation (Hutter 2014, Koopmans and Rucht 2002).

PEA is a type of content analysis that assesses the features of protests across space and over time and is particularly useful for analysing the longitudinal evolution of protests. It easily identifies protest campaigns spanning over certain time periods and/or taking place at different locations (Hutter, 2014). PEA helps to achieve historically and comparatively relevant insights regarding social movement dynamics (Hutter 2014, Earl et al 2004) by mapping, analysing and interpreting not only different features of claim-making activities that citizens engage in, but also their cover in written media (Koopmans

and Rucht 2002, Hutter 2014, Portos García 2020). Due to its specificities, PEA has proven to be central in studies based on the political process approach because it allows researchers to contrast main features of protest events with changes in existing structures or, more precisely, political opportunities (Hutter 2014).

As with almost any other research method, two main shortcomings of PEA stem from sources of bias in data collection (Tilly 2002, Hutter 2014). The literature has extensively documented the occurrence of two types of bias. First, the selection bias, meaning that the protest events reported in the news might not be representative of the number of protests that took place in reality (Oliver and Maney 2000, Earl et al. 2004, Ortiz et al. 2005, Hutter 2014). Second, the description bias, meaning that for various reasons news reports can contain mistaken, imprecise or incomplete descriptions of an event (Tilly 2002, Ortiz et al. 2005).

Data used in this thesis has been collected via PEA within the "Disobedient Democracy" project.[1] The main objective of the data collection was to correctly identify all cases of protest events covered in the newspapers selected for analysis, and to code the available information reported on each identified event. Newspaper items were used as factual sources meaning that PEA relies on newspaper data as an imperfect, but, in the scarcity of alternative sources apt for comparative research (Koopmans 1995 in Kriesi et al. 1995), the best available source of information.

[1] The entire comparative dataset has been composed in 2019. It contains data collected during 2017 and 2018 for protest events in 2000 – 2017. Groups of researchers from the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Zagreb, Complutense University of Madrid, Nova University of Lisbon and Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory of the University of Belgrade collected data for Croatia, Spain, Portugal and Serbia respectively.

As other researchers collecting the newspaper data, I am aware of the aforementioned selection bias in news coverage which is influenced by the logic of the media reporting. However, it is assumed that the pattern of selection of reported events is relatively stable across time and issues, and that the number of reported events tracks real changes of protest activities in the population of actual events (Oliver and Maney 2000). Earl et al. (2004) identify three sets of factors predicting the selection bias: first, larger and more violent protests are more likely to be covered in the media; second, local and leftist newspapers are going to be less selective in covering protests than national and conservative ones; third, protests addressing issues of general relevance are more likely to be covered than those dealing with specific or niche demands. Therefore, following advice by Jenkins and Maher (2016), I recognise that PEA data is inevitably limited and partial in its nature, and that event data is not a type of data we can collect following the assumptions about a single absolute standard for identifying random samples.

To minimise possible bias, but also to enable cross-country comparisons, two quality national daily newspapers with the highest circulation (excluding sports dailies) of different ideological stance were used as data sources in each country. In the case of Croatia, *Jutarnji list* and *Večernji list* were used, in Serbia *Politika* and *Danas*, in Spain, *El País* and *El Mundo*, while in Portugal we relied on reports in *Diário de Notícias* and *Público.* To avoid additional selection, all editions from January 1st, 2000 until December 31st, 2017 have been used for the analysis. The identification process was limited to events that took place within the selected country, so events that occurred elsewhere and were reported on in national newspapers were not taken into account. Following Kriesi et al (1995)

editorials and opinion sections were omitted, but all other sections of particular dailies were covered in the analysis.

Several PEA datasets already exist for the countries included into this dataset. However, previous datasets are either large multi-country datasets based on newswire data in English (Beissinger and Sasse 2014, Kriesi et al 2020), are covering shorter time span (Accornero and Pinto 2015, Portos 2016, OWID 2018, Grdešić 2019, Carvalho 2019), or are based on a sample of newspaper issues from a selected time period (Accornero and Pinto 2015). Additionally, in the case of Croatia and Serbia, as Beissinger and Sasse (2014) collected data from newswires for Croatia and Serbia in the period 2007-2010, and OWID (2018) recorded workers' mobilisations during the 1990s, while Grdešić (2019) collected protest data for Serbia in the brief period of the anti-bureaucratic revolution (June to November 1988), it can be said that this dataset is the first that collected comparative longitudinal data on protest mobilisations in these countries.

> "In comparison to existing datasets, our PEA dataset has several advantages. First, since we included all newspaper issues in the given period, rather than sampling like, for instance, Accornero and Pinto (2015), our dataset captures all protest events reported in the selected national print media for each of the four countries. Second, we cover 18 years, allowing us to capture long-term dynamics. Finally, our dataset is based on two quality national daily newspapers per country, which means we applied a finer tooth comb in detecting protests than is the case when relying on newswires. As a result, we are able to look at both country and comparative trends in considerable detail, and substantially expand the possibilities of analysing various dimensions of protest mobilisations. (Dolenec et al 2020: 158)"

Since the selected newspapers are published in various languages, and as some of them never digitised their archives, the coders performed traditional manual event coding. The

coding consisted of two consecutive phases: first, the identification of protest events, and second, their classification based on selected attributes such as duration, type, organisers etc. (Makarov et al. 2016). All coders were MA or PhD students of political science and sociology with previous theoretical knowledge of contentious politics, native Croatian, Serbian, Spanish or Portuguese speakers with a professional command of English.

Despite starting with the assumption that protest events are all events which make political claims in public, on behalf of an individual or a collective, we were led by the premise that the nature of protest events significantly varies, particularly across different national contexts. Therefore, a strict definition of a protest event was deliberately not given to the coders. To provide better guidance for the identification process, the coding manual[2] offered a list of different forms of protest repertoires, ranging from "traditional" protest strategies such as marches, demonstrations and strikes, to newer strategies e.g., *acampadas*. The list was adapted according to PEA codebooks from earlier studies.[3]

Each event was coded in the database consisting of 40 variables, 6 of which are technical (identifying the event, listing exact sources within newspapers, and information on who coded the event), while the rest collected descriptive information about the event. Other variables are the geolocation, the identity of participants, identity of organisers, allies of protest, strategies and methods, demands and grievances, slogans and songs, direct targets and ultimate object, character of intervention by authorities, casualties and

[2] See Appendix 1

[3] The list was designed according to PEA codebooks used in several recent research projects which aimed to gather PEA data. The DisDem research team gratefully acknowledges Grzegorz Ekiert and Jan Kubik, Mark Beissinger, and Martin Portos for providing us with unpublished codebooks they have composed.

damage, information on whether negotiations with authorities took place and the responses and reactions of other actors to the protest event.

2.4. Mapping the Behaviour: Panel Data Analysis

To explore when economic shock leads to protest and when it restrains individuals from protest participation, in the third stage of the analysis I concentrate on the exploration of the individual level data for Spain.

In the analysis, I rely on the data from the ongoing online panel survey conducted by the Democracy, Citizenship and Elections research group at Autonomous University of Barcelona (Anduiza et al 2021). The survey was conducted for the first time in November 2010 and it has been done repeatedly ever since. To tie in with the discussion on occurrence and characteristics of protest during the Spanish cycle of contention that relies on PEA data, I use only the first 8 survey waves that cover similar periods to the one included in the PEA dataset. Thus, I explore the changes that happened among the respondents that participated in the waves conducted between 2010 and 2016.

The sample included in the panel is not representative of the entire population as the survey was originally designed to examine changes in attitudes and values among youth in the digital era (Galais and Blais, 2016; Galais and Lorenzini, 2017; Muñoz et al., 2014). It consists of Spanish internet users aged sixteen to forty-five who were selected through the active recruitment in the main commercial online services and websites. However, the

sample is representative of this subpopulation[4], that was hit severely by the consequences of the economic crisis and as such serves as an ideal opportunity to test if and how they affect protest participation (Galais and Lorenzini, 2017). It should be noted that, despite applied quotas, younger and university educated respondents are overrepresented in the survey, while the population with lower levels of education is underrepresented. This deviation might hinder the ability to identify the effects of the economic shock on attitudinal changes as, in theory, those overrepresented in the sample should be less deeply affected by the introduced austerity measures (Muñoz et al., 2014).

Despite some shortcomings, panel studies have the additional value that is usually missing in the comparative research based on cross-sectional data. Regardless of the (de)mobilising effect economic shock might have on protest participation, the most relevant issue in assessing the impact of economic shock provoked by the implementation of the austerity measures on protest participation is whether the effect endures (Margalit, 2019). The usage of panel data can help to probe this question as the data obtained from this type of survey gives the most reliable measurement of different types of attitudes and their evolution over time (Anduiza et al., 2016).

Given that the main contribution of this part of the dissertation lies in the exploration of the duration of the effect of the economic shock on the individuals' attitudes and behaviour, panel data is the most suitable type of data to tackle this question. It permits the study of changes that may occur in individual circumstances and to connect them with the changes in the existing attitudinal and behavioural patterns. This type of analysis

[4] for details on applied quotas in order to reduce biases related to the non-probability nature of the sample see Anduiza et al. (2016)

helps to tackle statistical issues related to multicollinearity and omission of some relevant explanatory variables by running models containing inter-individual differences of the temporally correlated variables, and by calculating the difference between the value of the variable of interest has in two consecutive time points (Anduiza et al., 2016).

Additionally, the data facilitate the correction of measurement errors given that the repetition of the observations allows to apply reliability tests, and adjustments for measurement errors are often necessary to achieve correct statistical estimates of causal effects (Achen, 1983). Additionally, since the data allow estimating the impact of a specific event between two or more waves, the data enables the possibility to verify the effect that political context might have on attitudes.

Chapter 3: Explaining the Socio-economic Context Behind the Contentious Politics

3.1. Introduction

The Great Recession was the Great Recession everywhere in the world. Its roots were the same, but its timing and nature were different in different countries (Della Porta et al 2017) and these specificities influenced nature, occurrence and magnitude of protest events that emerged as the response to the economic downturn. Why is it so? To what extent does the broader context influence it?

In this chapter I claim that the three most relevant explanations for the aforementioned distinction are the previously established constellations within the sphere of institutional politics, the nature of the particular welfare state, and the nation specific symptoms of the economic crisis and the timing and content of the policy responses to the outburst of the crisis.

3.2. Institutional Politics Before the Great Recession

The aftermath of the Great Recession brought to the political scene new challengers from both sides of the ideological spectrum. Their appearance and willingness to immediately contest the local, regional, national and European elections led to the unprecedented electoral volatility (Hernández and Kriesi 2016). To be able to trace the magnitude of change in the party systems of Spain, Portugal, Croatia and Serbia, in this part of the chapter I analyse the structure of the party system in the period preceding the economic downturn, and social and political crisis it provoked. In order to do so, I map the main

characteristics of the particular political system, the dominant parties, as well as their policy positions on dominant and latent social cleavages.

The overview of the election cycles, and of the subsequently formed governments (Figure 3.1) provides a clear understanding that, before the crisis, in all countries but Serbia we can talk about the political systems with two dominant parties that alternate in power.

The Spanish party system was established by the 1978 Constitution in the process that until today remains a textbook example of the transition controlled "from above" in a deal between elites (Bermeo 1987). The established electoral system led to the formation of stable parliamentary majorities, and consequently, governments. Parliament was dominated during most of its post-francoist era by two main parties, centre-left PSOE and centre-right PP (Gunther et al 2004). A decentralised territorial structure that was vouched by the constitution enabled the birth of the regional parties, that were able to cross electoral threshold, and together with a couple of smaller national parties such as Izquierda Unida, secure the parliamentary seat. In the attempt to secure the stability of government, the executive power dominated over the legislative branch which eventually led to weak parliamentarism isolated from the broader social context and direct pressure of the citizens. Other important consequences of that institutional design were the appearance of many fractions within parties which were trying to push their own agenda, as well as the constant and strong resistance from the right and army to cut the ties with the legacy of the dictatorship (Romanos 2017). In the decade prior to the crisis, both main parties were in the position to create policies as shown in Figure 3.1. Economically, their policies did not differ significantly, as both parties followed neoliberal policies disguised into the "Third Way" (Giddens 1998) discourse. First PP, and then PSOE, implemented

economic liberalisation and market-oriented policies, and their main difference was stemming from cultural issues such as abortion, and LGBT rights that were firmly supported by PSOE, but questioned by PP.

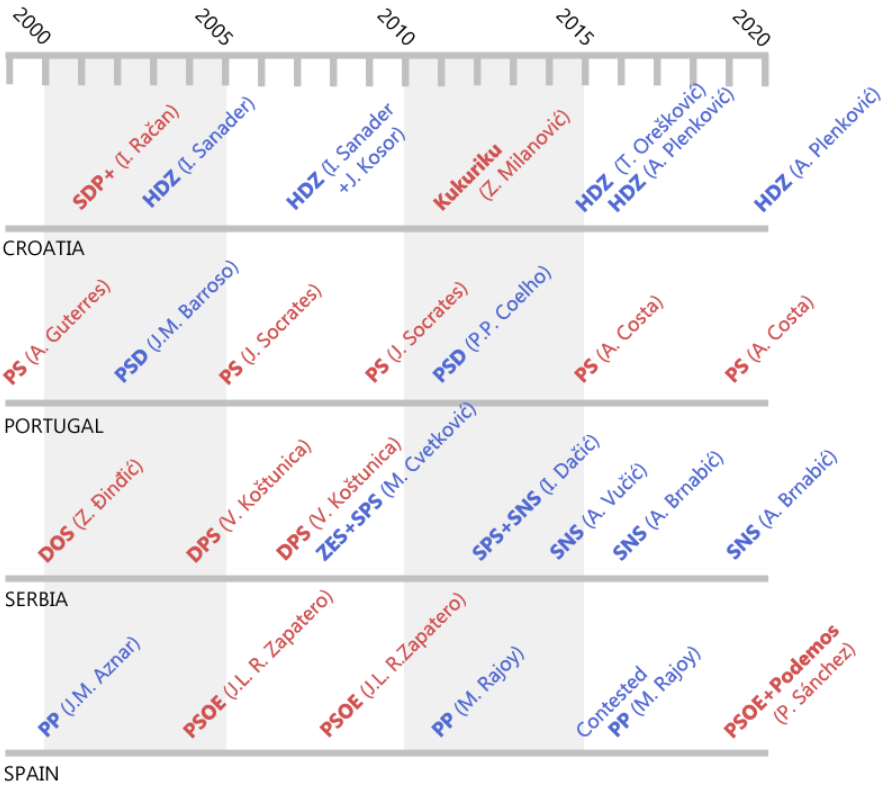

Figure 3.1. Elections and government orientation in Croatia, Portugal, Serbia and Spain. Source: National electoral authorities. Adapted by the author. *Note: all elections held after 2020 excluded from the overview. Red labels - governments led by centre-left parties. Blue labels - governments led by centre-right parties. DPS in Serbia marked red as they split from DS and over the years moved from a nationalist centre-left party to a radical right one.*

Portugal, despite going into the process of democratic transition through "ruptura" (Bermeo 1987: 214) - the regime change provoked by the military coup and the biggest demonstrations in Portuguese history that did not allow for the elites from the dictatorship to remain in their positions and shape the future political system - created the same type of political system that is present in Spain. Electoral system based on the

D'Hondt method gave propulsion to the birth of the bipartisan system dominated by PS, centre-left party, and PSD, centre-right party. In the decade before the outbreak of the economic crisis, they were alternating in power. Same as in the Spanish case, their policies did not differ significantly. The most important difference between the countries is the stronger influence members of parliament have on policy making than their peers in Spain (Fernandes et al 2023) that stems from the fact that both parties maintain strong relationships with the civil society and labour unions.

Croatia represents the third example of the country in which use of the D'Hondt method for seat allocation led to the creation of a bipartisan system, but that is not as strong as in two previously presented cases. After the breakdown of Yugoslavia, HDZ, a centre-right party led by the first Croatian president and autocrat, Franjo Tuđman, dominated the political scene throughout the 1990s. Their rule ended after Tuđman's death and the election's win by a coalition of centre-left parties in 2000 (Dolenec 2013). The main party in that coalition, SDP, was presented to the citizens during the last 30 years as the only viable option to keep the right from the office. SDP managed to form government only twice since 2000 (see Figure 3.1), always winning as the leading party of the pre-election coalition with smaller left and/or regional parties, and only if HDZ was facing strong internal problems and an unfortunate macroeconomic situation. The main two parties shared their view on economic policies and formed a consensus with other parties about EU membership as the main foreign policy goal in the 2000s (Henjak et al 2013). Similar to the parties in Spain and Portugal, their main differences arise from the cultural sphere: they differ in their view on nation-building process, Croatian role in the Balkan wars in 1990s, secularisation, LGBT rights, and right on abortion.

In Serbia, democratic transition only started unfolding after the president Slobodan Milošević was overthrown from power after two decades in the biggest series of protests in Serbian history. The first election after the overthrow was won by Democratic Party (DS), a centre-left party organised by the Serbian intelligentsia in opposition to Milošević's regime. Their leader Zoran Đinđić became the prime minister and was known for his policies dedicated to democratic reforms and rapid integration of Serbia in the European Union (Dolenec 2013). He was assassinated during his third year in the office by the members of an organised crime group. His government was replaced by the government led by DPS, a party that was funded after the split from DS. The party over years started supporting a strong nationalistic agenda and moved towards the radical right. Similar conservative centre-right parties governed Serbia ever since. In terms of policies, they advocated market liberalisation and privatisation, partially under the influence of the international organisations that advocated responsible fiscal policies throughout the first two decades of 2000s. Although Serbia proclaimed European integration as one of its main foreign policy goals, the question of independence of Kosovo remained the main steppingstone in the process. The second hurdle is the fact that from the 2012 elections the party system slowly moved towards one-party domination (Bieber 2020). SNS led by Aleksandar Vučić started to take over the power in the country just around the time it faced yet another economic crisis.

As seen in this overview, the dominant parties in all four countries do not differ significantly in terms of economic and redistributive policies they advocate. In the next section, I delve into the characteristics of particular welfare states in order to explore their nature and scope just before the onset of the Great Recession.

3.3. The Welfare State Characteristics

Given that the austerity policies were focused on the pillars of the welfare state: labour legislations, unemployment benefits, and pension system (Cinalli and Giugni 2016), and that past welfare preferences and expenditure levels limit policymaking in the future (Brooks and Manza 2007), it is important to explore the nature and the scope of the welfare state before the countries implemented said policies.

When Esping-Andersen (1990) wrote about "three worlds of welfare capitalism", his typology misspecified the Mediterranean welfare states as the ones in the process of maturation to become the Continental ones (Arts and Gelissen 2002). Similarly, Esping-Andersen (1996) claimed that post-socialist welfare states should not be looked upon as a distinctive welfare type, because differences between them and his established regime types were of transitional nature. Kornai (1997) claimed that post-socialist welfare states cannot fit to any of the proposed types because they were premature welfare states which will not develop in the direction of any of the existing types. For Deacon (1993) they represented a post-socialist "twist" on conservative corporatist regimes. In the similar vein, Guillén and León (2011) considered the Mediterranean welfare states a hybrid mix of all three types of regime and emphasised that they are in the process of constant change ever since the transition to democracy. In cases of both Mediterranean and post-socialist countries, the significant change in the nature and scope of the welfare state happened after the democratic transition. In the former, it started in the late 1970s and accelerated upon their integration to the European Union under the pressure of the EU (Petmesidou and Guillén 2014), while in the latter the breakdown happened in the first years of the 1990s during the severe economic recession that hit these countries during the transition period (Bohle and Greskovits 2012). In some countries, such as Croatia, the changes in the

welfare state were even more visible due to the rampant war, and the social risks coming hand in hand with it. Similar as in the Mediterranean countries, the nature of the welfare state started to change under the pressure from the international organisations to implement reforms based on the radical cuts. The changes continued during the early 2000s with the perspective of EU membership being the main driver of reforms (Bohle and Greskovits 2012, Fidrmuc 2003). In this part of the chapter, I am first offering an overview of their main characteristics, similarities and differences, and describe the influence the European integration processes had on social policy changes in the wake of the Great Recession.

After the breakdown of the dictatorship regimes in Spain and Portugal, and before two countries joined the EU, both welfare states had elements of different welfare regimes. The pension system was established similarly to the ones pertaining to the continental model - on the occupational basis which led to the fragmented coverage among the population. Another similarity to the conservative system stemmed from the reliance on the family as the primary caregiver and source of social assistance. The national healthcare systems, similar to the ones in the countries of social-democratic welfare regimes, were created only in the late 1970s and the early 1980s. The absence of state in a social care provision had been replaced by the involvement of the Catholic church, the Red Cross, and non-governmental organisations somewhat later during the transition (Petmesidou and Guillén 2014). Yugoslav welfare state was generous and inclusive, and vouched for universal access to different social services to all citizens. After the disintegration of Yugoslavia, it was hard to compare the newly created welfare states of Croatia and Serbia to the welfare states pertaining to the three main welfare regimes. The first decade of the independence of Croatia was marked by the war, the semi-

authoritarian rule of Franjo Tuđman, and the privatisation and deindustrialisation (Stubbs and Zrinščak 2019). In these conditions, the main priorities were care for refugees and internally displaced people and ad-hoc measures to fight the drastically increased levels of poverty and unemployment. After 1995 and military actions in which most of the territory of Croatia was put under control of Croatian authorities, the main challenge was to reestablish social infrastructure in these parts of the country. The inefficiency of the state, similarly as in Spain and Portugal, was compensated with the strong presence of Catholic charities, led by Caritas. Apart from them, the Red Cross, as well as numerous international charity organisations and volunteers were providing the basic social services, mainly to alleviate effects of omnipresent poverty (Stubbs and Zrinščak 2009, 2019). At the same time, the state reformed the pension system inherited from the socialist period and substituted it with the Chilean-based liberal model, and started to implement reforms that aimed at decentralisation, deinstitutionalisation and de-statisation of the social services provision, both under the pressure of the World Bank and the IMF (Puljiz 2001, Stubbs and Zrinščak 2019). The welfare state reforms started to happen in Serbia only in 2001, after the fall of the Milošević regime. During the 1990s, the regime provoked the collapse of the welfare state due to spending on the wars, inability to control hyperinflation, and rise in corruption and clientelism. The reforms started to happen only under the pressure and sponsorship of international actors. Their content combined elements of neoliberal policies that advocated withdrawal of the state, but the resistance of the then minister of social affairs helped to halt or soften some of proposed reforms (Arandarenko and Golicin 2007). The weak state, and market-oriented reforms led to the strong deinstitutionalisation of social services provision. Different NGOs were put in charge of providing social services. Differently than in other three countries, the absence of church and church related organisations has to be noted.

Petmesidou and Polyzoidis (2013) claim that this absence is an outcome of the Orthodox values, and a common occurrence in Balkan countries with the dominant Orthodox religion.

The prospect of, and later full, membership in the EU, in the Spanish case signified that the country spent significantly less on social protection than the European average. While it reduced the gap under the centre-left government in the beginning of the 1990s, the decrease in social expenditure became visible with the efforts to achieve budgetary discipline in the second part of the decade in order to comply with the convergence criteria to introduce the euro. On the other hand, public expenditure in Portugal was higher in the first years after transition, and after briefly decreasing in the late 1980s, it grew again in the 1990s. However, per capita social expenditure was lower in Portugal than in Spain throughout the period. Spain was spending more than the European average on unemployment protection, while a big proportion of spending was dedicated to old age pensions, and protection in the case of illness and disability. The Portuguese welfare state was dedicating larger amounts of resources to family policies than Spain, while it was spending less on unemployment benefits. In other areas, their expenditure was higher than the European average for illness and disability protection (Guillén et al 2007). The process of the EU integration changed both welfare systems in direct and indirect ways. Directly, through the access to EU social funds which created an influx of resources used, on the one hand, for economic growth and creation of employment, and on the other, for financing initiatives, primarily in the civil sector, to give visibility and offer solutions to the problems of marginalised social groups. Indirectly, through soft policies and the institute of "policy recommendations", the EU shifted orientation of social policies towards promotion of social inclusion, fight against poverty, reduction of gender gap, and

closure of gaps in social care provision, be it in geographical coverage, or in inclusion of particularly vulnerable social groups (Guillén et al 2007).

The period of Croatia adjusting its welfare system according to the recommendations from the EU overlapped with the onset of the Great Recession as the Croatian government signed the Joint Memorandum on Social Inclusion in 2007. The goal of the Memorandum was to provide a framework for preparation, implementation and monitoring of the changes in Croatian social policy making according to the recommendations of the EU (Stubbs and Zrinščak 2019). The recommendations went hand in hand with the recommendations the World Bank was giving to the Croatian authorities in the first decade of the 2000s: they advocated sharp decrease in social spending, and decentralisation and deinstitutionalisation of social services provision. The process of decentralisation created systems of parallel welfare states in which richer cities and municipalities provided better social services than those with lower levels of resources. Similarly, the deinstitutionalisation process meant that the NGOs provided more services in the areas of the country they were already present in - namely bigger cities. Both of these measures led to unequally distributed access to the social care provision, harming citizens in rural and less developed areas, with a rapidly ageing population. Social spending was captured by the enormous share of resources going to the war veterans' benefits. The centre-right government depended on support of veteran organisations and therefore never cut their benefits, and, interestingly, both the EU and the World Bank never gave direct orders to solve the issue (Stubbs and Zrinščak 2019). The EU was using the same direct and indirect mechanisms as in Spain and Portugal, but due to the rise of the rightist discourse in the wake of the Great Recession, and in the context of poor demographic indicators, and the emigration of the working age population, the effects

were not the same. The dominant discourse put emphasis on the family policies, and family values, meaning increase of maternity and child benefits, regardless of the incentives to reduce gender gap in labour market, and to reduce social spending (Stubbs and Zrinščak 2019). Due to the prolonged transition period, and numerous internal issues Serbia had during the early 2000s, European integration was not set as a foreign policy priority, neither European Union had an intention to engage in the serious talks about potential Serbian membership, the notable absence of EU in the social policy making was noted. Its absence was replaced by the presence of the IMF which advocated cuts in social spending. Additionally, the investment of foreign governments (eg. Swiss or Norwegian) enabled a development of community-based services and establishment of the unit for social inclusion and poverty reduction within the government (Stubbs and Zrinščak 2019). In the period before the crisis, the government did not engage in the reforms of the welfare system to preserve benefits of particular social groups. Similar to the Croatian case, the government was trying to maintain the level of benefits war veterans had in order to preserve social peace (Stambolieva 2016, as quoted in Stubbs and Zrinščak 2019). All planned reforms, mainly based on spending cuts, were halted due to the onset of the Great Recession.

In the nutshell, all four countries faced the arrival of the Great Recession with welfare states that were a mix of state intervention, market provision, and traditional forms of social protection. At the same time, their citizens expected universal access to social services, and publicly funded and easily accessed health care and education systems. The cleavage between these expectations, and willingness and possibility of governments to provide them, turned out to be one of the big points of contention in the upcoming period.

3.4. Symptoms of and Remedies for Crisis

The first symptoms which indicated the potential severity of the economic crisis in all four countries were different. Despite some similarities in the nature of the welfare state, the main characteristics of the economic system and the level of the integration to the European Union and eurozone were two main reasons why the first signs of recession were manifested differently across all cases. In the continuation I give an overview of some macroeconomic indicators to illustrate the depth of the economic crisis. I finish this part of the chapter by delving into the timing and the content of implemented austerity measures and assess their economic and social consequences.

Just before the outbreak of the Great recession, all four countries had a positive GDP growth rate (Figure 3.2.). Both Spanish and Portuguese growth slowed down upon the introduction of the euro as the official currency on January 1st, 2002. The decrease was more pronounced in Portugal which struggled to maintain the positive GDP growth through the first decade of the 21st century. While the integration to the European Monetary Union for Spain ment increase in growth, low inflation and minimal unemployment rates, the euro brought to Portugal problems with rising unemployment rates (see Figure 3.3). Portugal was lagging behind other European countries, increasing public spending and being unable to compete with other markets within EMU.

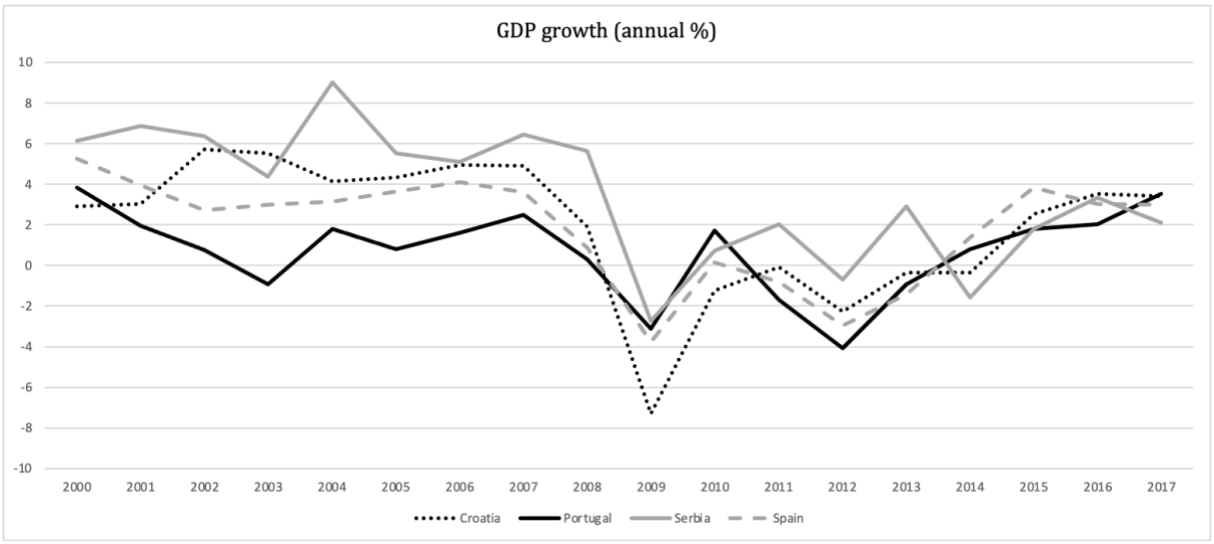

Figure 3.2. Annual change in GDP growth. Source: World Bank Data. Adapted by the author.

The GDP began to rise in Croatia and Serbia in the early 2000s. Both countries still felt the consequences of the period of profound economic contraction that happened during the 1990s, and their governments were trying to buy social peace by promising rapid growth and stability upon EU accession (Bohle and Greskovits 2012). Due to extremely low growth rates in the 1990s, the GDP growth rate in Serbia shown in Figure 3.2 could be misleading. The country was still underdeveloped and struggled to catch up with other post-socialist countries. Under the pressure of the international organisations it was trying to implement the structural reforms and was depending on the loans and help from the foreign countries and entities (Uvalić 2003). In Croatia, the growth was a product of the pact within the elites to integrate the country as fast as possible to the European Union. The country managed to get integrated fast to the global financial market and to stabilise its macroeconomic indicators (Franicevic 2011).

A look into the unemployment rate (Figure 3) shows two opposing trends: while Spain and Croatia managed to keep decreasing it, it was growing fast in both Portugal and Serbia. In Portugal, it was a consequence of certain parts of the economy such as agriculture, footwear and textiles production to adapt to increased competitiveness with

sectors of other countries after the introduction of euro (Blyth 2013), while in Serbia it was the product of privatisation process that was followed with massive layoffs and shutting down of numerous big factories across multiple sectors.

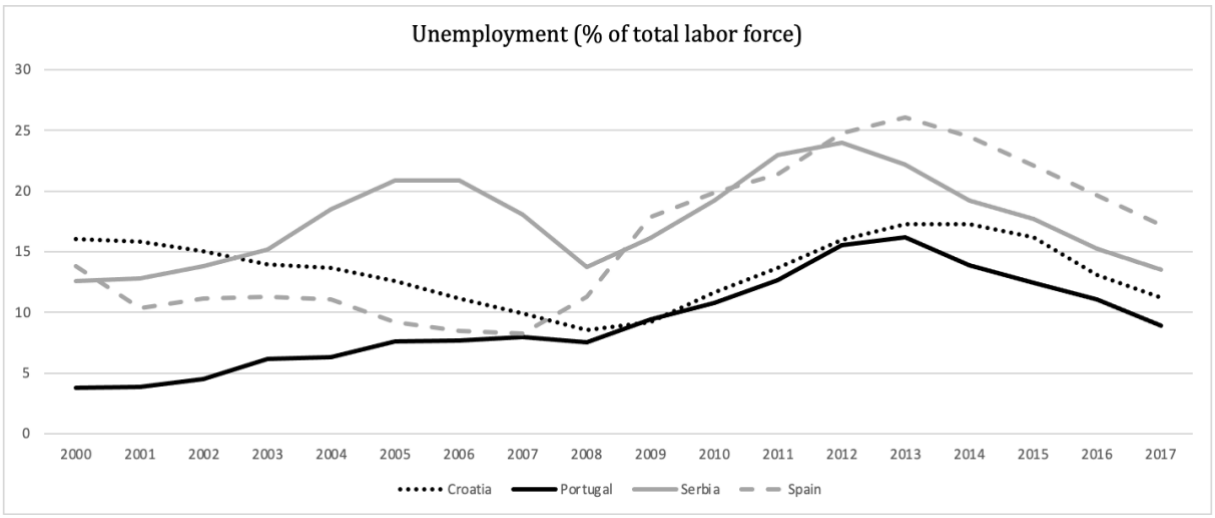

Figure 3.3. Annual change in unemployment rate. Source: World Bank Data. Adapted by the author.

Decrease of unemployment in Spain and Croatia was a product of economic growth. Higher number of employed citizens meant overall increase in the consumer power. The confidence in the good direction of national economies led to the blooming real-estate sector and increase in the loan-taking to buy homes or additional properties. In both countries that created a bubble that burst in the first years of the upcoming crisis. When the crisis hit, both then-prime ministers, Zapatero of Spain, and Sanader of Croatia, were claiming that their countries are prone to that type of crisis and tried to reassure their citizens that the countries would go through it unharmed.

They were proven wrong briefly after. In the continuation I explain the main problems each of the four countries went through in the first months of the crisis and then proceed to the overview of the austerity measures governments had to implement to tackle it.

Contrary to wide-spread belief that the crisis in Spain was a product of rampant public debt, in Spain in 2017 it sat on 26 percent of GDP, half smaller than the one Germany had at that point (Blyth 2013). As mentioned above, Spain and Croatia both had strong property bubbles formed in the 2000s. Construction business in Spain generated 16% of GDP and 14% percent of employment (Blyth 2013), while in Croatia it was the second most important source of revenue, just after retail, and before tourism (Gotovac 2011). When the crisis hit, the main proportion of people who lost their jobs were coming from this sector, they were mostly low skilled men in their early 40s. In both countries, construction work was also promoted in early 2000s as the strategic projects of national or local governments, so the public money was also used to support its growth. The main difference between these two countries was that the most citizens in Spain borrowed money from the regional savings banks (Blyth 2013), while in Croatia citizens were indebted with the subsidiaries of the foreign, normally Austrian, German and Italian banks (Dolenec, Kralj and Balković 2021). Also, Spain formed a part of Eurozone, so it was swamped by the availability of cheap credits in the local currency (Scharpf 2011), while Croatians took mortgages in the foreign currency (euro or Swiss franc) which meant that the amount of mortgage depended on the conversion rate and stability of these currencies and paid high interest rates that the banks could change uncontrollably (Franičević 2011).

Problems in Portugal did not start with the onset of the Great Recession. Its economy had slowed down since its growth with the introduction of the euro. Blyth (2013) was talking about the "chronic lack of growth" (2013:87). Trade deficit, personal and public debt, as well as the ageing population were a heavy weight for the country. Governments were trying to stimulate growth with numerous packages inspired by the idea of fiscal discipline. Already dime situation was only accelerated after the crisis hit other countries.

Serbia entered the period of Great Recession burdened by the consequences of the wave of privatisation that happened three years earlier. In the process of privatisation, the Serbian government forbade companies to layoff employees of privatised companies for three years following privatisation, so the timing of the crisis overlapped with a peak in unemployment. Nikolić et al (2017) reported the disappearance of 250 000 workplaces. The crisis partially influenced Serbia because just before its onset the country became more exposed to international trade and competition because it started the path towards EU membership by signing the Stabilisation and Association Agreement in 2008.

Following typology developed by Ortiz et al (2015) who categorised all austerity measures mentioned in IMF country reports for 181 countries, I list austerity measures implemented in Croatia, Serbia, Spain and Portugal in the period from 2010 to 2013 and discuss their timing.

Ortiz et al (2015) have grouped austerity measures into eight groups. (1) Governments have mostly eliminated or limited access to subsidies for fuel, utilities and food. In the attempt to reduce recurrent expenditures, they (2) either cut or cap salaries paid by different state entities. To generate more revenue, governments (3) increased taxes on goods and services or removed exemptions (eg. no VAT on certain basic products). In another measure that aimed to reduce recurrent expenditures, governments, especially in the countries with the large proportion of ageing population, (4) introduced changes to their pension systems which varied across different states. Some lowered the benefits, but others decided to implement long-term policies such as raising contribution rates and/or prolonging the retirement age. (5) Rationalisation of social safety nets happened as governments decided to lower spending on welfare benefits, most often by making the

eligibility criteria higher. In a similar vein, (6) some governments reformed their healthcare systems. In some cases, cost-saving procedures were introduced to public system, while in others the reforms went in the direction of privatisation of the services (eg. co-participation in fees payments, increase in prices of services in both private and public systems). Announcements of (7) labour flexibilisation laws included a vast array of measures from the limitations to collective bargaining, flexibilisation of the conditions for layoffs, to reduction of the minimum wage. Finally, (8) to secure fast influx of revenue, some governments decided to privatise state-owned companies or state-provided services. In Table 3.1 we can see that all four countries conducted similar measures in the similar time span.

Country	Subsidy reduction	Wage bill cuts/caps	Safety net targeting	Pension reform	Labour reform	Health reform	Consumption tax increases	Privatisation
Croatia	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Serbia	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Spain		X	X	X	X	X	X	
Portugal	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Table 3.1 Austerity measures implemented from 2010-2013. Source: Ortiz et al (2015). Adapted by the author

As aforementioned, Croatian political elites were neglecting the arrival of the crisis. Thus, the first anti-crisis measures were monetary in their nature. They were implemented by the Croatian National bank and were limited to deregulation by reducing, and later removing, the minimum reserve requirements. The goal of the measure was to support liquidity (Bokan et al 2009). The policy response came late so the government did not go through the expansionist phase of the crisis control. Their initial response was a package of measures aiming at increasing revenues by increasing taxes and introducing a new income tax. On the budget cuts side, the majority of active labour market policies were

suspended, and the remaining few were creating precarious jobs that met the needs of employers under the pretext of "training" of those specially affected by the crisis such as the youth, and middle-aged men (Wallace 2013). The centre-right government introduced two more big policy packages. First, so called Economic Recovery Programme, was announced in 2010 and it included a number of structural reforms that were supposed to encourage growth, but it was based on the fiscal consolidation through the spending cuts that can be categorised into the typology developed by Ortiz et al (2015) as wage cuts/caps, labour reform, privatisation and, somewhat as social safety net targeting. Second package of policies was announced in April 2011 after taking a loan from the World Bank and it was based mostly on the cuts in government spending, in public wages, in health, social benefits and in pensions.

In Serbia, the first attempts to fight the effect of the crisis were related to the wage cuts and wage caps for the employees in the public sector. Due to the high rise in unemployment in the private sector, the government did not consider in the beginning other measures such as the increase in tax rates to limit the burden of the crisis on those with stable income, and not to endanger productivity of the real sector (Nikolic et al 2017). Additionally, the restrictions on employment in public service were posed. The restrictions were short-lived, and they were abolished in 2011. In order to try to secure an influx of the revenues, the government tried to privatise remaining state-owned companies (Ortiz et al 2015). In 2013, under the pressure from the IMF and faced with the harsher macroeconomic situation, the new, partially technocratic government established to tackle the crisis, announced the sharp set of measures. The proposal included tax rises and cuts in public sector wages and subsidies to state companies. The policies aimed to change the labour law to facilitate the layoffs and increased the

retirement age for women. Up to that moment, the government did not increase VAT for food, but that measure was announced as well, in order to generate additional sources of revenue. These policies, same as the similar set announced in 2015, were framed by the government as "the rescue packages". Their urgency and scope were justified by the looming threat of the bankruptcy, which evoked relatively fresh memories of the dismal economic situation in the 1990s, and limited opposition to the proposed solutions, both in institutions and on the streets (Štiks and Horvat 2014).

After negating the onset of the crisis and the potential impact it might have on the Spanish citizens, the PSOE government tried to tackle it using expansionist fiscal stimuli. The strategy quickly changed, as already in May 2010, they announced a set of policies that included wage cuts for public servants, changed the eligibility and scope of coverage for people depending on the social assistance (especially for people with disabilities), and tried to decrease the pension spending. Apart from these measures, all public investment was halted. PSOE, with the support of PP, passed the bill for the constitutional reform with the goal of implementing the "principle of budget stability" (Romanos 2017: 133). It defined the maximum possible level of public debt in order to be able to implement policies that should have kept the public debt within the determined level. After the 2011 election that PSOE lost, the new PP government passed a new set of reforms that not only cut the wages of the civil servants, but also reduced the minimum wage, and introduced labour reform with the goal of limiting collective bargaining and facilitating the layoffs procedure. The new set of measures implemented in 2012 targeted specific industries that were depending on the governmental subsidies (eg. mining industry), while further cuts in availability of public services were announced. Distinctively from the other countries included in this dissertation, the Spanish government never targeted the

subsidies for the individual citizens (see Table 3.1), nor tried to privatise services or state-owned companies. The explanation for it might lie in the fact that the Aznar's government already used these mechanisms in the preparation for the introduction of the euro in the late 1990s.

The Portuguese socialist government approved the first austerity policies in April 2010, with the help of the PSD that was then in opposition - a recipe that could also be seen in the Spanish case. The package included policies that introduced wage caps and targeted the social benefits related to the rights of unemployed citizens. The next set of measures was announced just 5 months later. It prescribed wage cuts for public employees, targeted social benefits, and reduced spending on pensions. In the attempt to obtain revenues in the short period of time, the government increased the VAT rate and disclosed a privatisation of the transport sector. Third package based on the further cuts was approved in December. The fourth package was announced in March 2011, and it included even harsher decreases in health and social services, lowering of pensions, and higher taxes. As it was not communicated to social partners, nor discussed in parliament, it ignited not only strong opposition from institutional actors, but a series of protests (Fernandes 2017). Faced with an unexpected pressure demanding from the government not to proceed with the measures, the prime minister resigned. The dire economic situation continued, and the caretaker government started negotiating the bailout, while the parties were preparing for the electoral campaign. The memorandum of understanding, the outcome of these negotiations, was signed in May 2011, with the approval of PS, PSD and the second biggest right party CDS-PP (Moury and Freire 2013). The memorandum was mostly based on the unapproved fourth package of austerity measures and included almost all types of policies from Ortiz and Cummins' typology but

privatisation (for the detailed overview see González and Figueiredo 2014, as cited in Fernandes 2017). During the electoral campaign PSD ran on an agenda that was even more radical than the measures from the memorandum. They wanted to change the constitution in order to annul the parts of it vouching for the free and universal access to education, and social services (Moury and Freire 2013, Magalhães 2014). When the PSD won the elections, they implemented cuts in wages, introduced measures targeting various areas of the welfare state, and cut the pensions, and increased retirement age, as well as kept increasing taxes on income and VAT on energy utilities. The similar, but even harsher measures, were approved once again in budgets for 2012, 2013 and 2014. However, in a difference to other countries, some of the measures the Portuguese government enforced were ruled out as unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court in a series of verdicts that claimed that the measures such as cuts in public servants' wages and benefits violated the equality principles prescribed by the Constitution (Fernandes 2017).

3.5. Conclusion

This chapter aimed to map the specificities and similarities between the institutional politics, the nature of the welfare state, the symptoms of and responses to the crisis outbreak in each of four countries.

First, I showed that their party systems in the dawn of the Great Recession were dominated by two major parties that did not majorly differentiate from each other in terms of economic and social policies. The main divergence between them was coming from the sphere of cultural issues, especially in Spain, Portugal and Croatia. However,

despite the ideological differences, Croatian parties worked together on the goal of full EU membership, which they managed to achieve finally in 2013. Serbian party system started to develop into bipartisan one, but the emergence of different factions and radicalisation of centre-left parties, primarily around the issue of unfinished nation building and disputes around the status of Kosovo (Bieber 2020, Kralj 2022), led to the insurgency of one-party dominated system in the period post-2012. In all four countries, the party system was an outcome of the institutional solutions designed during the democratic transition and the space for presence of the options alternative to the mainstream parties were limited.

Second, all four welfare states relied on the idea of universally accessible health and education systems, but the pension system, and the social services and means-tested programmes relied on a mix of state intervention, market provision and social protection provided within the families or by the church and church-related organisations. Despite the increasing reliance on the market in health, education and social services provision, and in spite of the flexibilisation of labour laws, the citizens continued to expect the increased level of support from the state, especially when faced with unemployment, sickness, and inability to work.

Finally, regardless of the difference between the roots and depth of the crisis in a particular country, similar austerity measures were implemented in all four countries in the first years after the crisis outbreak. While they were implemented on the cues from the EU and IMF, all main political parties supported the proposed solutions. Spain and Portugal, being the part of the EU and EMU, had to comply with the proposed procedures for the control of the budget deficit. Croatia, trying to fulfil the accession criteria, was also

obliged with following budget deficit procedures. Serbia, trying to fight the consequences of the delayed structural reforms and to prevent another deep crisis after only a couple of years of relative economic stability, depended on the requirements posed by the IMF. The effects of the crisis were tried to be contained everywhere by limiting subsidies, cutting and capping the wages, pensions, and access to social services, changing the labour law, increasing taxes, and by privatising the service provision and/or the state companies.

Regardless of some similarities that are shared over all four cases, Spain and Portugal have gone through the process of democratisation a couple of decades before Croatia and Serbia, and most importantly, the process was not accompanied by an armed conflict. They have been part of the EU since the mid-80s and entered the EMU in 2002. When the crisis of 2008 arrived in Europe, the prospect of EU membership seemed to the political elites of Croatia and Serbia as wishful thinking which easily conveys that Spain and Portugal are much closer to the core of the EU in comparison to Croatia and Serbia. On the other hand, the more recent experience of democratic transition in Croatia and Serbia offered less time for a civic culture, and strong non-partisan political actors to be developed.

In the next chapter I explore cross-national variations in the nature of anti-austerity cycles by tracing differences between protest magnitudes, nature and salience of demands, and levels of disruptiveness and innovation of methods used during the cycles, in order to see how they differ within and across selected pairs of countries.

Chapter 4: Anti-austerity Cycle of Contention in the European Semi-Periphery[5]

4.1. Introduction

In the spring of 2011, the newspapers across Europe were reporting similar stories about contentious actions happening on the streets of numerous cities. One could have read reports on citizens marching for days around Zagreb, Croatia, asking the prime minister to stand down, and accusing the government of corruption and mismanagement of the economic crisis. The news from Serbia informed about demonstrations in Belgrade organised by the biggest opposition party whose officials started the hunger strike in an attempt to provoke early elections due to the incompetence of the government to get the country to the European Union and to vouch for better living conditions for citizens. Reports from Portugal described a series of massive demonstrations for the preservation of labour rights in the midst of the economic crisis that spread from Lisbon to the other cities and provoked the resignation of the then prime minister. In May, the whole world watched a series of demonstrations, marches and occupations of the main squares of Spanish cities, which quickly secured themselves a historical position under the name of 15M in a reference to May 15th, the day when protests against austerity policies and bailout of the banks started in Madrid.

[5] The part of the chapter on Croatia and Serbia is based on the article published as Balković, A. (2019). The austerity fuelled wave of contention in Croatia – myth or reality? Anali Hrvatskog politološkog društva 16(1): 71-94, DOI: 10.20901/an.16.04

The messages formulated by the protest participants in all four countries were the same: the elites failed regular citizens, they did not represent them, the pressure of economic crisis and uncertainty it brought cannot be solved by further deterioration of citizen rights. Regardless of sharing the same ideas, and to some extent being inspired by each other, these events were just a fraction of what was happening in the field of contentious politics in each of the countries in the aftermath of the Great Recession.

The chapter explores which political and institutional factors provide a possible explanation for cross-national variations in the nature of anti-austerity cycles of contention in the European semi-periphery. In the first part of chapter, I briefly outline a cycle-based approach apt for an analysis of particular national contentious politics systems that was presented in Chapter 1. Protest Event Analysis, method used to gather and analyse data about protest event occurrence in particular pairs of countries, and the newly collected data that were described in detail in Chapter 2 are used as the main tool and data source in this chapter. The central part of the chapter explores the nature of anti-austerity cycles of contention in national contexts in pairs of countries: Spain and Portugal, and Croatia and Serbia.

4.2. A Cycle-based Approach

As stated in the introductory chapter, the literature on the anti-austerity protests assumes that European movements developed in the aftermath of the Great Recession pertain to an unique global cycle of contention (Della Porta 2017, Flesher Fominaya 2017). This chapter aims to see if indeed the protest in this period can fit under the umbrella of what

Koopmans (2004) calls cycle of contention and can we talk about an unique global cycle. To be able to do so, this chapter explores if they included new participants, addressed the policy areas that new social movements put on the sidelines, and have they crossed the national borders. Given the time distance from the observed period, I can explore if they went through the period of transformation in which new forms of collective action and alliances between actors were observed and verify if and when they contracted.

In times of crisis the possibility of mobilisation increases because collective actions unfold when changing political opportunities enable the engagement of actors who lack resources on their own (Tarrow 2012). Reshaping of the political and protest sphere condenses predeveloped tensions and disputes in the society, by giving them visibility in the protest events that clustered over the short span of time (Carvalho 2019). Following these theories, Císař and Navrátil (2016) suggested that anti-austerity protests would be more frequent and bigger in size when compared to the protests in the age of relative stability.

Due to the lack of longitudinal protest event data covering longer periods of both economic decline and affluence and multiple countries, it remains challenging to test their assumption. Two of these rare studies find inconclusive findings. Ortiz et al (2013) in their study of protests in 84 countries covered the January 2006-July 2013 period and found evidence of steady increase in annual number of protests which was accelerated upon the outburst of the Great Recession. Kriesi et al (2020) studied 30 European countries in the period from 2000 to 2015. Their findings suggest that frequency and size of protest events vary over particular European regions and that they are highly influenced by specific

national issues which can, but do not have to, be related to the grievances provoked by the economic crisis.

To overcome limitations of the existing protest datasets, this chapter uses newly collected longitudinal protest event data for four European countries, spanning over an 18 years period, covering periods before, during, and after the Great Recession.

4.3. Data

To explore the nature of anti-austerity cycles in particular countries, in the first phase of the analysis, I aim to examine changes in levels of mobilisation in each country using the data collected via Protest Event Analysis within the Disobedient Democracy project (see Chapter 2 for detailed description).

Although there is no consensus on the most efficient way to measure changes in levels of mobilisation, two variables have been used primarily: the number of events and the number of participants in all recorded protest events (Beissinger and Sasse 2014).[6] Early studies assumed a high positive correlation between the frequency of protest events and the total number of participants. However, these studies show that correlation is, in fact, low or, at best, moderate, meaning that the choice between counting events and counting participants will drastically affect the prospective conclusions. To be able to grasp the changes in levels of mobilisation, in this chapter I use both variables for the analysis. Additionally, for the purpose of cross-national comparison between countries with

[6] Beissinger and Sasse in their analysis use third variable, the total number of protest days

significantly different sizes of population, the total annual number of participants was weighted using the census data from the 2011 censuses.

In the second phase of the analysis, based on previously presented theoretical discussion about a variety of demands in cycles of contention, I explore the nature of demands that dominated in the field of contentious politics in the observed period. Due to large number of categories within "demands'' variable in the dataset, the existing categories were recoded in three types: economic (which include austerity, inequality, unemployment, workers' rights, precarity, privatisation, financial and banking system, debt, globalisation, capitalism, housing crisis, cuts to public services, education, health care, price increase, and utilities), political (deliberative and inclusive democratic measures, reform of electoral system, supranational institutions, foreign governments, political parties, corruption, civil rights, specific laws and policies, self-determination, form or regime, and judiciary system) and cultural (LGBTTQI rights, disabled rights, veterans, minority rights, migration, urban planning, environment, animal rights, right to abortion, anti-war, anti-terrorism, violence, and gender violence) demands. This operationalisation aims to add to the discussions about relevance of capitalism for social movements literature (Della Porta 2015, Hetland and Goodwin 2013), and about change in salience of protest demands in the period of the Great Recession (Gessler and Schulte-Cloos 2020).

In the third part of analysis and following Tarrow's (2012) distinction between conventional, disruptive, and violent repertoires of contention, the existing categories from the dataset are recoded and included in the analysis as follows: marches,

demonstrations, mass meetings, and strikes[7] are considered to be conventional repertoires, while occupations of public space, sit ins, obstructions of roads, human chains, hunger strikes, and self-harming are coded as disruptive. Finally, riots and assaults on property and people are seen as violent repertoires of contention.

4.4. Spain and Portugal

The economic downfall that began in 2008 led to a profound social and political crisis in Southern European countries. In response, protests had flown the streets articulating citizen's discontent (Accornero and Pinto 2015, Carvalho 2019, Della Porta et al. 2017, Portos 2017, Quaranta 2016).

Some researchers quickly assumed that protests formed a part of one global homogenic wave of contention and praised newness, spontaneity, and precedence of events that were unfolding in front of their eyes (Flesher Fominaya 2017). They were highlighting interconnection and similarities between the most prominent events of the era such as Arab spring, Occupy or 15M (Della Porta and Mattoni 2014, Castells 2015).

On the other hand, others claimed that citizen's radical reactions were not directly prompted by the crisis itself, but rather by the specific governmental responses to the crisis as the implemented austerity measures only perpetuated economic uncertainty (Bermeo and Bartels 2014). Austerity measures were perceived as a proof of political unresponsiveness of elected officials which served as an argument in a call for democratic

[7] In their analysis of evolution of Spanish contentious politics Romanos and Sadaba (2022) based on the same dataset code strikes as a disruptive form of protest. Regardless of strike being a method that disrupts usual workflow, I argue that it is a conventional method due to its long and persistent usage and highly regulated form.

renewal (Della Porta 2015, Grasso and Giugni 2016). As previously stated, Císař and Navrátil (2016) suggested that anti-austerity protests would be more frequent and bigger in size when compared to the protests in the age of relative stability. However, they emphasised that their most important characteristic would be formulation of demands that address specific austerity measures such as changes in employment legislation, social services, pensions and education. If so, the protests' occurrence, the main demands and other protest characteristics would be grounded within, and determined by, specific national context, and not by global grievances.

This part of the chapter seeks to verify whether, depending on the national context, different demands were expressed, and repertoires were used, as a response to the Great Recession in Spain and Portugal. As the existing literature about the Spanish and Portuguese anti-austerity cycles in particularly highlights only one important distinction between the two – the ability of social movements that contested the national responses during the crisis to translate from the streets to the electoral arena, the second goal of this chapter is to explore whether and how demands expressed and choice of repertoire during the anti-austerity cycle of contention influenced both institutional and contentious politics in the post-crisis period.

Results show that in Spain protest participants expressed both socio-economic grievances and anti-systemic sentiments, while using innovative, and disruptive repertoire. In the Portuguese case, during the whole cycle, the conventional repertoire dominated over the disruptive one. The employment of conventional methods went hand in hand with the nature of expressed demands. Although protestors acknowledged the erroneousness of capitalism and democracy, they almost exclusively opposed proposed austerity policies

which would lead to further deterioration of the welfare state, public services and workers' rights. In both cases, choices of repertoire and dominant demands signalled a road both institutional and contentious politics would take upon the demobilisation of anti-austerity cycles of contention.

4.4.1. Theoretical framework

Kriesi et al (2020) find a relative increase in the number of protests in Spain and Portugal during the peak of the crisis, but their finding might have been a reflection of newswire bias towards big events such as 15M. In his paired comparison of Spain and Portugal, Carvalho (2019) uses a combination of the previously collected newswire data for the periods between transition to democracy and late 1990s, and original data he collected from the national daily newspapers for the period of Great Recession. Coming from different sources, it is difficult to compare this data, but he manages to detect cyclic character of collective action in both countries which seems to be the product of national specificities. In the case study of Spain, Jiménez (2011) showed that since the transition protests became a normalised form of political participation and observed steady growth in the number of events and participants. Also exploring Disobedient Democracy protest event data for Spain in the period from 2000 to 2017, Romanos and Sadaba (2022) found evidence of the cyclic nature of Spanish collective actions. Similar to Carvalho (2019), they claim that the beginning and the eventual demobilisation of cycles do not directly relate to the periods of economic stability and demise, but rather to the salient demands within the national, and sometimes (as in the case of Global Justice movement, and partially in the case of anti-austerity protest) within the transnational context.

Despite the fact that the state of economy itself is not sufficient mobiliser, it has to be again highlighted that the Great Recession produced major economic contractions and, above all, a decline in economic growth and an increase in unemployment rates (Grasso and Giugni 2016). Initial responses to the crisis were interventionist fiscal measures. From 2009, with the emergence of the Greek debt crisis, European institutions started to impose a set of austerity policies on their member states. These policy changes had an immediate effect on citizens' lives as socio-economic situation degraded even further because policies targeted the core of the welfare state: unemployment benefits, pension systems, and labour legislation (Cinalli and Giugni 2016). Austerity measures lead to lower growth, higher unemployment, withered infrastructure, and more skewed distribution of income and life chances (Blyth 2013: 28). In newly emerged circumstances of economic uncertainty, citizens became aware that the levels of social protection that the shrinking welfare state is providing them with, are not insufficient to shield them from the effects of the crisis (Hemerijck 2013).

Social movement studies have admitted that since the 1970s, the main focus of the discipline have been "new social movements" while protests addressing economic demands were side-lined. In the end of the period of relative economic stability, researchers recorded that the protests addressing socio-economic inequality and redistribution have been on the rise (Giugni and Grasso 2016, Kriesi et al 2020). The scholars began to call to bring economy and capitalism back into the social movements mainstream (Della Porta 2015, Hetland and Goodwin 2013). Listening to these calls, the scholars started to (re)investigate economic protests (Beissinger and Sasse 2014, Bermeo and Bartlets 2014, Della Porta et al 2017, Kriesi et al 2020, Kurer et al 2019, Quaranta 2016).

Gessler and Schulte-Cloos (2020) claim that dissonance between standardised views on demands expressed in contemporary protests and importance of economic demands needs to be bridged. This approach to the analysis is useful for two reasons: first, they focus on economic issues, but they also argue that both political and cultural issues need to be studied to grasp the complete impact of the Great Recession on the changes in the nature of protest demands. According to them, the economic crisis will be reflected in political and cultural terms because governments tried to avoid responsibility for the situation and to deflect it onto democratically unaccountable transnational institutions, while right-wing organisations used welfare chauvinism to create a cultural division among "insiders" and "outsiders". Secondly, they are able to compare crisis and post-crisis levels of protest with the pre-crisis level. In Southern Europe, when compared to the pre-crisis levels of economic protest, the number of events addressing economic grievances rose significantly. Their cross-regional analysis showed that the revival of economic protest happened in Southern Europe which was the most profoundly affected by the economic crisis.

As mentioned earlier, apart from the changes in the nature of the salient demands, one of the main characters of particular cycle of contention is the innovation in forms of collective action (Tarrow, 2011). Kerbo (1982) claimed that usually, and especially in their early stages, movements of crisis tend to use a more violent repertoire and express more hostile outbursts towards authorities, while movements of affluence use a more traditional protest repertoire. Already early studies about the anti-austerity protest in Spain acknowledge the newness, spontaneity and diversification in methods of collective actions. Among many others most authors mention primarily occupations of public space,

caceroladas, escraches, and human chains (Castells 2015, Flesher Fominaya 2015, Romanos 2017). In comparison to the Spanish case, the Portuguese case is considered more prone to use of traditional methods such as strikes, marches and demonstrations (Carvalho 2019, Fernandes et al 2021). Carvalho (2019) showed that e.g., occupations of public space were solitary endeavours of smaller groups of activists which did not manage to appeal to broader groups of participants.

In the line with the scholars who expect rise in both frequency and size of protest events in the crisis ridden countries, I assume that, in both Spain and Portugal, the number of protest events and participants is going to be higher during the anti-austerity cycle of contention when compared to the pre-crisis levels of mobilisation. Further, based on the knowledge about propensity of economic protests during the crisis period, I expect that in both countries economic demands represent the majority of demands expressed during the anti-austerity cycle of contention. It is expected that more diverse and more radicalised methods are used in the Spanish cycle of contention, while conventional ones are expected to be dominant in the Portuguese cycle.

The scholars showed that in Spain the most important challenger to the status quo emerged by the birth of the 15M social movement. In the earliest phase of anti-austerity cycle the movement did not easily forge links with existing political parties and labour unions, because of anti-party and anti-union orientation of the movement, but also due to the mistrust of the parties towards the movement (Carvalho 2019, Castells 2015, Flesher Fominaya 2015, Romanos 2017). The legacy of 15M movements led to decentralisation of activities in the form of smaller grassroots assemblies, and to proliferation of issue-specific movements against privatisation of public services (Carvalho 2019, Portos 2016,

Romanos 2017). The later phase of the cycle saw the birth of new parties emerging from the movements. The parties adopted horizontal practices of the movement and brought successfully the ideas of the "indignados" to the sphere of electoral politics (Della Porta et al 2017).

On the other hand, despite seeing the rise of similar social movements in the first part of anti-austerity cycle of contention, Portuguese cycle was marked by the dominance of "old" actors, in particular unions who closely collaborated with leftist parties, but also with the emerging activist groups (Accornero and Pinto 2015, Carvalho 2019, Portos and Carvalho 2019). Movements such as Geração à Rasca and Que se Lixe a Troika demobilised slowly and never tried to contest elections. In general, it has become an axiom that the shockwaves provoked by the contentious responses to the Great Recession in Southern Europe led to the emergence of new challengers who managed to shake the structure of consolidated party systems (Vidal 2018). In this literature, Portugal is normally presented as an exceptional case being the only country in which pre-crisis political dynamics manage to maintain the continuity during and after the Great Recession (De Giorgi and Santana-Pereira 2021).

In the final part of the analysis, I connect findings about the nature of demands and destructivity of the repertoires to the post-crisis power dynamics among political parties in each of the countries.

4.4.2. Levels of mobilisation

Given that PEA data is collected for the period from 2000 to 2017, an opportunity to verify the existence of anti-austerity cycles of contention within a longer trajectory of contention in both countries is present.

For that purpose, I look into the main trends in frequency and intensity of protest events in the given period. In total, the highest number of events was recorded in Spain, with 4,042 events. 3,170 events were recorded in Portugal. Table 4.1. shows that average number of events, as well as average number of participants in the observed period are higher in Spain than in Portugal. However, the average proportion of mobilised population in both countries over 18 years is similar and could lead to precipitated conclusions about resemblance between trajectories of contention.

	Spain			Portugal		
	Number of events	**Number of participants**	**Proportion of mobilised population**	**Number of events**	**Number of participants**	**Proportion of mobilised population**
Average 2000-2017	224,50	3.484.005,06	7,44%	176,11	805.173,22	7,62%
Before 2008	212,00	4.656.523,13	9,95%	201,88	649.067,38	6,15%
2008-2015	244,25	2.271.777,25	4,85%	178,75	1.136.156,50	10,76%
After 2015	195,50	3.642.844,00	7,78%	62,50	105.663,50	1,00%

Table 4.1. Level of protest mobilisation in Spain and Portugal. Source: Disobedient Democracy Dataset (Dolenec et al 2023, forthcoming)

In the period before the Great Recession, in both countries a similar average number of events is recorded, but Spain displays a higher proportion of mobilised population than Portugal. More central for the main discussion, the event count in Spain during the Great Recession is on average higher than in the periods before and after the economic crisis. However, the proportion of the mobilised population is the lowest in this part of the observed period. Portugal is exhibiting a reverse picture with the proportion of mobilised population being the highest in the period of Great Recession. The same mobilising effect is not reflected in the average number of protests. While it is slightly higher than the average for the 18 years period, it is lower than in the period before the crisis. The numbers for Portugal reveal a demobilising trend after the end of the Great Recession, as

both average number of events and proportion of mobilised population reach the lowest recorded number.

Compared to the pre-crisis level of mobilisation, it is observed that in Spain citizens started to mobilise more often, but the protest events did not manage to attract the same or higher number of participants. Contrary to expected, Portugal has seen a decrease in the number of protest events, but they were bigger in magnitude in comparison to the pre-crisis period, as well as the anti-austerity period in Spain. This finding suggests that in Portugal there might have existed salient issues which a larger portion of citizens could be mobilised around in a more centralised and, to the broader masses, in a more appealing and less costly manner than in Spain. In the following paragraph I look deeper into the national trajectories over 18 years to offer possible explanations for the observed differences within and between cycles.

In Spain, the early 2000s coincided with the decline of the protest cycle led by the global justice movement, which in March 2002 organised protests against the European Council meeting in Barcelona. This initial decrease in the number of protest events does not go hand in hand with the number of participants, which grew tremendously in 2003 and 2004. The PEA data shows that the biggest events are related to wide-spread resistance to the Spanish participation in the war in Iraq, and to anti-terrorist mobilisations in general, but particularly to those condemning the terrorist attack in March 2004 in Madrid. In both cases, demonstrations were organised simultaneously in many Spanish cities and brought millions to the streets. From 2005 until 2007 an increase in the number of protest events is observed, but it does not translate into a significant increase in the number of participants. In the years prior to the Great Recession, social movement

activists organised numerous protests with limited mobilising capacity to denounce not only the weak foundations of the democratic system established during the transition, but also the collateral effects of the so-called "Spanish economic miracle". Several topics marked this period – the students' fight against the implementation of the Bologna process, strikes in various industries scattered around the country, massive protests against educational reform, demonstrations against royal family etc., but the protests that were organised the most often and attracted the highest number of participants were those related to the consequences of the ETA violence in the previous decade. Some were organised to contest the deal ETA made with the Zapatero government, some were protests against the treatment former ETA members were receiving in courts or in jails, some were marches for Basque independence, while some called for an exercise of stronger influence of the central government in the Basque country.

After the significant drop in occurrence of protests and proportion of mobilised citizens in 2008, the anti-austerity cycle began, reaching the peak in 2011-2012 with the movement of the "Indignados". Trendline shows that their mobilisation capacity slowly decreases after 2012, coinciding with the emergence of political parties associated with the movement, but the legacy of the movement, living in the "mareas" against privatisations in public sector, managed to mobilise over 10% of population in 2014 and early in 2015 which represents the peak in the magnitude in this cycle.

The final rebound in both average number of protest events and participants that is seen in the data exists mostly due to the mobilisations around the independence movement in Catalonia, and feminist mobilisations against gender violence.

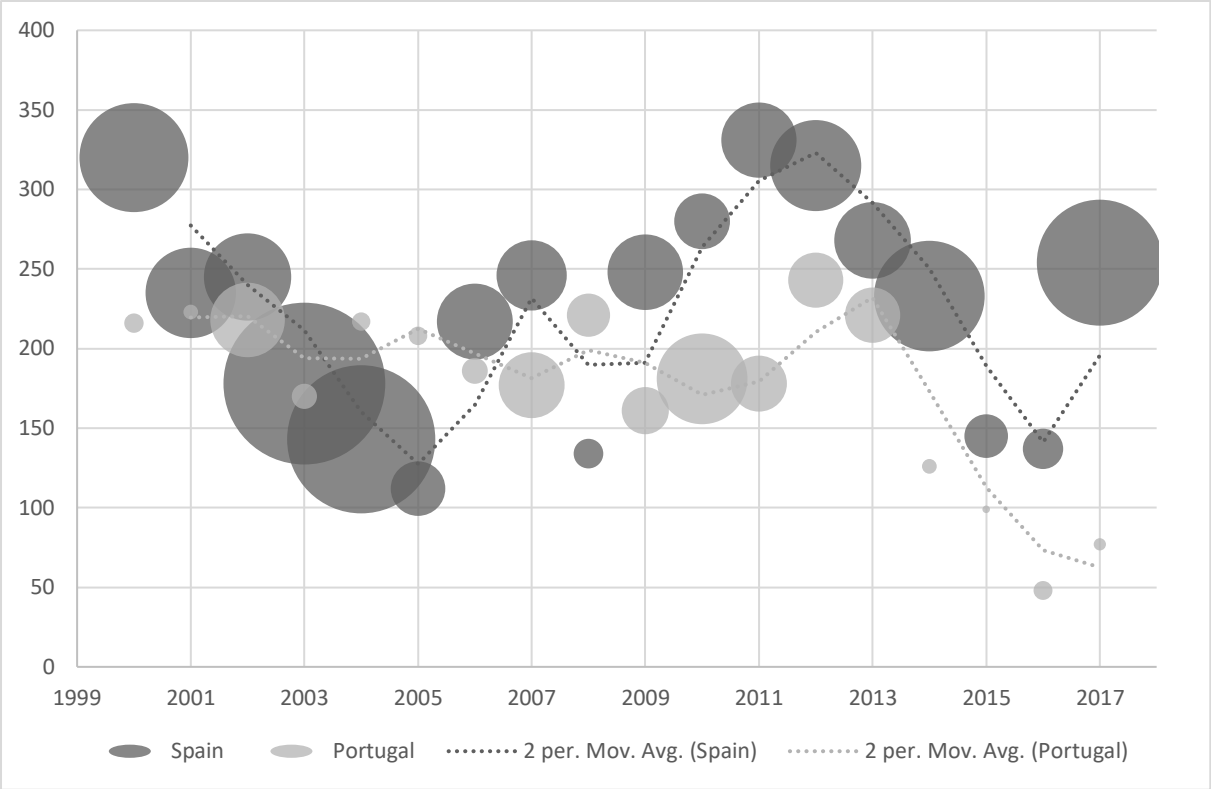

Figure 4.1. Protest magnitude in Spain and Portugal, moving average. Source: Disobedient Democracy Dataset (Dolenec et al 2023, forthcoming)

Contrary to Spain, between 2000 and 2008 Portugal saw a period of relatively stable number of protest events with an average annual count of 201,88 protests. During this period, the numbers of protesters were also relatively constant, with years 2002 and 2007 being clear outliers. Data shows that almost 22%, and slightly over 17% of population, respectively, was mobilised during those years. In both cases, the main justifier for the observed peaks in the number of participants is the government's proposal to change the labour law. The leading trade unions organised several strikes in both public and private sector as well as demonstrations which culminated in general strikes.

The beginning of the anti-austerity cycle of contention is marked by the increase in the number of protest events in 2008. Although the annual number of events reaches its peak

only in 2012 and 2013, the number of participants is higher than average throughout the period, and it starts to drop only in 2014. The number of participants rose dramatically to reach a peak in 2010, marking mass mobilisation protest events against crisis-related government policies, including a general strike with 3 million participants. General strikes can blur and distort the protest magnitude as they compose a significant portion of total number participants in the year they happened. However, even when excluding from the analysis general strikes in 2002, 2007 and 2010, the larger portion of recorded events with more than 100,000 participants is located in the period between 2008 and 2015. Most of them were organised by labour unions and supported by leftist parties, but three biggest events in 2011, 2012 and 2013 reaching almost 2 million participants cumulatively were organised by citizens initiatives that emerged in this cycle of contention - Geração à Rasca and Que se Lixe a Troika.

Finally, it can be seen that both protest numbers and numbers of participants declined during 2014. To some extent demobilisation, which becomes especially prominent in the post-crisis period, can be seen as an outcome of the formation of unprecedented ruling coalition: after the 2015 elections a minority Socialist government aligned with the left-wing political parties, Left Block and the Communist Party, all of which were very active actors during anti-austerity mobilisation. This finding suggests that their former allies from the period of heightened contention do not have a necessity to voice their grievances on the street because institutional channels are more open, and possibly, more responsive to their demands.

4.4.3. Demands – nature and salience

Looking closer into the structure of demands in the recession period allows us to see what crucial mobilisers behind the protest events in the anti-austerity cycle of contention were. Figure 4.2. demonstrates that, although they were significantly present throughout the period, economic demands do not make the largest share in the total number of recorded demands in Spain. Only in 2012 they amounted to almost 65% of all demands. This peak is explained by the announcement of the conservative government which was elected in 2011 to continue with even harsher austerity measures. The budget for 2013 was announced together with a long list of budget cuts, which citizens replied to with a series of protests around the country. These mobilisations were jointly organised by the largest unions, activists coming from the 15M movement, oppositional parties, and organisations of pensioners and students. The diverse and broad coalition of actors demonstrated that the large proportion of the Spanish population was to some extent affected by the announced cuts.

The Spanish case serves as an example of intertwined economic and political demands. As shown in Figure 4.2., on average 41% of demands in the whole period are political demands. Deeper inspection of the recorded events exhibits clearly that Spaniards did not voice only dissatisfaction with the economic situation. Rather, they openly blamed the regime established by the 1978 Constitution for non-responsiveness, advocated re-examination of civil rights and more individual freedoms, while denouncing political parties and, especially government and judiciary, for corruption and clientelism.

What seems to be specific for the Spanish case, the critique of international institutions and of the capitalist system in general had been a part of messages expressed in demonstrations, but it did not play the central role. A blatant critique of domestic elites was at the centre of protestors' attention, and the international institutions played a secondary role. Such focus did not allow the national institutions to deflect the blame for the economic decline. It was clear that due to the exposure to the global economic crisis and the bailout conditions posed by the EU and the IMF to battle it, the domestic elites had limited manoeuvring space, but the citizens demanded socially more sensitive solutions. Additionally, another specificity of the Spanish case, which adds up to the total share of political demands, is the reactivation of the question of Catalan independence which has been coming slowly to the focal point since 2011, to completely overtake the political issues in the post-crisis period.

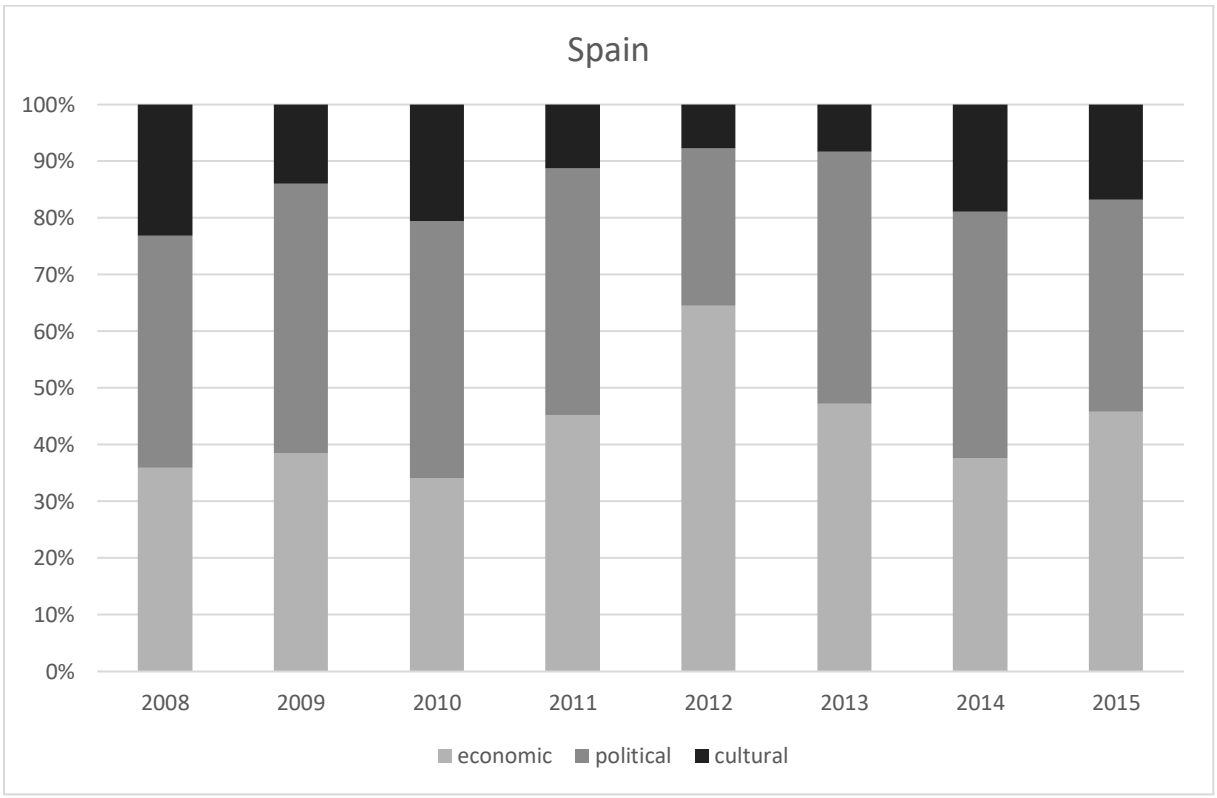

Figure 4.2. Share of economic, political and cultural demands in total number of recorded demands in Spain.

Source: Disobedient Democracy Dataset (Dolenec et al 2023, forthcoming)

The protest events dataset shows that cultural demands are present during the anti-austerity cycle. However, the largest share of events with cultural demands relates solely to one issue: the discussion about the right to abortion. In the beginning of the cycle, it culminated in 2010 just before the Zapatero-led left-centre government passed the more liberal law on abortion. After the conservative PP formed the government in 2011, they tried to amend the law to be more in line with their traditional values. In 2014 the right to abortion has again become a salient issue because the government finally published a draft of amendments to the 2010 law which would significantly reverse what was prescribed in 2010. Faced with the strong backlash from feminist organisations and opposition parties, the government retracted the draft.

In the anti-austerity cycle in Portugal, clear dominance of economic demands is seen from Figure 4.3. During the most contentious years, the share of events with economic demands on average makes more than 80% of total recorded demands. The anti-austerity protests were predominantly organised by unions, leftist parties and social movements that were close to the ideas that "old" actors supported. Although participants recognized the fallacy of capitalism and asked for "real" democracy, they primarily addressed proposed austerity policies which, if implemented, would lead to further deterioration of the welfare state, public services and workers' rights. The demonstrations demanded halt of the salary cuts, and protection from the increase of the living costs. Protestors advocated strong labour protection and help against rampant unemployment. The quality of, and broad access to the public services, especially to the health care and higher education, were ones of the most often repeated demands. If taken into account that Fernandes et al (2021) found that the protection of the well-funded, easily accessible, reliable and

beneficial public services was the primary mobiliser in 2000-2008 period, it is not surprising that Portuguese citizens took the streets to protect the existing rights when faced with the economic shock and prospects of welfare state retrenchment.

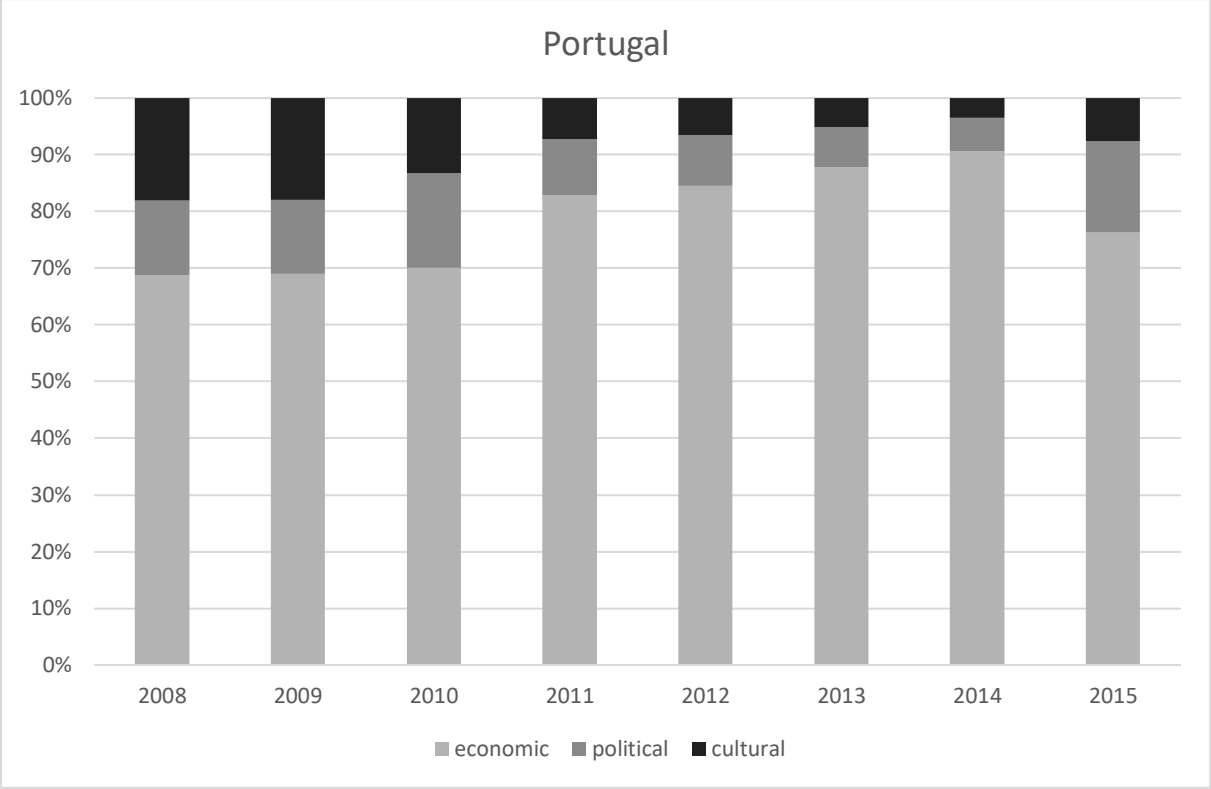

Figure 4.3. Share of economic, political and cultural demands in total number of recorded demands in Portugal. Source: Disobedient Democracy Dataset (Dolenec et al 2023, forthcoming)

Unlike in Spain, political demands were not a salient part of the majority of protests. The protests in which political demands were expressed primarily voiced out the dissatisfaction with the foreign governments and institutions such as International Monetary Fund and European Union who were perceived as the main enemies of the existing welfare privileges. The participants did not question the role of domestic political elites, nor disputed the inheritance of the Carnation revolution. This is especially visible after examining the main protest organisers: the labour unions, political parties and non-governmental organisations which have been part of the system created during the

transition period organised and/or supported major protest events. Additionally, during the introduction of one of the packages of austerity measures in 2013, protestors had a strong support from the judiciary system and the president which helped to slow down the implementation of some policies and to revoke those that were only proposed in accordance with the promises to the creditors. The most famous institutional act of disobedience to proclaimed commitment to fiscal adjustment came from the Constitutional Court. The court ruled that the harsher austerity measures aimed at keeping the bailout negotiated with the international institutions on track were unconstitutional. The verdict saw them as a path to the deterioration of citizens' rights previously granted by the Constitution.

The nature of cultural demands was significantly different than the one that was recorded in the Spanish case. The most important issues which are reflected in the higher number of events with cultural demands in 2008 and 2009 are connected to the questions about quality of public space and ecological issues. Additionally, the question of the same-sex marriage and right of same-sex partners to adopt kids were on the agenda throughout the cycle and mobilised both liberal and conservative movements in the periods of the most heated public debates about the issues in 2009-2010, and again in 2012-2015.

Although in comparison between two countries, Spain had worse macroeconomic indicators than Portugal and the austerity measures were harsher (see Chapter 3), economic demands did not represent the majority of demands expressed during the cycle of contention. The theoretical expectations that economic demands will be the most present ones during the economic crisis are confirmed in the case of Portugal. The composition of demands' frequencies in the Spanish protest events serves as a display of

proof that the economic crisis is mirrored in political and cultural terms, and that demands that form in this period cannot be disentangled from one another.

4.4.4. Methods – innovation and disruptiveness

The scholars have been claiming that the innovation in methods of collective action is one of the most important contributions of the anti-austerity cycle of contention in Spain, while noting that the same has not happened in Portugal (Carvalho 2019, Castells 2015, Fernandes et al 2021, Flesher Fominaya 2015, Romanos 2017, Romanos and Sadaba 2022).

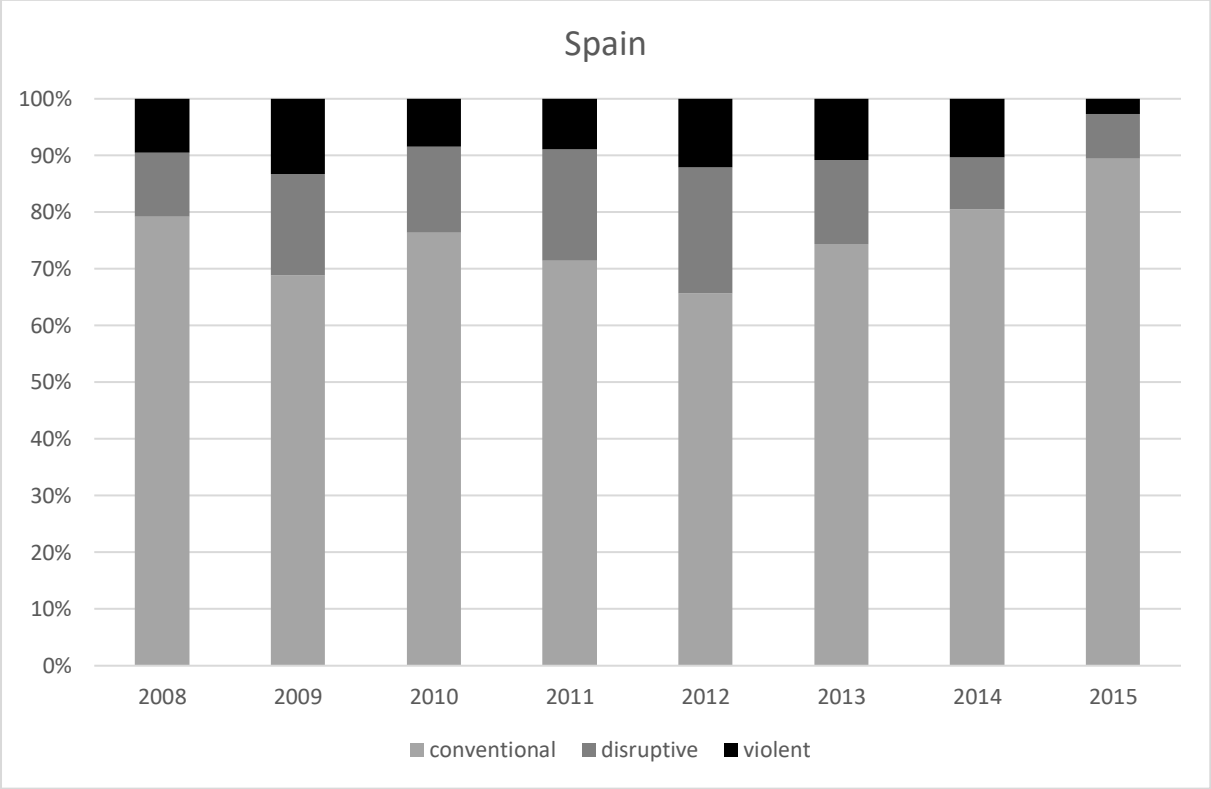

Figure 4.4. Share of conventional, disruptive and violent methods in total number of reported methods in Spain. Source: Disobedient Democracy Dataset (Dolenec et al 2023, forthcoming)

Figure 4.4. and Figure 4.5. demonstrate that in both countries prevalence of conventional methods can be observed. Regardless, the average share of conventional methods in the total number of recorded methods in Spain is 75%, while this number reaches 90% in Portugal. It has to be noted that the main difference in usage of conventional methods is the significantly higher rate of strikes in the Portuguese case, while Spanish protests in the observed period were mostly demonstrations. This finding shows that unions which organised a large proportion of protests in Portugal stack with the well-known repertoires probably because they were mostly organised in the joint action of social movements, NGOs, and labour unions, with the support of the leftist political parties. The new movements which emerged in Spain tried to combine conventional methods with the innovative and disruptive ones, which were more adequate to show their dissatisfaction with the socio-economic situation and to express anti-systemic sentiments of protestors.

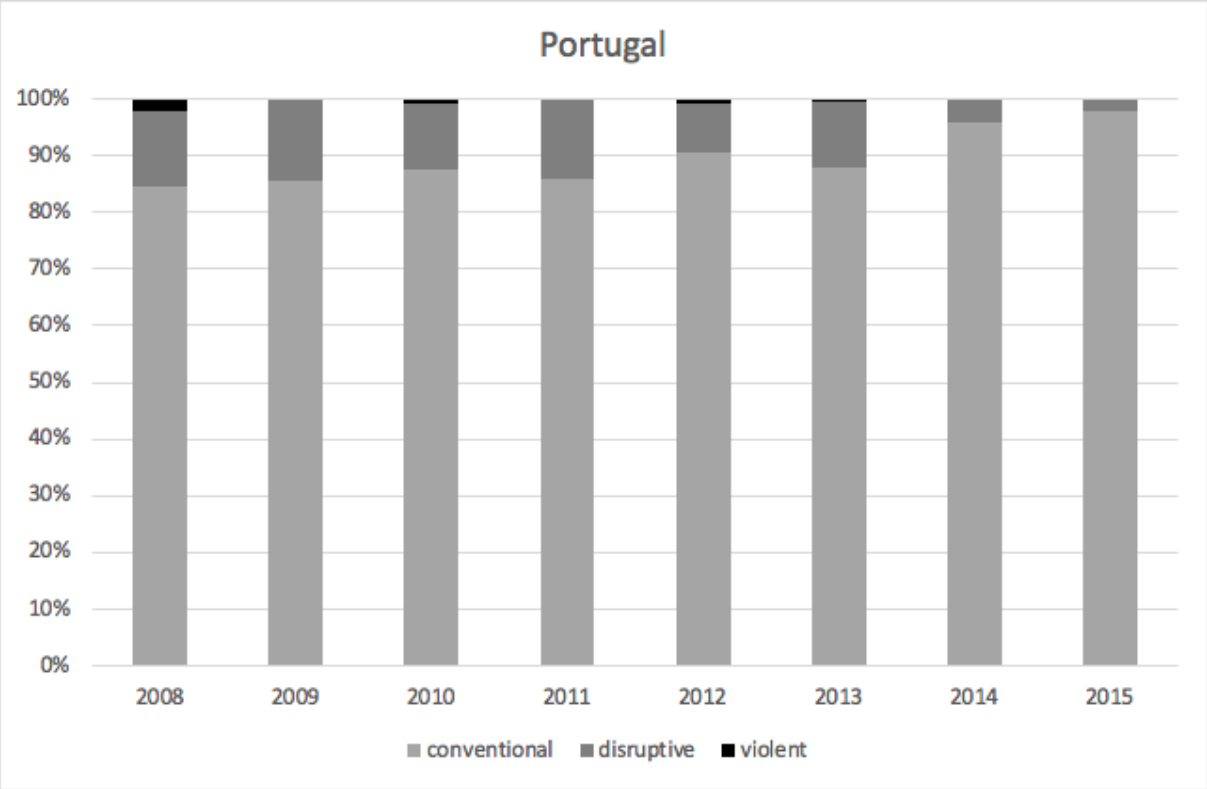

Figure 4.5. Share of conventional, disruptive and violent methods in total number of reported methods in Portugal. Source: Disobedient Democracy Dataset (Dolenec et al 2023, forthcoming)

Consequently, the highest share of disruptive and violent methods in the Spanish cycle can be observed in 2011 and 2012 which goes hand in hand with existing literature about innovation in and disruptiveness of the collective action repertoire during and in the aftermath of 15M mobilisations. However, it has to be highlighted that the highest proportion of disruptive and violent methods was seen in 2012 due to their wide use during the Asturian miners' strike. Although the miners' strike is not considered to be a part of what is known as a 15M movement, it represents one of the strongest opponents to the announced austerity measures. One of the EU requirements for reduction of the Spanish fiscal deficit was to put an end to mining industry subsidies. Faced with a prospect of closing down the mine shafts, the miners blocked the shafts, attacked the premises of the ruling party, blocked the roads and railways, occupied public spaces, and eventually

organised several days long marches on Madrid where they were joined by other citizens in a massive demonstration.

The analysis confirmed theoretical expectations that more diverse and more radicalised methods were going to be used during the Spanish cycle of contention, while conventional ones were expected to be dominant in the Portuguese cycle.

4.4.5. Instead of conclusion – influence of contentious politics on institutional politics in the shadow of the Great Recession

The overview of the contentious politics in Spain and Portugal during the first 17 years of the 21st century demonstrates that the dynamics of contention has been determined by the social contracts created during the transition periods. The level of compromise and dedication to the pacts created among political elites and citizens after Franco's death in Spain and in the aftermath of Carnation revolution in Portugal can be seen as the key factor that shaped the nature of demands and methods expressed and used during the anti-austerity protests in both countries. The differences in the mobilisation levels and the radicality of demands have spilled over into the institutional arena. In the immediate aftermath of the bailout, the Spanish political system witnessed the creation of new political parties, the rise in electoral volatility, and increase in political polarisation. In Portugal, the old alliances between the left parties and unions remained strong, with the political system starting to see the first significant changes since the revolution only as late as 2020.

The PEA data showed that in Spain, the beginning of the 2000s was predominantly characterised by the demise of the Global Justice Movement and the increase of the protests related to the consequences of the ETA activities in the 1980s and 1990s. Spanish military involvement in NATO missions in Iraq and subsequent terrorist attack served as a fuelling agent for the wave of anti-war protests. The period of relative economic stability brought to the spotlight post-materialist protests. That said, not that salient, but still present, were the demands for the abolishment of the monarchy, for the territorial reorganisation, against the corruption of the political elites, and for the better quality of public services - the demands that were about to become central in the upcoming protest cycle.

If looking into the number of protests and level of mobilisation, Portugal had seen a relatively quiet first decade of the 2000s, but same as in Spain, the demands that were about to erupt in the anti-austerity protests were visible. The labour unions organised protests against the liberalisation of the labour law, and diverse protests were organised around the issues of privatisation of and access to public services.

To sum up, in both countries, relatively dormant claims were brought to the surface once the economic situation dramatically worsened. They served as what Kriesi (2015) calls latent political potential. He used this term to determine the degree of dissatisfaction with the political system. Similar to previous works on this topic, I found that the latent political potential was significantly stronger in Spain than in Portugal. In the protest arena, it was reflected in the number of protests, in the nature of demands, and in the level of disruptiveness of the methods participants used. On the other hand, widespread dissatisfaction with institutions, political parties, and democracy in Spain in general, led

to unprecedented changes in the party system which could be seen in the increase of electoral volatility, the creation of new parties, and the growing political polarisation. All of these were visible in 2015 general elections when neither incumbent PP, nor PSOE managed to secure the majority. Newly established Podemos, left platform organised in 2014 in the aftermath of 15M, won the third position, while Ciudadanos, centre-right party that until then never contested national elections and centred itself around the issue of Catalan independence, won the fourth position. The inability of two biggest parties led to the new elections in 2016 where PSOE marked historically worst results, and PP managed to form the government. Podemos and Ciudadanos repeated the results from the previous elections (Vidal 2019). The PP government collapsed in 2018 in the midst of corruption scandals and accusations on handling the post-Catalan independence referendum process. PSOE, with the help of Podemos, managed to form the government in the beginning of 2019. In the elections in April 2019, despite the decrease in support for Podemos, the parties remained in power. This election cycle was marked by the growing polarisation, visible in the rise of the radical-right party Vox, and the increase in the support for Catalan parties. On the other hand, in the Portuguese case, the party system in the aftermath of the anti-austerity protests was primarily marked by the changes in the inter-party dynamics in Bloco de Esquerda, and consequently by their stance on the collaboration with PS, social movements, and labour unions (Carvalho 2019). Similar to the situation in Spain, the centre-right coalition led by PSD won the relative majority of the votes but failed to form the government. BE achieved its best result ever and won the third position, just after PS. The PSD led coalition managed to form the government, but its programme did not receive the parliamentary support which led to a motion of rejection and establishment of the leftist government led by PS. This constellation of power remained unchallenged in the 2019 elections, which added a

stronger impulse to the claims that Portugal remains the outlier among countries on the European semi-periphery in terms of long-term effect of anti-austerity protests on the institutions and the existing party system (De Giorgi and Santana-Pereira 2021). However, after the COVID-19 crisis, the Portuguese political scene started to resemble the one we have seen in 2019 in Spain. Snap elections were held in January 2022, after BE and Partido Comunista Portugues did not support the budget proposed by PS. The collaboration on the left that was maintained since 2015 did not survive the period of the economic growth in which successful recovery was primarily seen by the public as success of PS which led to deterioration of the relationship among the coalition partners. In the 2022 elections, PS obtained a relative majority, but BE went from the third strongest party to the sixth position. Such a bad result of the left was accentuated by the enormous success of the far right Chega and right Initiativa Liberal.

4.5. Croatia and Serbia

In the context of post-socialist countries (Musić 2013, Pleyers and Sava 2015), Croatia and Serbia were described (Beissinger and Sasse 2014) as one of the most notable exceptions from the assumption that numerous and sizable protests were going to happen if a given country was in recession. However, cycles of anti-austerity protests in both countries have not been studied in depth. Beissinger and Sasse (2014) assumed that citizens remained relatively calm and offered little to no resistance to the introduction of austerity measures but offered no conclusive answers to the question why an anti-austerity cycle of contention did not occur as it did elsewhere. This chapter explores this question by analysing PEA data.

Until 1991, Croatia and Serbia were part of the same country and shared the socialist political and economic system. After the breakup of Yugoslavia their paths diverged as they experienced different processes and timings of both democratic and economic transformations. Regardless of these differences, both countries went through transformation under right-wing nationalist leadership. To battle the 2008 crisis austerity measures were imposed to both countries by supranational institutions (see Chapter 3 for overview). However, Croatia opted mostly for tax increases (Nikolić et al 2017) and changes in labour law (Franičević 2011), while Serbia tried to cut expenditure levels (Nikolić et al 2017).

In the literature on protest participation, and social movements in general, both countries were described as typical examples of countries recording low popular participation in collective actions, while exhibiting high proliferation of NGOs and professionalisation of actors in the field of contentious politics (Petrova and Tarrow 2007, Bilić and Stubbs 2015).

My contribution to literature is threefold. I showcase that in both countries the protest dynamics was heavily influenced by consequences of political and economic changes in the "transition period". Second, protests directly addressing specific austerity measures were indeed relatively scarce in both countries. However, the existence of movements for free public education, in defence of labour rights, and for the "right to the city" challenges the notion about "quietism" in the age of austerity. These movements managed to connect specific grievances to the universal fight against the state of permanent austerity simultaneously addressing the lack of "real" democracy, inequality of chances, and corruption of neoliberal system. In these movements, the characteristics of Kerbo's (1982) movements of affluence and movements of crisis overlapped.

The Serbian cycle of contention differs primarily from the Croatian one in the higher frequency of protests that were organised by labour unions addressing labour-related issues and articulating workers' grievances. In Serbia anti-austerity contention led to realignment of pre-existing alliances among labour unions and leftist NGOs, while in Croatia protests from the observed period left an important mark on the political system by enabling some of their initiators to establish political parties which would gain significant electoral success in the short span of time. Finally, the paper shows that the last cycle of contention in these countries partially dismantles what were described as characteristics of post-socialist collective action (Piotrowski 2015) which is primarily seen in the appearance of nation-wide protest campaigns, and in the emergence of new actors who do not shy away from expressing that they pertain to the ideological left.

4.5.1. Theoretical framework

In the literature on protest participation, and social movements in general, Croatia and Serbia were described as typical examples of countries recording low popular participation in collective actions, while exhibiting high proliferation of NGOs and professionalisation of actors in the field of contentious politics (Petrova and Tarrow 2007, Bilić and Stubbs 2015). The research on protest participation and on social movements in general has predominantly studied Central and South-eastern post-socialist countries through the lenses of Western movements and explored how the movements in the "East" diverge from the "universal" patterns (Gagyi 2015, Piotrowski 2015).

In her critique of that approach Gagyi (2015) claims that after 1990 the literature on social movement in post-socialist countries served only to contribute to the broader literature on transition and democratisation. In the process, two main conflicts - which were used in upcoming years as a theoretical framework to explain collective action in these countries - arose. First, the conflict between theories of democratisation which assumed that transition to democracy would lead to the broader citizens' participation in decision making, and between theories which accentuated that economic transition which was guided by neoliberal policies served as a "pacifier" of losers and opponents of transition, particularly labour and lower income groups (Przeworski 1991, Ekiert and Kubik 1998, Greskovits 1998). Second conflict was highlighting that these societies, on the one hand, were characterised by low popular participation, and simultaneous proliferation of civil society organisation which led to the often-reproduced hypotheses about the "professionalisation" of collective action (Petrova and Tarrow 2007, Piotrowski 2015).

Piotrowski (2015) summarised characteristics of collective action in post-socialist countries in six points. He claimed that the last 30 years of collective action demonstrated that mobilisation level was constantly low apart from cases when rightist organisations and/or parties were the main mobilisers. Second, the mobilisation had local character, and nation-wide campaigns which relate local problems with universal issues were rare. Consequently, the mobilisation was limited to big cities, mostly to the capitals. Partially, that was due to the high level of professionalisation of some collective actors and their move from grass-root movements to organisations dependent on grants. On the other hand, a handful of existing grass-root movements were strongly connected to subcultures which limited broader appeal of movements and limited them within their environment without creating an incentive to cooperate with other stronger actors and pursue policy

changes. Finally, strong leftist actors, both in realms of institutional and contentious politics, were non-existent because being identified as "leftist" still bears anti-communist sentiment.

I proceed with the analysis as follows. First, I present the change in levels of mobilisation over time, then I proceed to discuss the evolution of the features of protest events – demands and repertoires during the Great Recession.

4.5.2. Levels of mobilisation

In the covered period, 2800 protest events were recorded in Croatia, and 2870 events in Serbia. Table 4.2. shows that average number of events, as well as average number of participants in the observed period are higher in Serbia than in Croatia. However, the proportion of mobilised population is slightly higher in Croatia in the period of Great Recession and after 2015.

	Croatia			Serbia		
	Number of events	**Number of participants**	**Proportion of mobilised population**	**Number of events**	**Number of participants**	**Proportion of mobilised population**
Average 2000-2017	155,56	89.206,06	2,08%	160,00	316.274,11	4,40%
Before 2008	186,13	83.656,25	1,95%	225,38	570.121,88	7,93%
2008-2015	136,25	89.998,88	2,10%	94,38	105.927,38	1,47%
After 2015	110,50	108.234,00	2,53%	161,00	142.270,00	1,98%

Table 4.2. Level of protest mobilisation in Croatia and Serbia. Source: Disobedient Democracy Dataset (Dolenec et al 2023, forthcoming)

Significantly higher proportion of mobilised population in the early 2000s in Serbia is easily explained by mobilisations that happened in 2000 and 2001 - almost 30% of citizens participated in two general strikes, and protests related to October 5 events in which president Slobodan Milošević was overthrown from the power after two decades following massive demonstrations organised by labour unions, students' associations and opposition parties, and non-governmental organisations. The magnitude of these events in comparison to other events in the observed period is visible in Figure 4.6.

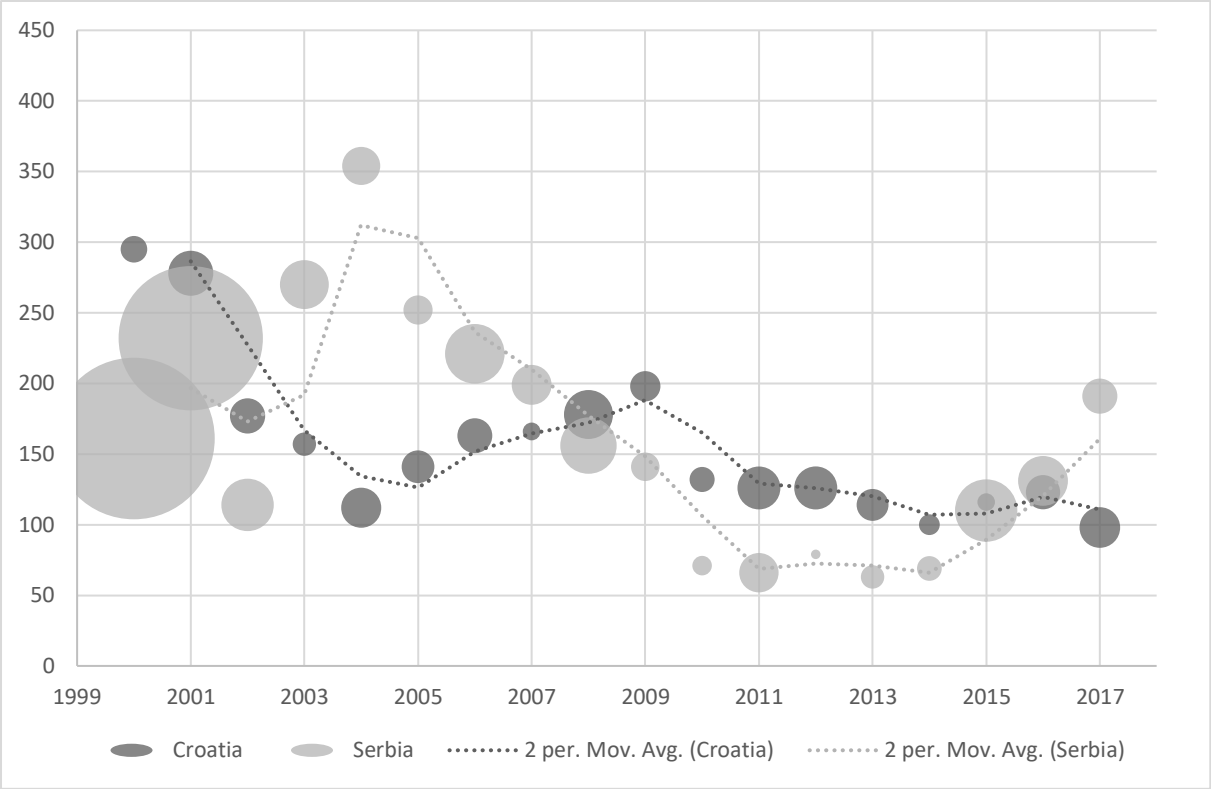

Figure 4.6. Protest magnitude in Croatia and Serbia, moving average. Source: Disobedient Democracy Dataset (Dolenec et al 2023, forthcoming)

The highest number of protests was recorded in Croatia in 2000 and 2001. This period was deeply marked by workers' mobilisations and dissatisfaction with the consequences of the political and economic changes in the 1990s (see chapter 3). Due to data limitations, it is difficult to assess if they represented continuation of mobilisations from the late 1990s (Grdešić 2008), but participants' demands show that their nature was unaltered. They were demanding revision of privatisation processes and payment of unpaid wages and/or severance pay, while simultaneously examining the role of previous and incumbent governments in shielding those responsible for criminal activities during the period of privatisation.

At the same time, associations of war veterans organised numerous multi-local demonstrations to condemn the government's cooperation with the Hague tribunal in the

investigation and prosecution of the crimes committed during the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s. The veterans' associations were the main challengers to the new centre-left government. Although their protests concentrated on the protection of their fellow comrades-in-arms or commanders from judicial prosecution, they used their social capital to destabilise the government, to maintain status quo among political and social elites established in the nineties, and to keep their social benefits untacked. Their ultimate objective was the return of the Croatian Democratic Union to power.

Starting from 2003, economic and social indicators started to improve, and political parties, employers, labour unions and civil society came to a consensus that achieving European integration should be the main priority. The relative economic and social stability was reflected in the decline of protest activities. The higher number of participants and events in 2008 represents the only outlier in the period but is mostly explained by a several days long strike in public services and numerous smaller strikes in factories around the country and among farmers.[8] Additionally, labour unions of public sector employees organised a massive protest in Zagreb demanding "radical change in economic and social policies" which was attended by more than 50,000 participants.

The number of protests peaked in 2009 when versatile, numerous, and dispersed protest actions happened. The citizens mobilised against first particular legislations that were created to tackle the first signs of economic crisis, but also rebelled against commercialisation of higher education, and against proposed urbanistic solutions in Zagreb and other cities. 2011 marked the beginning of protests organised by citizen

[8] As official reports on the numbers of strikers are non-existent in Croatia and Serbia, media outlets usually report numbers provided by unions. There is a possibility that numbers are inflated by organisers. The implications for analysis are obvious - in years when multi-sector, multi-day or general strikes are recorded, an overestimated number of participants is plausible

initiatives which would later be regarded as only anti-austerity protests.

The post-2015 rise in the average number of participants reflects two large mobilisations organised by a broad network of civil organisations which advocated for school curriculum reform: one in 2016, and the second one in 2017.

The first two years of the observed period in Serbia were profoundly shaped by mass mobilisation against the crumbling regime of Slobodan Milošević. Although the number of events in this year was not particularly high compared to other years (see Figure 4.6.), the cumulative number of event participants for 2000, reaching beyond 2 million people, clearly points to the intensity of contention. The protests leading to Milošević's overthrow started with strikes of miners at the Kolubara mines. People from different parts of the country came to Belgrade to participate in the main protest event held on 5th October, when citizens marched on parliament and public broadcasting station, institutions that symbolised the repressive nature of Milošević's regime. The one-day event led to his resignation in the following days. The proportion of citizens which participated in protest events remained high in 2001, but an overwhelming majority of these was mobilised through two events: an hour-long workers' "warning strike" in factories around the country, and a general strike in October 2001.

Looking at the number of protests in the beginning of 2000s, it can be observed that these years were more contentious than the period after 2008. These mobilisations were in the first place tied to contention against the regime. They also addressed the regime's incapability to solve economic problems, especially fluctuation of prices of goods and utilities, which led to serious endangering of workers and pensioners' rights.

Smaller mobilisation waves were observable in 2006 and 2008. Both of these peaks were mobilisations led by rightist nationalist organisations and parties. The participants challenged the independence of Kosovo and Montenegro and criticised the government's cooperation with the Hague tribunal.

The slight rise in the rate of mobilised population in 2011 and 2015 overlapped in timing with the introduction of "rescue packages" which aimed to contain the economic crisis. These protests were predominantly related to workers' rights, cuts in salaries, prices of goods and utilities, and retirement issues. However, it has to be noted that in the period from 2010 to 2014 the smallest number of protests in the 18 years period was recorded. Almost all of them were organised by students, pupils, workers and labour unions and addressed problems of poor educational services, commercialisation of public (higher) education, and endangered and decaying workers' rights.

2016 and 2017 were both marked by two particular protest mobilisations. In 2016, the initiative "Don't Let Belgrade D(r)own!" mobilised the majority of all recorded protest event participants, and in 2017 a significant proportion of protest event participants was mobilised in the protest campaign called "Against dictatorship", which emerged as an immediate reaction to the victory of Aleksandar Vučić in the 2017 presidential elections and the related accusations of electoral fraud.

4.5.3. Demands – nature and salience

In the upcoming part, by looking closer into the structure of demands I aim to see what the main mobilisers behind the protest events in the anti-austerity period were. Figure 4.7. demonstrates that, although they were significantly present throughout the period, economic demands do not make the largest share in the total number of recorded demands in Croatia. Only in 2009, 2012 and 2013 they surpassed 50% of all demands. The larger share of economic demands in 2009 can be explained by two main reasons. First, the Croatian government introduced new taxation, raised the rate of value-added tax, cut spending in ministries and state companies, and revoked policies enabling free transportation and textbooks for pupils (Franičević 2011). Labour unions led protests against these measures, highlighting that they were immoral and inadequate responses to the economic situation. At the same time, workers and farmers were rebelling against the state's tendency to halt subsidies and to privatise the last remaining state-owned companies. Second, the emergence of a student movement that addressed problems of commercialisation of higher education (Dolenec and Doolan 2013) emerged. Students occupied the universities, and organised marches and sit-ins. Parents, workers, professors, and activists joined their actions. The government seemed to be aware of the mobilisation potential students had. Balković (2014) showed that Croatians prioritised governmental spending on public education over other types of social spending. If citizens assumed that cuts were going to affect the part of the welfare state which they cared most about, they would be likely to engage in contentious actions to defend the existing arrangements. Thus, it can be said that the government wanted to prevent student protests from spreading to broader social groups whose discontent would be triggered by cuts in sectors everyone benefited from once in their lifetime. By fulfilling some of the

student demands, the government used very well documented tactics to pacify a rebellious portion of society, and possibly prevented bursts of broader dissatisfaction. The main slogans the movement was using were "One World, One Struggle" and "Knowledge is not a Commodity" which related specific problems within Croatian higher education with universal topics such as lack of "real" democracy, inequality of chances, and corruption of the dominant neoliberal system. Insights from PEA data about the nature of the movement confirm Štiks and Horvat's (2014) argument that it could be interpreted as the first anti-austerity movement in Croatia.

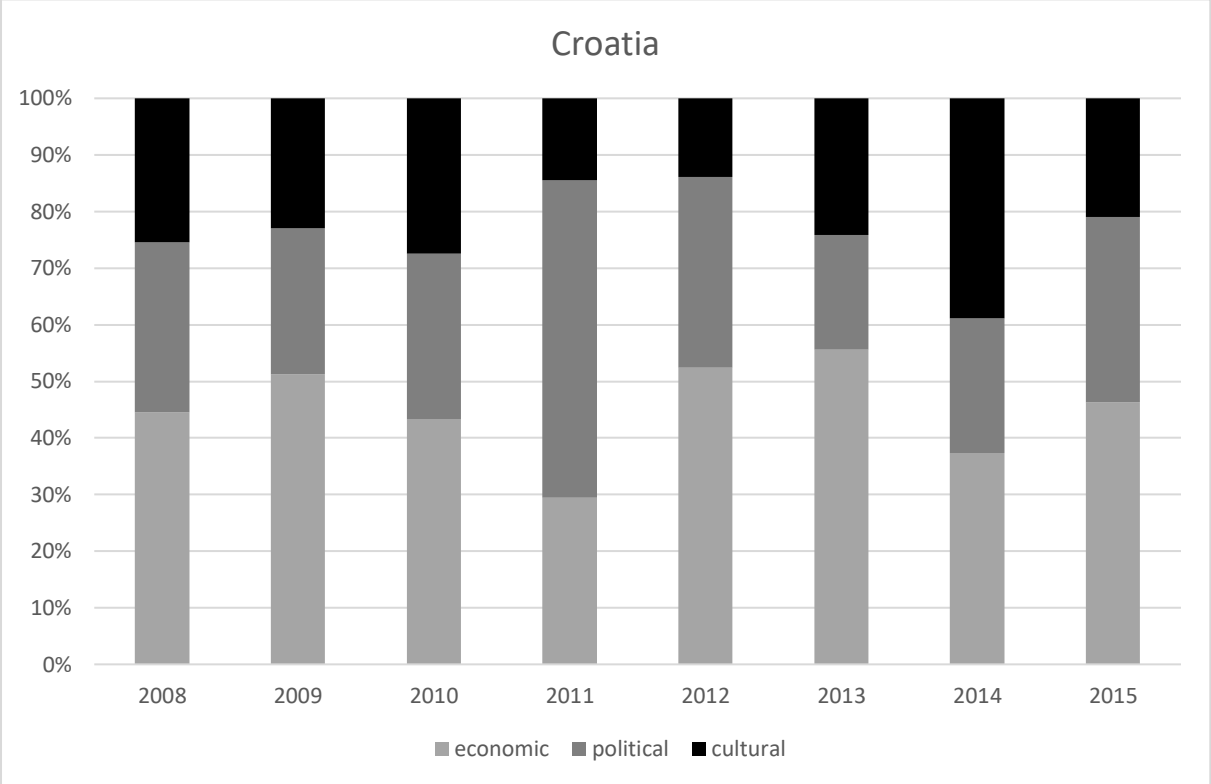

Figure 4.7. Share of economic, political and cultural demands in total number of recorded demands in Croatia. Source: Disobedient Democracy Dataset (Dolenec et al 2023, forthcoming)

Dominance of political demands is observed in 2011, a year which marked the beginning of protests organised by citizen initiatives which share some features of anti-austerity protests that occurred in Spain and Portugal. The government passed the harsh

programme for economic recovery in 2010. However, the 2011 wave of discontent started only with protests of war veterans, rightist organisations and football fans against the government and its policies – those aiming to tackle effects of the crisis included. Their demands were not communicated clearly, and it seemed that they were only questioning the HDZ government's capacity to govern.

These protests were an introduction to a sequence of events organised by the citizen initiative which managed to communicate grievances in a more comprehensive way. Because they were the first to rely on Facebook to mobilise people, the protests became known as Facebook protests. In months to follow they organised fourteen marches through Zagreb, as well as demonstrations in various cities. The number of citizens who attended marches and related events varied significantly on a daily basis. The highest recorded number of participants – over 20 000 of them – was recorded during the protest on March 5th.

Their claims were amalgamations of political, economic and cultural demands. Protesters were addressing economic and social situations while indicating dissatisfaction with the dominant capitalist system and social inequality it produces. Two political demands were repeated continuously: fight against corruption and clientelism. In a sphere of cultural demands, the clear distinction existed between two currents among protesters. On the one hand, there were calls for restoration of "moral principles" and "traditional values", while leftist branch kept expressing distrust in the church, which led to quarrels with right oriented protesters over the presence of religious symbols. The general anti-EU feeling was omnipresent, but again, different views were clashing: some participants were

strongly oriented against Croatia entering the EU, while others were pro-EU but did not agree with solutions the EU offered during the crisis.

Cultural demands were salient in the beginning of the recession period, when they were mostly represented in the movement formed around ecological activists who opposed redevelopment of the historical centre in Zagreb. In 2012 and 2013 ideological divisions between progressive left and traditional right became prominent and mobilised over 100,000 people during that period mainly about the issue of definition of marriage which is mirrored in the higher share of protests with the cultural demands in 2013. The peak of presence of cultural demands was observed in 2014 and is based in reintroduction of politics of history into mainstream daily politics. The rightist civil organisations started campaign of historical revisionism, while veteran organisations started an encampment on the premises of Ministry of Veteran Affairs with a goal of perseverance of memory of their role in Homeland war, and more importantly – they asked the minister and his associates to step down because the centre-left government introduced cuts in their benefits. The encampment lasted 555 days and turned into the longest lasting recorded event in the PEA dataset. Veterans decided to end the protest only after centre-right HDZ and their coalition partners came into power at the end of 2015.

The PEA data for Serbia shows the clear dominance of economic demands throughout the 2008-2015 period. However, protests expressing these demands have to be seen in the lights of unprecedented levels of contention in the early 2000s. The governments that followed the demise of Milošević did not manage to fulfil promises of better living standards, and of a stable and growing economy. Dismissals which were part of privatisation processes were still happening in the second decade of 2000s accompanied

by the anticipation of the newest IMF's recommendations to tackle economic decline (Nikolić et al 2017).

The labour unions of public sector employees organised marches in Belgrade in March 2011, first participants were education workers, which were later joined by health care professionals and members of judiciary. The education workers, as well as workers in various factories, held strikes on various occasions during the spring. They were joined by farmer strikes in the northern province of Vojvodina where farmers blocked roads and border crossings with Croatia and Hungary for days, aiming on disrupting trade among the countries. The workers' marches and strikes were supported by large national union federations as well as smaller unions, leftist NGOs and opposition parties. Despite not achieving their goals, that cooperation led to smaller joint mobilisations in upcoming years.

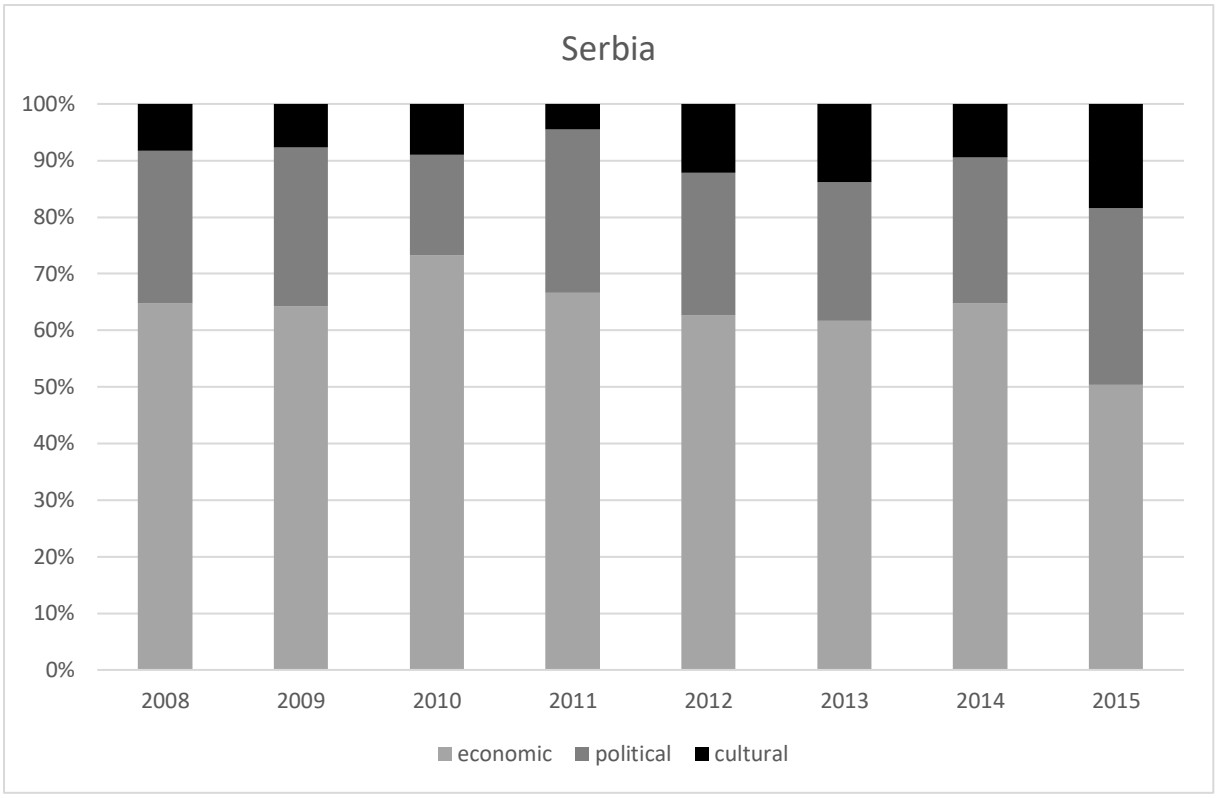

Figure 4.8. Share of economic, political and cultural demands in total number of recorded demands in Serbia. Source: Disobedient Democracy Dataset (Dolenec et al 2023, forthcoming)

When the share of political demands was on the rise, that was predominantly triggered by protests organised by rightist nationalist organisations and parties which fought against the independence of Kosovo and criticised the government's cooperation with the International Court of Justice in the Hague. A smaller portion of all recorded political demands were demands for the government to step down which were made by the labour unions in the midst of their various mobilisations. Additionally, the minimal part of these demands is targeting corruption and attempts of Vučić's regime to, through electoral engineering and clientelist practices, capture the state.

The rise in the number of protests with expressed cultural demands visible in 2015 is explained by the birth of the Don't let Belgrade D(r)own movement. The beginnings of the

movement could be traced to 2011 when organisations from the independent cultural scene and anarchist collectives started to use abandoned urban spaces for different communal actions in which they problematized opaque privatisation of public spaces across Belgrade. From 2014 onwards, Don't Let Belgrade D(r)own), organised several protests and brought together activists and professionals from numerous activist groups, NGOs, and professional urbanist organisations. The primary target of their actions was opposition to a developmental project on the Belgrade waterfront. In 2016 they organised a large-scale series of protests, with over 20 000 people participating on a daily basis. The issue of urban development became a central symbol of corrupt and captured state institutions and managed to mobilise the broader public over the shared goal for the first time since the overthrow of Milošević.

4.5.4. Methods – innovation and disruptiveness

As it was mentioned earlier, one of the main novelties that is a characteristic for a new cycle of contention is the innovation in methods or repertoire of collective action. To check if the claim can be confirmed for the period of Great Recession in these two countries, in the continuation I delve into the composition of the methods recorded in the PEA dataset.

In the case of Croatia, there is a clear predominance of conventional methods. 2008, 2011 and 2014 show a slight variation from that pattern. In the case of 2008, these were the first actions by "The Right to the City" movement which opposed a developmental project in downtown Zagreb. Protestors used the most diverse repertoire of action social

movements had ever used before in Croatia, ranging from demonstrations, occupations, sit-ins to symbolic and theatrical performances. Dolenec et al (2017) note that this broad range of action repertoire, especially occupation of public space, predates similar strategies used in Indignados protests and in "Occupy" movements. Additionally, the movement represented an important instance of cooperation between environmental organisations, organisations from the independent cultural scene, student organisations, unions, workers and grassroots initiatives whose cooperation evolved and grown in capacity since 2000 (Dolenec et al 2017) which eventually led to the establishment of political platforms "Zagreb je naš" (Zagreb is Ours) and "Možemo" (We can). The platforms, heavily inspired by ideas and political programmes of Podemos and En Comú, have since grown into important political actors on local and national level which currently have a major of Zagreb coming from its ranks and holds majority in Zagreb's city assembly, while being the 3rd most popular party nationwide in 2022.

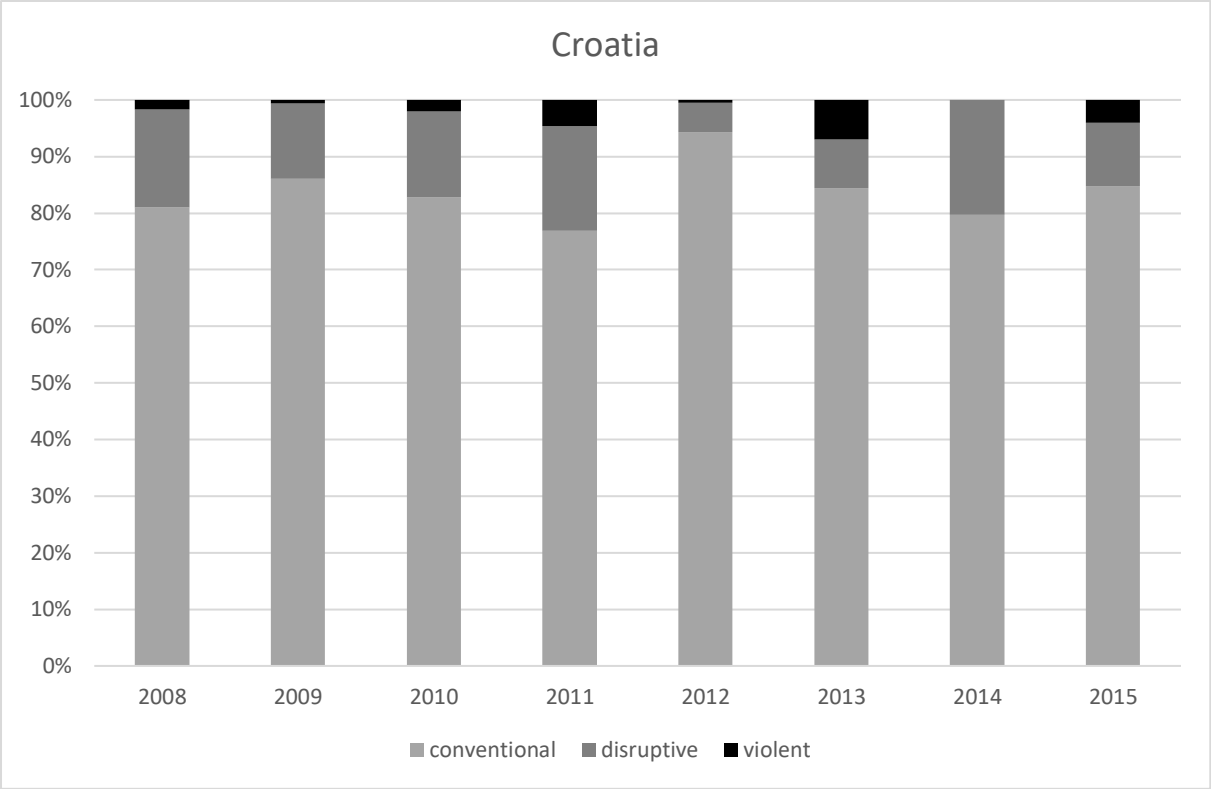

Figure 4.9. Share of conventional, disruptive and violent methods in total number of reported methods in Croatia. Source: Disobedient Democracy Dataset (Dolenec et al 2023, forthcoming)

The rise in the number of disruptive and violent protests in the second part of the cycle is observed due to the aforementioned events – Facebook protests in 2011 and veteran encampment in 2014 and 2015. While veterans primarily used repertoires of occupation of the public space and marches on the special occasions, Facebook protests were remembered by marches around Zagreb. However, protesters were not only visiting governmental institutions, headquarters of the main political parties, and banks, but also politicians' residences where they would either bang pots or just shout to disturb and insult members of politicians' households – both strategies that were also used in the Spanish anti-austerity protests.

In the years following these protests some of the actors involved in their organisation became prominent political actors. Already in the same April, one of initiators of the

protests, Ivan Pernar, established a political party - at the time called *Savez za promjene* (Alliance for Change). Its popularity gradually started to rise due to the party activists' well-mediatized participation in anti-eviction activism which led to the party's rebranding as *Živi zid* (Human Shield) in August 2014. The 2015 presidential and parliamentary elections were marked by unforeseen success of *Živi zid*. One of their most renowned activists, Ivan Vilibor Sinčić, had announced he would run for president. Despite him entering the race as an underdog, he placed third in the first round. This venture and anti-eviction activities led to national recognition for the party which was reflected in the 2015 elections. The party secured one parliamentary seat. In the 2016 snap elections, *Živi zid* formed a coalition with several other actors and won 8 seats. At the time the success signalled that the party became a relevant political actor which had undergone through transformation from an activist organisation to a political party. In that sense it could be regarded as one of new parties which have emerged after the crisis and disrupted the existing party system by taking a significant portion of voters from multiple established parties. However, unclear political positions and continuous fights among leaders of the party lead to its eventual decline and in the parliamentary elections in 2020, the party lost all of their seats.

In Serbia, the average share of conventional methods in the total number of recorded methods is slightly lower than in Croatia. It has to be noted that the main difference in usage of conventional methods is the significantly higher rate of strikes in the Serbian case, while Croatian protests in the observed period were mostly demonstrations. This finding resembles the one in the Spanish and Portuguese case, and echoes what Dolenec and her colleagues (2021) describe as a substantial mobilisation capacity of unions of public sector that is mostly reflected in a state-wide strike (sometimes) across sectors.

Comparatively, unions, especially those in the private sector, in Serbia have a stronger protest profile and a lower policy impact than in Croatia (Dolenec et al 2021) which might explain why they do not abstain from usage of more disruptive and violent methods as explained in the next paragraph.

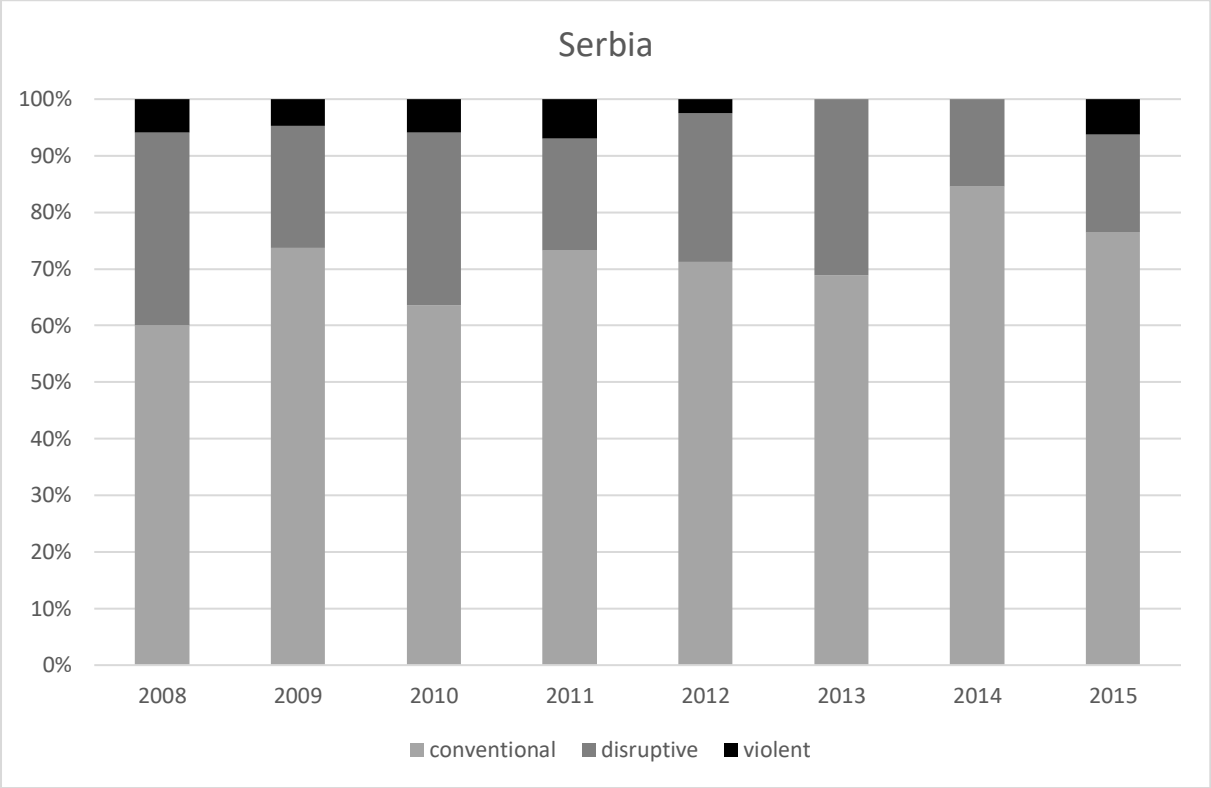

Figure 4.10. Share of conventional, disruptive and violent methods in total number of reported methods in Serbia. Source: Disobedient Democracy Dataset (Dolenec et al 2023, forthcoming)

The higher share of disruptive and violent methods in the Serbian case is present mainly due to the practice of agricultural workers and labour unions in industry to use heavy machinery to obstruct main roads and traffic routes to provoke a stoppage in production and transport of goods. Obstructions of roads were mostly recorded in the areas close to the borders with Croatia and Hungary and in railroad centres in the middle of Serbia. Additional specificity of Serbian context is often usage of hunger strikes, especially among

workers who have used all legal elements to obtain the salaries they have not received after privatisation or disappearance of factories they have been working in. This finding could signal that workers not only do not trust in the efficiency of the judiciary, but that they do not have any allies among other collective action actors. As they were lacking resources for a nation-wide campaign, they were relying on the resources they had, and with them tried to achieve the most disruptive effect that would be felt throughout the country.

4.5.5. Instead of conclusion – influence of contentious politics on institutional politics in the shadow of the Great Recession

The analysis of the contentious politics in the last two decades demonstrated that the dynamics of contention in Croatia and Serbia is influenced by long-term effects of the so-called 'transition period' in the 1990s. The opportunity to challenge the existing political alignments during the short period of economic growth and political stability in the early 2000s did not happen. The findings from PEA data go in line with theories claiming that the national institutions' specificities serve as predictors of protest dynamics.

In Croatia, the beginning of the 2000s was marked by workers' mobilisations and dissatisfaction with the consequences of the political and economic changes in the 1990s. Only later in 2000s, in the times of relative economic stability, labour unions advocated better working conditions and started questioning policy changes. That being said, workers' protests can be seen as the only outlier in the usually obedient protest arena in the first part of 2000s.

In Serbia, late transition and relatively unstable political and unfavourable social environment throughout the 2000s has seen periods of contention provoked by nationalism and workers' grievances which had accumulated during Milošević's regime. Political elites had seen compliance with neoliberal policies as a road to economic growth, while NGOs followed recommendations of their grant givers and had not confronted elites unless topics were in the realms of identity politics.

Based on knowledge regarding protests in the 1990s and in years preceding the crisis, it could be assumed that no matter how harsh austerity measures, a significant share of the population would remain pacified as long as there is no change in existing welfare arrangements. Regardless, in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis challengers to the status *quo* did appear and it can be said that the post-2008 cycle of contention happened. The analysis showed that protests directly addressing austerity measures were connected mostly with specific workers' grievances. The student protests and "The Right to the City" movement managed to connect specific grievances with universal ones. They addressed democratic deficit and corrupt dominant neoliberal system and social inequalities it accentuates and perpetuates. At the same time, they preceded so-called Facebook protests in formulating and expressing socio-economic grievances. These movements were the first ones in Croatia to have articulated the anti-systemic sentiment by criticising neoliberalism and austerity. Due to their strong organisational structure and abundance of resources in terms of participation and activists' "know-how", these movements resemble Kerbo's (1982) movements of affluence. On the other hand, the Facebook protests lacked organisational structure and continuous engagement. They were motivated mainly by the general dissatisfaction with corrupted elites and a sense of not

being represented. In that sense, they can be seen as corresponding to Kerbo's (1982) movements of crisis. The common feeling of dissatisfaction brought together people of different ideological backgrounds which in a longer term prevented the movement's persistence and cohesive demands making. Additionally, the Facebook protests lacked resources and organisational structure which would help to articulate grievances.

However, protests from this period left an important mark on Croatian political system – they had helped some of their initiators to establish an anti-system political party which would gain significant electoral success in just a few years' time. Although the success of Živi Zid was short-lived, it shook the idea of a strictly bipartisan political system by opening space for the new challengers, both from the right and left, who managed to enter the institutional arena. A progressive-green municipalist platform "Zagreb je naš - Možemo", a product of the experience of network-building the activists had during "The Right to the City campaign", has since become a relevant political actor on local and national level with a major of Zagreb coming from their ranks and majority in Zagreb's city assembly pertaining to the platform, while being the third most popular party nationwide.

In Serbia, this type of protests started only in 2017. Same as in Croatia the movement was formed on the grounds of workers and students' protests and using the organisational structures from the fight against reckless urbanisation and degradation of the public space. The 2017 protests opened a space for a new period of regime confrontation and enabled different actors to try to cooperate in formulation and expression of dissatisfaction with dominant socio-economic discourse. In 2022, the members of the collective Don't let Belgrade D(r)own, openly pointed out to the electoral success of

Zagreb je naš - Možemo in Croatia as their main influence in a campaign to enter the institutional arena[9]. They challenged the local elections in Belgrade and managed for the first time to cross the threshold and win 11% of the votes which secured them 13 seats. However, due to the extremely closed political opportunity structure in Serbia, the collective is still restricted to the local politics and it is hard to believe that they will be able to contest the Vučić's regime in the near future.

In a nutshell, some characteristics of post-socialist collective action as seen by Piotrowski (2015) managed to be partially disrupted during the period of the Great Recession. The protests were not exclusively limited to local issues as reflected in the appearance of nation-wide protest campaigns that mobilised citizens around different issues from political, economic, and cultural spheres, and in the emergence of new actors who do not shy away from expressing that they pertain to what could probably be labelled as a radical left.

The anti-austerity cycle was not only fuelled by crisis and austerity measures that followed, but also by socio-economic grievances which accumulated in previous periods, but which were omitted from the political mainstream due to lack of actors and possibilities to represent them.

[9] They referenced the influence of "Možemo!" (We Can!) not only in the programme, or by gathering experience from activists from Zagreb, but also by competing under the name "Moramo!" which means "We have to!"

4.6. Conclusion

The chapter has engaged in exploration of the political and institutional factors which provide a possible explanation for cross-national variations in the nature of anti-austerity cycles of contention on the European semi-periphery. Using the novel dataset based on news reports on protest events in the 18 years long time period, it showed that the characteristics of the anti-austerity cycles in each of the examined countries depended on the existing patterns of contentious politics, as well as on the openness of the political system. The demands expressed in this cycle, and the methods used to articulate them reflected the social problems deeply rooted in the particular society. The movements formed in the period, managed to connect local grievances with the globally articulated claims against the capitalist system, and the influence of the supranational institutions. They also signalled that the implemented austerity measures led to the further deterioration of the standard of living, the buying power, and of the accessibility and quality of public services.

The cases of Portugal and Spain exhibit divergent outcomes in terms of the nature of contentious cycles, but also in their political outcomes. The national cycles mirrored each other until early 2011, both in the aspect of employed repertoires and in demands protestors conveyed. Subsequently in Spain, protestors in the events addressing both socio-economic grievances and anti-systemic sentiment, used innovative, and predominantly disruptive, repertoire. In the Portuguese case, during the whole cycle, the conventional repertoire dominated over the disruptive one. The employment of conventional methods went hand in hand with the nature of expressed demands.

Although protestors, the same as in Spain, recognised the fallacy of capitalism and democracy, they limited their demands to opposing the austerity policies to prevent further deterioration of the welfare state, commodification of public services, and liberalisation of workers' rights. The Portuguese protests were not directed against the system as such. Quite contrary, the participants highlighted that the progressive heritage of the Carnation revolution, reflected in a generous welfare state and in a stable political system, should be protected.

In both cases, choices of repertoire and dominant topics signalised a road both institutional and contentious politics would take upon the demobilisation of anti-austerity cycles of contention. While in Spain the reconfiguration of the party system happened subsequently, the main outcome of mobilisations in Portugal was the building of new alliances among civil society, labour unions and leftist political parties.

In Croatia and Serbia, the protests directly addressing austerity measures were rare, however they were expressed in relation with other specific protests – mobilisations of workers in particular industries, the student protests, protests against uncontrolled urban redevelopment etc. When it comes to the methods used in these protests, the higher share of disruptive and violent protests was recorded in Serbia, where they were tied specifically to the issues in the agriculture and industry. The workers, when left without any other institutional paths to protect or demand their rights, were using road blockages and hunger strikes as the very last means to provoke the response of the authorities.

Similar as in Spain, protests left an important mark on the Croatian political system – they had helped some of their initiators to establish an anti-system political party which would

gain significant electoral success in just a few years' time and which challenged the dominant bipartisan structure of party competition. In Serbia, the regime confrontation started only recently. The most visible change it brought was enabling and empowering cooperation among different, and until recently, marginal left actors. Together they have tried to formulate and express dissatisfaction with the dominant socio-economic discourse and present themselves as the most serious opposition to the Vučić regime.

This chapter has two main contributions. First, the comparison between the cases underlines the necessity to observe particular national contexts as separate systems of contention. Even when pairs of countries exhibit similar historical trajectories and contentious politics patterns, and when similar policies are introduced almost simultaneously, the citizens' contentious responses seem to be different. Second, as seen in the example of the Spanish contentious cycle, in some countries, despite the observed rise in the occurrence of protest events in the times of the strongest economic contraction, a similar increase in the number of participants was not recorded. The longitudinal data for the past two decades showed that the higher proportion of the Spanish population was mobilised in protests during the periods of relative economic stability. In the next chapter I delve into this conundrum and explore if the exposure to the economic shock affects propensity to participate in protests, and if so, whether the effect lasts over time.

Chapter 5: The Effect of Exposure to the Economic Shock on Protest Participation

5.1. Introduction

When exposure to the economic shock leads individuals to protest and when it restrains them from expressing their indignation? When compared to the level of mobilisation in relatively affluent times, in the shadow of the Great Recession of 2008 citizens started to mobilise more often which is best reflected in the rise of the number of recorded protest events (Ortiz et al., 2013). A large body of literature has been dedicated to the exploration of the causal connection between the economic hardship that ensued and the increase in protest participation on the aggregate and individual levels (Beissinger and Sasse, 2014; della Porta, 2015; Giugni and Grasso, 2015; Kern et al., 2015; Kriesi et al., 2020). In Chapter 4 I showed that in some countries, despite the observed rise in the occurrence of protest events, a similar increase in the number of participants was not recorded. This leads us to the conclusion that individual propensity to participate in protest might be determined by a different set of factors than the change in level of mobilisation on the aggregate level.

Traditionally, the political process theory has been stressing the importance of individual and collective resources, opportunities, and framing (McAdam et al., 1996; Tilly, 1978). Although these theories might have been sufficient before, they have proven to be inapt in the times when the economic shock that happened in 2008 matured into still ongoing

economic and political crises. With the rise of the share of protests that have been addressing socio-economic inequality, material security, redistribution, or economic issues in general (Kriesi et al., 2020), the proliferation of work that aimed to re-introduce grievances as a theoretically and empirically important explanatory factor happened.

These studies are reporting inconclusive findings about the effect that grievances produced by the economic shock have on protest participation. Regardless of their scope or applied research design, the studies are divided between the ones stating that economic hardship demobilised citizens (Rüdig and Karyotis, 2014), and those concluding that economic hardship fuels mobilisation (Grasso and Giugni, 2016; Kern et al., 2015; Quaranta, 2016). In the attempts to reconcile diverging findings by offering more nuanced theoretical conceptualisation and new measurements of grievances, recent studies showed that grievances can be multidimensional (Galais and Lorenzini, 2017; Kurer et al., 2019; Muliavka, 2021; Portos García, 2020) and conditioned by available resources and opportunities (Grasso and Giugni, 2016; Kurer et al., 2019). Grievances are the product of dissatisfaction with the personal objective and perceived economic status, and evaluation of the political circumstances. Each of these dimensions can have different attitudinal effects on protest participation (Portos García, 2020). Additionally, the conditioning or moderating effect of resources and opportunities does not affect each of these dimensions equally.

Following up on Bermeo and Bartles (2014), I argue that the individual protest participation was not prompted by the Great Recession itself, but rather by the exposure of particular individuals to subsequently implemented austerity measures. To distinguish the possible effect of the crisis itself from the effect of the economic shock due to exposure

to the austerity measures on the propensity to participate in protests, I follow and test typology of grievances developed by Portos Garcia (2020).

I aim to show that there is a need to distinguish between the objective economic hardship, grievances that are a product of the individual's assessment of their economic situation and prospects, and grievances the citizens developed due to the exposure to the particular political context. The different nature of grievances leads to the difference in the effect they have on the propensity to participate in a protest.

Instead of testing exclusively for the effect resources and political opportunities have on protest participation of economically disadvantaged individuals and individuals affected by the austerity measures, I claim that subjective economic and political grievances can moderate the effect individuals' objective economic situation has on their propensity to participate in protests.

Regardless of the (de)mobilising effect economic shock might have on protest participation, the most relevant issue in assessing its impact is whether the effect endures (Margalit, 2019). So far, studies were failing to do so due to data limitations and reliance on the cross-sectional surveys. The nature of the data is what allows us to explore whether the effect of the economic shock is short-termed, or it endures and matures over the time. The usage of panel data enables the probing of this question as it gives the most reliable measurement of different types of attitudes and their evolution over time (Anduiza et al., 2016).

As my main contribution, I draw on a panel survey from Spain which enables adopting a longitudinal perspective to observe if the effect of the exposure to the economic shock on the propensity to participate in protests lasts over time. Given that the Great Recession in Spain led to the introduction of the harsh austerity measures, the massive mobilisations on the streets, and the change of political system, the country is often considered a paradigmatic case to study the social and political consequences of the Great Recession from different perspectives (Galais and Lorenzini, 2017; Portos García, 2020; Vidal, 2019). The insights from a Spanish survey serve as an illustration which could be extended to other contexts in which implemented austerity measures led to increased poverty and inequality in society, especially among those who were directly affected by the cuts.

The chapter is structured as follows. Theoretical framework and hypotheses stemming from it are presented in the next section. Subsequently, used data is described. The fourth section of the paper presents the results. The final section discusses the relevance of the results and connects them to the existing literature.

5.2. Theoretical framework

The political consequences of economic crises have been studied in the literature extensively. The rich body of literature can be divided into two prominent strands. The first accounts for changes on macro-level and examines the episodes of particular economic transitions and crises, while the second one focuses on the micro-level by examining personal exposure to economic shocks and its connection to individual's

political attitudes, preferences, behaviour and values (Margalit, 2019). The studies about the political consequences of the Great Recession follow the same pattern.

On the one hand, a large body of literature showed that the Great Recession, especially in Southern Europe, has restructured dominant socio-political cleavages, transformed existing political coalitions, and opened space for new challengers (see Chapters 3 and 4 of this dissertation, and eg. Bermeo and Bartels, 2014; Bojar et al., 2022; Bremer et al., 2020; Hernández and Kriesi, 2016; Hutter et al., 2018; Vidal, 2019).

On the other hand, the findings in the second strand of literature clash about the effect that individuals' exposure to economic shock can have on a change in political preferences, as well as on direction and durability of change. In Hirschman's (1970) language, the existing research (for the overview see Margalit, 2019) suggests the existence of different outcomes - some individuals completely "exit" the political sphere, some "voice" their indignation, while others remain "loyal" to the preferences they had before the exposure.

Seeing that the level of protest mobilisation grew in the aftermath of the Great Recession, the change in propensity of individuals to engage in protest participation represents one of attitudinal changes that could be explained by the exposure to economic shock. However, Bermeo and Bartels (2014) argue that citizens' willingness to participate in the protests in the shadow of the Great Recession was not directly prompted by the crisis itself, but rather by the personal exposure to subsequently implemented austerity measures. Citizens felt that these policies only perpetuated general, and consequently, their personal economic uncertainty and therefore mobilised in order to challenge the

policies on the streets. On the aggregate level, effects of austerity measures on protests (Genovese et al., 2016; Ortiz et al., 2013) and different forms of social unrest (Ponticelli and Voth, 2020) had been found, but the literature on how (changes in and structure of) policies affect citizens' behaviour is scarce (Mettler, 2002). The attempts to connect these fields were more characteristic for American political science (Mettler and Soss, 2004) than for European authors (see Kumlin and Stadelmann-Steffen, 2014 for the overview).

According to Mettler and Soss (2004), public policies are expected to influence citizens' behaviour due to four principal reasons. First, individuals affected by a certain policy might become active on related issues as they want to protect or expand benefits granted to them by a policy. Second, some policies contribute to building civic skills needed for dealing effectively with government and for becoming aware of the possibility to make collective decisions. Third, public policies have a key function to (re)distribute resources - by doing so they can supply resources needed for political mobilisation. Lastly, policies influence processes of political learning, and thus create specific patterns of political belief.

The lack of literature that bridges the fields of public policies and political behaviour makes it difficult to identify previously formed arguments about the effect of exposure to austerity measures might have on protest participation. Notwithstanding, Muñoz et al (2014) claim that Mettler and Soss' (2004) general reasoning can be applied to the analysis of the consequences of austerity measures, but that each of their explanations leads to different theoretical expectations which go hand in hand with the well documented two perspectives indicating opposing theoretical expectations regarding political participation of those individuals that experienced an economic shock.

One strain of the literature that can be labelled as the "mobilisation hypothesis" (Schlozman and Verba, 1979) claims that affected citizens will blame the government for their economic status and show their dissatisfaction through the types of political participation that are at their disposal. The Great Recession renewed the interest for the role of economic grievances and economic deprivation as explanations of individuals' propensity to participate in protests (Della Porta, 2015; Giugni and Grasso, 2015; Hetland and Goodwin, 2014). Some studies (Galais and Lorenzini, 2017; Grasso and Giugni, 2016; Kern et al., 2015) reported positive association between grievances and the increase in protest participation in the shadow of the Great Recession.

In the nutshell, for Gurr (1968) grievances represent an outcome of unfavourable economic and political conditions followed by experienced or perceived inequality. Therefore, it is expected that the rising economic deprivation fuels protest participation of those that are personally experiencing the consequences of the policies. As they want to change the existing policies by expressing their discontent immediately, they choose participation in protests over having to wait for the opportunity to vote out the incumbents.

On the other hand, the return of grievances was followed by the return of theories which claim that grievances can demobilise citizens. This strand of literature follows Rosenstone's (1982) famous "withdrawal hypothesis" which argues that due to complex and unfavourable socio-economic and psychological reasons, grievances prevent citizens from participation both in electoral and contentious politics. Researchers found evidence for this hypothesis on both individual and societal level. At the individual level, citizens who struggle in everyday life lack capacities for political engagement (Schussman and

Soule, 2005; Verba et al., 1995). At the societal level, the economic crisis can prevent citizens from participation due to collective experience of disempowerment (Kriesi et al., 2020).

Although theories stressing the importance of individual and collective resources, opportunities and framing (McAdam et al., 1996; Tilly, 1978) might have been sufficient in affluent times, in the times of economic hardship, they can only be a part of the explanation for the changes in propensity to participate in protests. I side with the literature that claims that grievances are theoretically and empirically important concept, especially in the times of rapidly changing economic conditions (Flesher Fominaya, 2017; Galais and Lorenzini, 2017; Grasso and Giugni, 2016; Kern et al., 2015; Kurer et al., 2019; Muliavka, 2021; Portos García, 2020; Rüdig and Karyotis, 2014). Grievances should be seen as a product of exogenous shocks that have attitudinal and behavioural impact on individuals and can be impulses for (de)mobilisation (Kriesi 2012, Snow 2013).

Regardless of the direction of the effect grievances might have on mobilisation, it is challenging to investigate it empirically. The most economic shocks are not assigned at random among the population (Margalit, 2019). In the case of the Great Recession, austerity measures imply a political choice about who should carry the burden of the economic crisis (Muñoz et al., 2014) by experiencing an economic shock as "public policies define the boundaries of the political community" (Mettler and Soss, 2004: 61). The changes in protest participation are expected to happen to individuals pertaining to specific groups of the population - those affected by austerity measures as these policies can be seen as an economic shock that disrupted individuals' quotidian routines, practices and social networks.

Previous research found that individuals depending on public salaries and subsidies (in comparison to the rest of population) increased their political engagement upon being exposed to austerity measures (Muñoz et al., 2014). This finding was confirmed by (Portos García, 2020) who found that living in a household where the highest income comes from a public servant increases chances for protest participation. Studies in the contexts different from the Spanish one showed that individuals who had experience with an austerity measures-affected welfare state are driven to protest not only in the case of being denied social benefits or services, but also if being a welfare recipient (Lorenzini and Giugni, 2015; Quaranta, 2014; Theiss and Kurowska, 2019).

To tackle the ambiguity of these findings in the prospective research, it is important to underline that grievances can be multifaceted and that each of their dimensions can have different attitudinal effect (Galais and Lorenzini, 2017; Kurer et al., 2019; Muliavka, 2021; Portos García, 2020). It is necessary to assess how different dimensions of grievances provoked by the economic shock and their interplay affect protest participation. This endeavour will enable us to explore when the exposure to the economic shock leads to protest and when it restrains individuals from expressing their indignation in that particular manner.

Portos Garcia (2020) suggested a typology of grievances which enables us to empirically examine their complexity. What he calls "objective-material grievances" refers to direct macroeconomic structures that are consequences of the exogenous economic shock and that impact the willingness to participate in protests. At the individual level, the existing literature found that, poor, unemployed, those with part-time contracts and/or

precarious jobs, are prone to protest participation as they perceive it as the only way to challenge their material situation and risk social exclusion and further alienation. Therefore, the first hypothesis (H1) I test is that falling out of the work force and experiencing a decrease in monthly income might make an individual more avid to participate in protests.

As addressed earlier, the dramatic economic shock and deterioration of material conditions were experienced by the individuals affected by the implementation of austerity measures. Therefore, I assume that, as the public sector employees and, indirectly their families, were target of the salary cuts implemented as the part of the austerity policies, it is possible that forming a part of a household that gets the biggest share of the income from the public salary, might lead to becoming more likely to engage in the protest participation (H2.1). Similarly, the public subsidies were cut in the attempt to stabilise the fiscal balance of the country. At the same time, people who lost their jobs or who came to the job market directly from school, became dependent on the shrinking benefits. Thus, becoming a recipient of the public subsidy, might lead to becoming more prone to protest participation (H2.2).

Grievances are not a product only of a change in the objective material conditions, but also of subjective perceptions citizens have about the sources of discontent, hardship and strain (Gurr, 1970; Klandermans, 1997; Snow et al., 1998). Consequently, not only those who experienced the economic shock will become willing to protest more, but also those who perceive relative increase in the levels of deprivation and discontent due to inability to positively change their (or collective's) socioeconomic and political status. Portos García (2020) calls them "subjective-ideational socio economic grievances". They consist

of citizens' attitudes, perceptions on the economic situation and expectations on how the economic situation might change. He distinguishes between egotropic and sociotropic perceptions of the economy where the former describes concerns about self-sufficiency, and the latter about the state of the national economy. I argue that sociotropic perceptions of the economy form a part of political grievances as they clearly take into account the well-being of the entire society, and not only self-interest of the individual.

Based on the literature on relative deprivation theory, the citizens who were exposed to the economic shock due to the implementation of the austerity measures tend to perceive their economic status as unjust in comparison to others who had not to bear the same burden. Suddenly interruption of quotidian routines provoked strong emotional response. To correct injustice, they mobilised to try to reverse their status. It is expected that individuals who experienced a decrease in satisfaction with their economic status might become more likely to participate in protests (H3).

Finally, "subjective-ideational political grievances" (Portos García, 2020) grasp the notion that economic grievances do not form in a vacuum. Their source lies in the broader political contexts and they stem from the political decisions about the content and extent of the policies. Especially in the austerity-ridden contexts, citizens feel there is a mismatch between their policy preferences and policies implemented by the governments. Thus, they might blame the incumbents, but also the political elite in general, for inadequate crisis response, inability to meet citizens demands and to represent them in the institutions. Given that, citizens who decrease the level of satisfaction with the incumbent party and the main opposition party might become more likely to participate in protests (H4.1).

As the policy response of political elites directly impacts the pace of economic recovery, what Portos (2020) sees as a sociotropic perception of concern about the state of economy in a country, should be considered as a part of political grievances. Citizens are motivated to participate in protest events if that enables them to attribute blame about the state of the economy and express political dissatisfaction. Thus, if a citizen becomes less satisfied with the current state of the economy, they might become more likely to engage in protest events (H4.2).

5.3. Selection of variables

To test above formulated hypotheses, I use the data from the ongoing online panel survey conducted by the Democracy, Citizenship and Elections research group at Autonomous University of Barcelona (Anduiza et al 2021). The survey started in November 2010 and it has been conducted repeatedly since then. However, in order to connect it to the discussion on occurrence and characteristics of protest events in the shadow of the Great Recession from Chapter 4, I use the first 8 survey waves covering the period from 2010 to 2016.

The dependent variable is a dummy variable based on the response on the question whether the individual participated in a demonstration in the last six months in each of the waves. If the respondent answered positively, their response is coded as a "yes".

Although the information about other forms of participation (e.g., boycotting, petitioning, contacting a politician or donating money) which are frequently used in studies on non-

electoral participation is available in the panel, they are not used for analysis. They can be perceived as low-cost forms of political participation that do not call for profound investment of time and material resources. They also do not potentially endanger an individual's wellbeing as participation in demonstrations does. From the methodological point of view, if used to build a participation index, they tend to add the noise to the dependent variable and undermine the relevance of demonstrations.

Given the lack of questions about the specific repertoires, such as marches, sit-ins, and occupations, which are perceived as quintessentially related to the anti-austerity cycles of contention (Romanos, 2014; Romanos and Sádaba, 2022), a participation in a demonstration is accepted as a proxy for a participation in any other type of protest event (Galais and Lorenzini, 2017) that is not a strike. Albeit the strikes were of particular importance for the Spanish anti-austerity cycle of contention as they served as events in which new and old actors converged (Carvalho, 2019; Portos and Carvalho, 2022; Portos García, 2020; Romanos and Sádaba, 2022), I argue that propensity for participation in strikes has different logic than the participation in demonstrations, and therefore I do not include it in the analysis.

For predictors of the respondent's objective economic situation (H1), I use a 10-point indicator for the level of personal income. 0 represents respondents with the lowest monthly income, the one lower than 300 euros per month, while 10 represents those with the highest income – 6000 euros per month and higher. Apart from this indicator, I use a variable grasping the information about citizens' current job status. A dummy variable is created in order to distinguish unemployed respondents, respondents who are still

students, or who work without remuneration, from those who are working and receive the salary.

To test the effect of the exposure to the economic shock due to introduction of austerity measures (H2), I use two dummies: one that shows whether the person is receiving any type of public subsidy or not, and another that takes into account if the highest earning person in the household is a public servant.

As a predictor for captioning perceptions of an individual's subjective economic situation (H3), I use self-reported satisfaction with personal economic situations. Measured on a 1 to 3 scale ("better", "equal", "worse"), this variable captures individual deprivation in a relation to the respondent's assessment of their economic situation from one year ago.

I use three variables as predictors of political grievances. First, to test hypothesis H4.1, I use two variables that grasp the evaluation of the government and the main opposition party. Both are measured on a 5-point scale where 1 is "very good" and 5 is "very bad". Second, to verify hypothesis H4.2, the variable that captures the evaluation of the general economic situation in Spain at the moment of the survey is used. As the previous two variables, it is measured on the same 5-point scale.

Following the literature that shows that left-leaning citizens, as well as those individuals who are more interested in politics, are more likely to engage in protests, I incorporate the variables measuring political interest using the 4-point scale, ranging from 1 (very interested) to 4 (not interested at all), and ideological self-placement on the standard left-right 0-10 scale.

5.4. Results and discussion

Change of levels of participation in a demonstration over time is shown in Figure 1. The highest levels of participation among respondents were reported in 2012 and 2013 which means that 6 months prior, more respondents in the sample participated in protests than in previous waves. This period overlaps with the most intense period of mobilisations in the post-15M events, as well as with the emergence of so-called *mareas* ("tides"), a series of protests for preservation of social rights, and against further cuts in social services, that were organised around the country. This finding echoes the assumption that citizens affected by a certain policy might become active on related issues as they want to protect their existing rights and benefits (Mettler and Soss, 2004).

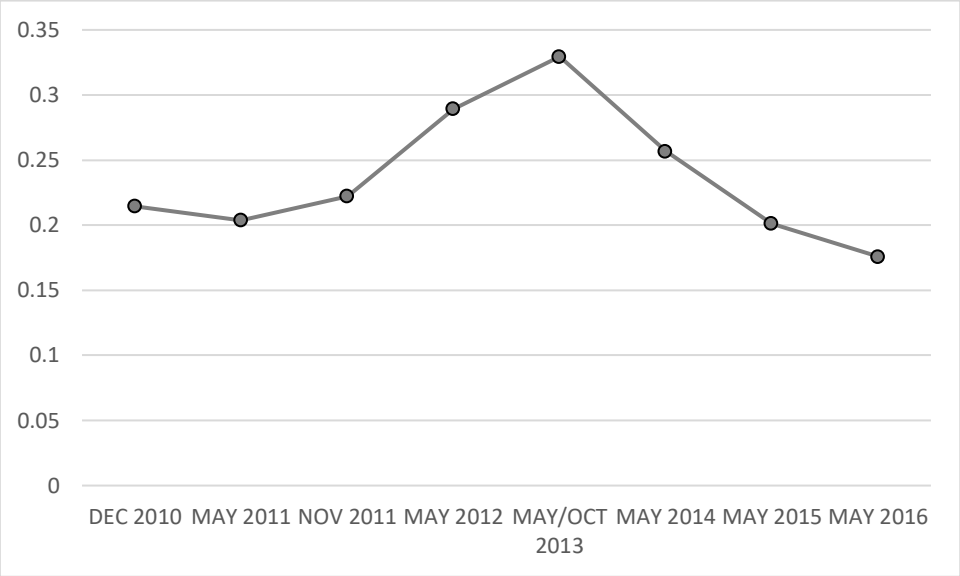

Figure 5.1: Levels of participation in a demonstration over time. Source: POLAT, 8 waves (Anduiza et al 2021)

After that peak, in the next 3 waves, a decrease in average levels of participation is recorded. On average, the respondents in May 2015 and May 2016 reported that they participated less in demonstrations than the respondents in the other time points. The decrease might be partially explained by the contextual factors. First, this period is

marked by slow economic recovery which could pacify a portion of the population that felt that their personal economic situation is relatively better than in the last couple of years. Second, some of the activists that participated in the biggest protests in 2011 and 2012 started to organise in political parties and challenged political elites by participating in the elections, trying to change the system from within (see Chapter 3 and Chapter 4). Citizens who used to participate in protests might not have needed to resort to contentious action if they could vote for candidates and parties who would represent their demands in the institutions.

To explore this further, I probe how levels of participation in demonstration changed over time for the members of the groups that were most likely to be affected by the austerity policies implementation: individuals living in the household where the highest earning member is a public servant, individuals who receive some type of public subsidy, and individuals who do not receive salary because they are either unemployed, still studying, or work without remuneration. Although this exploration does not offer an insight into personal trajectories of respondents during the observed period, it helps us to verify when and how the propensity to participate in protest changed for the particular groups of respondents.

In the first wave, the level of participation in a demonstration for respondents living in a household where the public servant has the highest salary was higher than the one of those who do not live in this type of household (Figure 5.2). Their level of participation was also higher than the one of all respondents (compared with Figure 5.1). This finding might go hand in hand with what we know from the resource theory - individuals with

the higher level of education, employed and with higher levels of income have higher likelihood to participate in politics (Putnam, 2000, Verba et al., 1995).

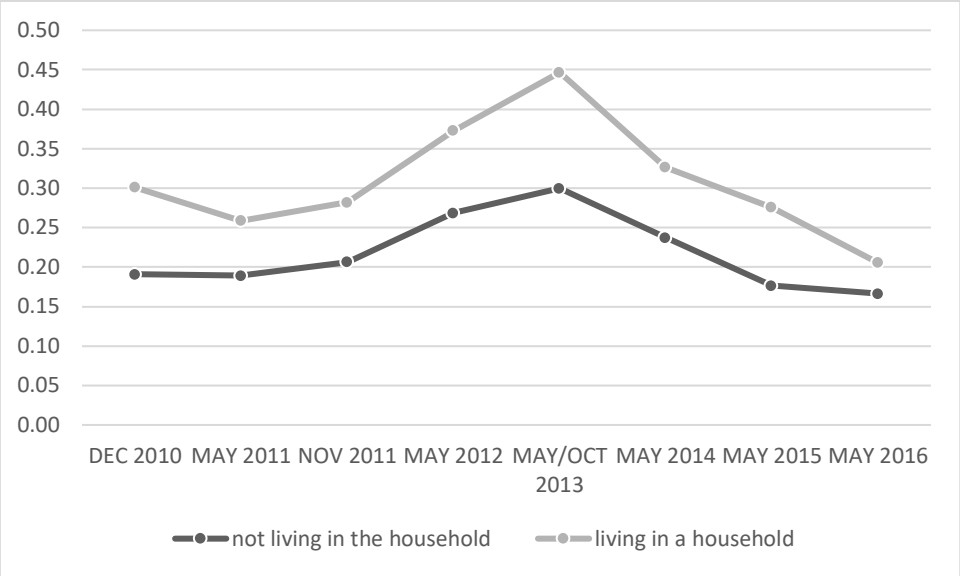

Figure 5.2: Levels of participation in a demonstration over time if living in a household where the public servant has the highest salary, Source: POLAT, 8 waves (Anduiza et al 2021)

Given that this group is not composed of only public servants, but also of their family members, and taking into account the age structure of the respondents in the first wave, it can be assumed that the political socialisation is one of the possible explanations for such finding. Even though it is difficult to assess the direct effect of transmission of political values, attitudes and behaviours from parents to children, studies show that parents pass their attitudes and behaviours to children, especially in the families with good socioeconomic conditions (Bloemraad and Trost, 2008). Politically active parents and parents who share the same political views are more likely to have politically engaged children (Jennings et al. 2009., Verba et al., 1995). The intergenerational transmission of political values can have an opposite direction – children can influence their parents by bringing in new sources of information and by expanding their social networks (Bloemraad and Trost, 2008) due to their socialisation outside of the household - in

educational institutions, by engaging in the civic activities, by spending time with their peers (Jennings et al. 2009., Verba et al., 1995).

Although trendlines for both groups of respondents mirror each other, two important observations have to be highlighted. First, the most significant difference among the groups is the higher percentage of change of the level of protest participation among those living in the households with the highest income coming from the public servant salary in 2012 and 2013. This change could signal that members of public servants' households wanted to protect their existing benefits and/or felt that the economic shock they experienced disrupted their quotidian routines, practices and social networks. On the other hand, after the peak in their mobilisation, they continued to demobilise the same as the average respondent in the sample.

Both respondents who have been receiving some type of a public subsidy and the ones that have not, reported the highest levels of protest participation in 2013. Their trajectories throughout the observed period are somewhat different. With the exclusion of the period between the first two waves, levels of participation are higher among people who are not receiving subsidies than among those who do. After 2013, more respondents who are public subsidy recipients expressed that they participated in protests than those who do not depend on subsidies. This difference is even more visible in May 2016 when their trajectories diverge.

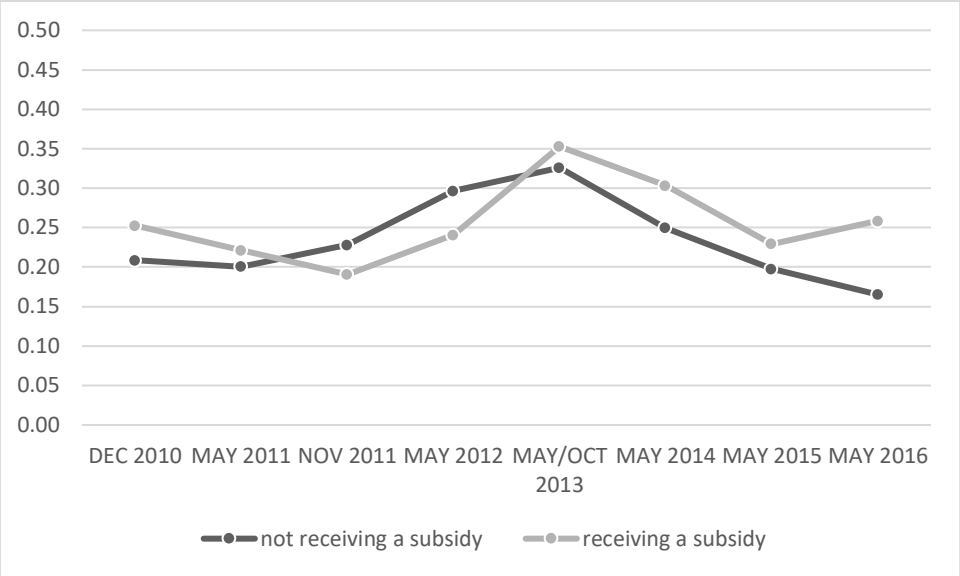

Figure 5.3: Levels of participation in a demonstration over time if receiving a public subsidy. Source: POLAT, 8 waves (Anduiza et al 2021)

There are two possible explanations. First, the one coming from the resource theory – the subsidies contributed to building civic skills needed for dealing effectively with government and for becoming aware of the possibility to make collective decisions; through the subsidies, citizens are supplied by the resources needed for political mobilisation (Mettler and Soss, 2004). Second, the one coming from the grievance theory – these are citizens who suddenly became dependent on public subsidies due to sudden drop in their objective economic status. They mobilise to voice their dissatisfaction with the changed economic status and to attribute blame to the government for the experienced shock (Schlozman and Verba, 1979).

The difference in the levels of participation in a demonstration between respondents who are not receiving a salary and those who do is non-significant throughout the observed period (Figure 5.4). It can be noted, though, that, between 2012 and 2013, the level of participation increased more for the individuals who had not been receiving salary. In the last point, on average more respondents without the salary reported that they

participated in protests in the last 6 months. As said before, given that this exploration does not allow for the inspection of individual trajectories, it cannot be assumed if these respondents were more prone to protest because they have stopped receiving their salary between two waves, or these are respondents who are experiencing a prolonged period of unemployment or are still in education.

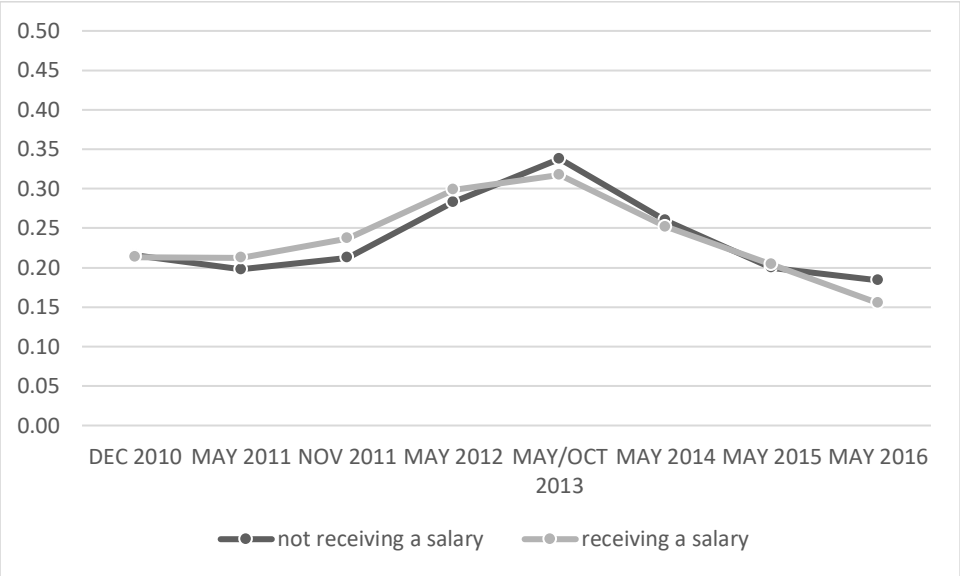

Figure 5.4: Levels of participation in demonstration over time if not receiving a salary. Source: POLAT, 8 waves (Anduiza et al 2021)

In order to test previously formulated hypotheses, I fitted 10 models to predict the change in the individual likelihood to protest. I applied listwise deletion of incomplete cases, for which sample consists of 2714 individuals and 12926 observations. Before including any new predictor, a model was compared to the model which had been fitted in the previous step. The improved model fit was observed if AIC and BIC decreased (Table 5.1). Given that the outcome variable is a dummy, I fitted logistic mixed models estimated using ML and BOBYQA optimiser.

An empty baseline model (m.0) which showed that a significant portion of variance in the outcome lies at the individual level, hence I gradually included other predictors. In the first step (m.1) I included the effect of time (wave). In the second model income as a measure of objective economic situation is included, together with controls for left-right self-placement and political interest. Controls are included in all subsequently fitted models. Model 3 included a dummy to measure if an individual receives salary or not. The effect was statistically non-significant and did not lead to the improvement in model fit, so this predictor was dropped from the further analysis.

Model	Term Added	Compared to...	DF	AIC	BIC	LogLikelihood	Residual Deviance	X2	X2DF	p-value	Significance
m1.glmer	wave	m0.glmer	9	11639.13	11706.33	-5810.56	11621.13	262.05	7	0	p < .001***
m2.glmer	income+lrself+polintr	m1.glmer	12	11170.95	11260.55	-5573.47	11146.95	474.18	3	0	p < .001***
m3.glmer	employment_rec	m2.glmer	13	11170.83	11267.9	-5572.42	11144.83	2.11	1	0.14593	n.s.
m4.glmer	publicworker_rec	m2.glmer	13	11141.39	11238.46	-5557.7	11115.39	31.56	1	0	p < .001***
m5.glmer	subsidy_rec	m4.glmer	14	11135.36	11239.9	-5553.68	11107.36	8.03	1	0.00461	p < .01 **
m6.glmer	ecositpersonal	m5.glmer	15	11131.19	11243.19	-5550.59	11101.19	6.18	1	0.01295	p < .05 *
m7.glmer	income:ecositpersonal	m6.glmer	16	11133.07	11252.54	-5550.53	11101.07	0.12	1	0.7301	n.s.
m8.glmer	ecosit + goveval + opeval	m6.glmer	18	11101.49	11235.9	-5532.75	11065.49	35.7	3	0	p < .001***
m9.glmer	income:ecosit+income:goveval+income:opeval	m8.glmer	21	11106.1	11262.91	-5532.05	11064.1	1.39	3	0.70767	n.s.

Table 5.1. Model fitting. Source: POLAT, 8 waves (Anduiza et al 2021)

In the following step (m.4), I introduced one of the predictors that measures the exposure to the economic shock due to the introduction of austerity measures – the one assessing if the highest earning person in the household is a public servant. In the next step, in Model 5 I included the effect of being a subsidy recipient.

In Model 6, self-reported satisfaction with personal economic situations is introduced. Seeing that its effect adds to the model fit, in Model 7 I included interaction between an individual's objective economic situation and their subjective assessment of personal economic situation. The effect of interaction was statistically non-significant and did not add to the model fit. Thus, it was excluded from the further analysis.

To verify the importance of political dissatisfaction for protest participation, in Model 8 I included as predictors respondents' assessment of the state of the economy in the country, and their evaluations of the government and the main opposition party. The predictors significantly increased model fit (Table 5.1). Proceeding further, I verify whether the interactions between income and each of the measures of political dissatisfaction affect the propensity to protest. Model 9 does not increase model fit of Model 8, and all interactions are statistically non-significant. As all of the theoretical assumptions had been tested by this point, I concluded that the minimal adequate model in this case is Model 8 (Table 5.2).

Model 8's total explanatory power is substantial (conditional R2 = 0.59), and the part related to the fixed effects alone (marginal R2) is 0.14. The odds ratio for the model's intercept, corresponding to wave=1, and the rest of explanatory variables being 0, is 1.44 which means the odds for a person to participate in protest were 1.44 times higher for a person in December 2010.

Within this model it can be observed that the effect of time is statistically significant and positive in waves 4, 5 and 6. The likelihood of respondents participating in protests in the last 6 months was higher in the period from May 2012 and May 2014, which goes hand in hand with what we know about the dynamics of the Spanish cycle of contention in that period (see Chapter 4). If asked in waves 6 and 8 if they participated in protest in the last 6 months, respondents had lower chances to confirm that they did. This finding mirrors trends on the aggregate level (Chapter 4), and the average tendencies in the sample (Figure 5.1)

	Protest participation		
Predictors	Odds Ratios	CI	p
(Intercept)	1.44	0.74 – 2.77	0.283
wave: wave2	1.02	0.84 – 1.23	0.859
wave: wave3	1.17	0.96 – 1.43	0.115
wave: wave4	1.97	1.60 – 2.42	**<0.001**
wave: wave5	2.81	2.29 – 3.45	**<0.001**
wave: wave6	1.48	1.16 – 1.89	**0.001**
wave: wave7	0.86	0.66 – 1.11	0.245
wave: wave8	0.70	0.53 – 0.91	**0.008**
Income	1.00	0.96 – 1.04	0.941
Public workers' household	1.61	1.36 – 1.91	**<0.001**
Subsidy recipient	1.30	1.08 – 1.56	**0.006**
Personal economic situation	1.09	0.98 – 1.20	0.109
Economic situation of the country	0.99	0.90 – 1.09	0.863
Government evaluation	1.19	1.11 – 1.28	**<0.001**
Opposition evaluation	0.94	0.87 – 1.00	0.061
Left-right self-placement	0.74	0.70 – 0.77	**<0.001**
Political interest	0.45	0.41 – 0.50	**<0.001**
Random Effects			
σ2	3.29		
τ00 codpanelista	3.61		
ICC	0.52		
N codpanelista	2714		
Observations	12926		
Marginal R2 / Conditional R2	0.138 / 0.589		

Table 5.2. Minimal adequate model. Source: POLAT, 8 waves (Anduiza et al 2021)

Contrary to the hypothesised relation, the effect of income is positive, meaning that the increase in the monthly income leads to the increase in the likelihood to participate in protests. However, the effect of income when included in the model, seems to be statistically insignificant. Even when interactions of income with other predictors are included in models, its effect continues to be non-significant. The finding signals that the objective economic status does not influence the change of the likelihood to protest, not even when moderated by the subjective assessment of the own economic situation or by the political dissatisfaction.

In accordance with the previous knowledge, starting to live in a household where a public servant has the highest income (Muñoz et al., 2014; Portos García, 2020) or becoming a public subsidy recipient (Muñoz et al., 2014) increases likelihood to participate in protests.

The effects of personal assessment of the economic situation, as well as the evaluation of the national economy are statistically non-significant in the model. However, in both cases the hypothesised direction of the effect holds. The deterioration of satisfaction with personal economic situations leads to an increase in propensity to participate in protest. There is a higher chance to express dissatisfaction by protesting, if a respondent had decreased their evaluation of the current state of the national economy.

Finally, the effect of the government evaluation on the propensity to participate in protests is significant. Citizens who decrease their evaluation of the government seem to be more likely to participate in protests. On the contrary, the decrease in the evaluation

of the main opposition party, decreases the chance to participate in protests. This finding goes against the hypothesised relationship, but it goes in hand with the prior findings (Portos García, 2020) which might suggest that citizens do not equally attribute the blame for the crisis management to all political elites, but just to those who are officially in charge to manage it.

5.5. Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored the possible explanations for the conundrum that retook the central spot in the protest participation research after the Great Recession – does the exposure to the economic shock lead to the increase in the propensity to protest participation or it restrains citizens from participation?

Starting from the assumption that the main fuel for the changes in the levels of the individual protest participation was not the Great Recession itself, but the exposure of particular individuals to subsequently implemented austerity measures, I have tested the typology of grievances developed by Portos Garcia (2020) drawing my conclusion from the analysis of panel survey conducted in Spain in the period from 2010 to 2016. The analysis has demonstrated that indeed different dimensions of grievances affect in a different manner the propensity to participate in protest events.

First, the citizens who are objectively in the worst material situation do not seem willing to express their grievances on the streets. This finding adds to the prior empirical findings about the withdrawal of the individuals who are the worst-off from the different types of public engagement. To probe this finding further, it would be necessary to explore reasons

for their withdrawal by connecting the prospective research on the resource limitation with the research about the role of emotions, the literature on the disintegration of individuals' social networks, and the literature on the dissatisfaction with the political systems.

Second, the findings confirm that those who were directly affected by the change in their economic status due to the exposure to austerity measures (e.g., public subsidy recipients and public servants) are becoming more willing to participate in protests. This finding might signal that these individuals are more prone to showing their dissatisfaction with the political decisions in the events that can be organised ad-hoc and do not depend on the nature of the electoral cycle.

Third, the findings related to subjective economic, and political grievances go hand in hand with the mobilisation theory, showing that these grievances' dimensions can moderate the effect individuals' objective economic situation has on their propensity to participate in protests. The deterioration of satisfaction with personal economic situations, as well as a decrease in the evaluation of the state of the national economy, increase chances to participate in protests. In the same vein, the sharper the decrease in the evaluation of the government, the higher the possibility that individuals engage in protest.

The findings add to the literature that underlines that not only the role of material resources has to be taken into account when exploring political behaviour of economically disadvantaged members of the society. The sudden changes in the economic status, the subjective assessment of the own economic situation, and the political discontent play a

crucial role in the (de)mobilisation of citizens and have to be treated as the significant predictors of change in individuals' willingness to engage in protests.

One of the central contributions of this chapter has been assessing if the (de)mobilising effect of the economic shock on the protest participation is short-termed or it endures over time. When examining behavioural changes for the respondents in the panel survey, in the time span of slightly over 5 years, the results showed that they had higher likelihood to participate in protests in the period from May 2012 to May 2014. Given that the chances of respondents participating in protests in the last six months decreased in the last two survey waves conducted in spring 2015 and 2016, it can be said that the effect of the exposure to the economic shock was short-lived. However, it has to be noted that the respondents who were living in the household with the public servants and/or were public subsidies recipients in the last two waves had the higher chances to have participated in the protests than the average respondent in the wave which might signal that the effect of economic shock lasted slightly longer among individuals pertaining to these social groups. The sudden changes in the living standard due to the exposure to austerity policies might have indeed led citizens to keep being engaged in protests on related issues for a prolonged period of time.

Prospective research is needed to disentangle this conundrum by testing it in other contexts and using data that enables directly following the effect of a policy change on the behavioural changes among individuals over longer portions of time. Similar to other research based on the individual data, due to data restrictions, I have not been able to diversify if the increase in the propensity to participate in protest provoked by the economic shock translates only to the participation in the protests related to the economic

demands, or it boosts overall willingness to participate in this type of political activity regardless of the nature of the demands expressed in specific protests.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1. Main argument in brief

The main aim of this dissertation was to deepen the understanding of the conditions under which the implementation of the austerity measures leads to the increase in the protest participation. The thesis claims that the global economic crisis per se is not a sufficient mobiliser that leads to unprecedented levels of protest participation. The increase in political participation happens only when an opening in the political opportunity structure of a particular country happens. The chances that the opening occurs are products of the country's specific heritage and mostly related to the sphere of institutional politics, and to the dormant social cleavages that are not represented by the mainstream political parties. Insurgence of the economic situation related protests and willingness of people to participate in them over a prolonged period of time depend on the past social policy preferences and level of exposure of the national economy to the global economic situation. Further, on the individual level, the increase in the chances that a person engages in protest activities, is influenced by distinct factors. Primarily, subjective perceptions about personal economic status, and satisfaction with the governments are the main drivers for the protest participation.

6.2. Summary of findings and main contribution

Chapter 3 showed that the party systems of all four countries were an outcome of the institutional design that happened during the democratic transition. Spain, Portugal and Croatia before the outbreak of the Great Recession served as examples of the bipartisan systems, with the main two parties targeting voters of different ideological, but same

economic preferences. The Serbian party system started to develop into a bipartisan one in the early 2000s, but the country slid towards illiberal democracy and the dominance of a single party after 2012. Before the economic crisis, all four countries built their welfare states on the mix of state intervention, market provision and social protection provided within the families or by the church and church-related organisations. With the deeper integration to the EU, and on the basis of recommendations from the IMF and WB, the countries increased the share of services that are to some extent provided on the market. When it comes to the Great Recession itself, the analysis showed that in spite of the differences in the roots of the crisis in each country, almost identical austerity policies were implemented in all four countries almost simultaneously. All countries tried to decrease the budget deficit by cutting and capping the wages, pensions and access to social services. They changed the labour law in order to facilitate layoffs and limit the strength of collective bargaining. On the revenue side, all of them either increased taxes, introduced new ones, or abolished the previously existing tax exemptions. All countries but Spain limited subsidies and tried to privatise different companies or services. Serbia was the only country out of four that did not try to change the scope of and/or accessibility to the public health system.

Findings from Chapter 4 reinforce the previous knowledge that the nature of the anti-austerity cycles in each of countries are products of the previous contentious practices, the openness of the political system, and ability of the newly born movements to connect national issues with the global claims for more democracy and against capitalism (Carvalho 2019, Della Porta et al 2017, Flesher Fominaya 2016, Portos García 2020). The findings also challenge existing ideas about unprecedented levels of mobilisation during the anti-austerity protests (Císař and Navrátil 2016) as the number of recorded events

and/or the percentage of mobilised population was higher in the period between 2000 and 2008 in all countries apart from Portugal. This finding signals that the internal topics related to the decisions of "corrupted" domestic political elites such as the anti-war movement in Spain, labour mobilisations in Croatia, or anti-regime protests in Serbia can serve as equally, if not more, important mobilisers than the global economic crisis.

The deeper look into contentious cycles of the observed pairs of countries showed that the Spanish cycle resembled more to the Croatian than to the Portuguese one. Although the overall level of mobilisation was significantly higher in Spain than in Croatia, the main organisers in both cases were newly emerged coalitions of regular citizens, activists, workers, and occasionally labour unions. While in Spain the larger number of protests directly addressed implemented austerity policies, in both cases protests marked the beginning of the fight against power relations established in the years after the democratic transition. Several new parties were created in both countries, managing to gain impactful electoral success in a relatively brief timespan. Their insurgence opened the path for the deterioration of the bipartisan system and put new topics on the political agenda. The main feature of the Portuguese cycle of contention was the intention to preserve and protect inheritance of the Carnation revolution which granted social and civic rights in the form of a universal welfare state. To do so, the participants formed broad alliances between leftist political parties, NGOs, labour unions and citizen initiatives counting on the support of the Constitutional court. In a similar vein, in Serbia, despite the nature of the protest cycle being different, the main outcome of anti-austerity protests was a creation of an alliance on the left. The NGOs and citizen initiatives decided to mobilise and contest elections. However, their goal, unlike in Portugal, was to challenge Vučić's regime and re-establish democratic government principles.

Chapter 5 upholds the idea that different dimensions of grievances have a distinctive effect on the propensity for protest participation (Portos García 2020). It supports previous findings which show that the objectively difficult material situation demobilises people (Rosenstone 1982), while confirming that those who were exposed to austerity policies are more likely to participate in protests to try to reestablish and/or protect their benefits (Mettler and Soss 2004). Increase in the propensity to engage in protests seems to be higher among the individuals who are dissatisfied with the deterioration of their economic status, as well among those who are dissatisfied with general political situation and government performance (Schlozman and Verba, 1979).

One of the central questions of Chapter 5 was focused on the assessment of the longevity of the effect of the economic shock on the chances for protest participation (Margalit 2019). The findings show that the exposure to the economic shock drove an overall short-lived increase in the protest participation. However, the effect has faded quickly among all respondents but those who directly experienced the consequences of specific austerity policies. The unexpected decrease in the living standard and quality of life seems to have been a driver for the prolonged engagement in the sphere of contentious politics.

To sum up, the thesis contributed to three different bodies of literature. First, theoretically, it adds to the literature aiming to reconcile different approaches to study protest participation - namely political process and grievances theory. Likewise, the thesis enriches the literature stream that approaches grievances by seeing them as a multifaceted phenomenon. Finally, the dissertation adds to the literature exploring the nature of the anti-austerity cycles of contention. It examines different countries as

particular cycles of contention, and demonstrates that their birth and peaks happen when the domestic political elites cannot maintain the status quo. The Great Recession as the threat to quotidian routines and established social rights, as well as the popular movements in other countries that served as inspiration for the local movements, were just catalysts for the appearance of the cracks in the national political opportunity structure.

6.3. Limitations of findings and avenues for the future research

Coming up, I turn to discussing the limitations this thesis succumbs to. First, I want to point out and discuss data limitations of the data used in the empirical chapters. The analysis in Chapter 4 is based on the protest event data obtained from newspaper articles. As described in Chapter 2, this type of data is intrinsically contaminated by the selection bias influenced by the nature of the current media reporting habits - the media reports more often on larger and more violent protests; the national and conservative newspapers are less prone to report on protests; and the media favorises reporting on topics they mark as nationally relevant but neglects to report on protests related to the niche topics (Earl et al 2004). Although the data was collected with the clear intention to reduce possible bias by using two national daily newspapers of different ideological stances as data sources, the data limitations should still be discussed. While it does not represent all the protests that actually happened in the observed period, I also did not treat it as a representative sample of the entire population, but rather as a population of the events that were reported on. The only possibility to obtain data on all protests that were held in the specific period is to look into the police records on the protest reported to the authorities in accordance with the national laws. However, in some countries, this data is not publicly available. Even if it were, due to differences in legislation prescribing

the rules when a protest should be reported to the authorities which would make a cross-country comparison more difficult to carry out. The availability of data on specific types of protest (eg. strikes) is even more restricted (see discussion on the strike data in Dolenec et al 2021). The data coming from scrapping the newswires (Kriesi et al 2020) are even more biased towards the massive and extraordinary events. All of this makes the newspaper data the best available type of data for the type of analysis that was conducted in this dissertation.

Second, the main advantage of the individual panel data used in Chapter 5 is that it enabled me to trace the behavioural change longitudinally. However, it is somewhat restricting when it comes to the operationalisation of different dimensions of grievances (see Portos García 2020 for discussion). As one of the goals of the chapter was to validate Portos García (2020)'s findings on a slightly prolonged time period than the one he covered in his analysis, I mostly followed the operationalisation he used in the aforementioned study, but it would be insightful to observe if the results would change if the dimensions of grievances were operationalised using other indicators, in case of their availability. For example, in the Wave 5, a battery of items addressing the effects of economic crisis was incorporated, specifying the type of economic shock the respondent faced recently (such as a wage reduction, a worsening of living and/or working conditions, a loss of purchasing power and similar). However, these items were not included in all waves so I would not be able to trace changes in the effect of economic shock on propensity to protest participation over time, which was one of the focal points of the panel data analysis.

Third, the findings from Chapters 3 and 4 are based on an in-depth comparison of two pairs of countries on the European Semi-periphery which could raise a question about their generalisability. The thesis established a series of conditions which increase chances for protest events' occurrence, but the conditions are derived from the explored cases, and cannot be directly applied to other austerity-ridden semi-peripheral countries. Similar studies in other cases should be done in order to verify the applicability of discovered mechanisms to other cases. Therefore, they can serve as a backdrop for further empirical analyses. However, these findings add new knowledge about the nature of protest cycles in post-Yugoslav space. I connected a growing body of literature about protest mobilisations in that part of Europe in the shadow of the Great Recession (see eg. Balković 2019, Beissinger and Sasse 2004, Dinev 2022, Dolenec et al 2021, Horvat and Štiks 2015, Milan 2017, 2020, Musić 2013) with the abundant literature on the protest mobilisations in Southern Europe by challenging the idea of these countries, especially Spain (Portos García 2020), are the outliers based on the nature of conditions that helped in shaping the anti-austerity cycles of contention.

Finally, I address possible ventures for prospective research. On the structural level, I have only superficially tackled the interplay of the nationalist dynamics with the consequences of austerity policies, and with the re-insurgence of the nationalist (be it right or left oriented) movements such as Catalan independence movement, movements against independence of Kosovo and Montenegro in Serbia, or the rise of rightist movements and organisations in Croatia, Spain and Portugal. On the level of agency, this thesis failed to address the role of different organisations that either organised or supported protest actions during the austerity cycles of contention in particular countries. It would be interesting to connect protest event data with mapping of connections

between organisations, both within national, but also across national context(s) in order to explore roles of organisational resources, and roles of knowledge and discourse transfers between activists. At the individual level, the next steps for the analysis would have to start with the exploration of reasons for the withdrawal of the economically most vulnerable individuals by connecting it to different bodies of literature that tried to find explanations for the breakdown of connections between these individuals and their social networks and political community in general. Ultimately, as pointed out in the conclusion of Chapter 5, the thesis has not been able to determine whether the economic shock increases only chances for the protest participation in protest related exclusively to the economic issues or it serves as a form of a political socialisation tool where it shapes citizens to be more involved in this mode of political participation in general.

The goal of this dissertation was to identify conditions under which, upon introduction of the austerity measures, levels of protest participation increased. Although austerity was a dominant discourse frame, and a universally prescribed remedy for the economic crisis across similar and less similar contexts, changes in protest participation depended on the specificities of national context and personal exposure to the austerity measures. Based on these findings, I feel it is safe to say that the "One World. One Struggle" cry that was often used in the protests in the aftermath of the Great Recession, needs a bit of tweaking. "One world. Different countries. Path-dependent (but similar) collective and individual struggles".

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Appendix to Chapter 4

Chapter 4 relies on the data collected via **"Disobedient Democracy: A Comparative Analysis of Contentious Politics in European Semi-periphery"** project. The overview of instructions for data collection and the overview of the variables can be found in the continuation.

Protest Event Dataset - Codebook

This document provides an overview of the protest event dataset collected within the project "Disobedient Democracy: A Comparative Analysis of Contentious Politics in European Semi-periphery" funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation. Protest event data collection was implemented during 2017 and 2018 at the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Zagreb, at Complutense University of Madrid, Nova University of Lisbon and the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory in Belgrade.

In addition to this document, we recommend consulting the following research note:

Dolenec, Danijela, Ana Balković, Karlo Kralj, Daniela Širinić, Eduardo Romanos, and Tiago Fernandes. 2020. "Protest Event Dataset for Croatia, Portugal, Serbia and Spain: Focus on Strike Data." *Croatian Political Science Review* 57 (4): 155–168. doi:10.20901/pm.57.4.07. (URL: https://hrcak.srce.hr/252686?lang=en)

BASIC INFORMATION

The dataset covers protest events that took place in four countries (Croatia, Portugal, Serbia and Spain) in the period between 1 January 2000 and 31 December 2017. In total our dataset records 12,941 protest events. The highest number of protest events was recorded in Spain, with 4,062 events, 3,199 protest events were recorded in Portugal, 2,870 in Serbia and 2,800 in Croatia.

Data sources

The dataset is based on newspaper data from two quality national dailies ('papers of record') in each of the four countries covered: *Večernji list* and *Jutarnji list* (Croatia), *Diário de Notícias* and *Público* (Portugal), *Politika* and *Danas* (Serbia), and *El País* and *El Mundo* (Spain). Each daily issue of the eight papers (printed or digital version) was inspected for any information on protest events, which were later uploaded and coded in an online database.

Definition of protest event

Aiming to detect a broad variety of occurrences and include contextual specificities of each country in the dataset, we deliberately avoided strict definitional criteria of protest

events, such as a minimum number of participants or a specific form of action. Instead, the coding manual contained a list of contentious repertoires and performances, such as demonstrations, marches and similar[10], which served as a guideline in the identification process. Each event was coded in the database consisting of 40 variables, 6 of which are technical (identifying the event, listing exact sources within newspapers, and information on who coded the event), while the rest collected descriptive information about the event[11]. Other variables are the geolocation, the identity of participants, identity of organisers, allies of protest, strategies and methods, demands and grievances, slogans and songs, direct targets and ultimate objects, character of intervention by authorities, casualties and damage, information on whether negotiations with authorities took place and the responses and reactions of other actors to the protest event[12].

Spatial and temporal demarcation of protest events

Coders observed rules with regards to spatial and temporal demarcation of protest events. Occurrences which happened in different locations simultaneously, sharing the same goal, identity or organiser, were treated as a single protest event with multiple locations. Only events which had at least one location within one of the four country cases were included in the dataset. Events organised by domestic organisers in other countries, notwithstanding any relations through organising, grievances, and other characteristics, were not supposed to enter the dataset. Whenever possible, the geolocation of protest events was traced, which should enable various types of spatial analyses.

Each event was coded as a single unit notwithstanding its duration, since duration itself is treated as a variable in the dataset. Some types of events that last for days and weeks, such as occupations, were treated as single protest events. However, when for instance a long-lasting occupation of public space led to the emergence of a march or similar, those would be coded as separate events.

Two important clarifications related to the list above:

- **Boycotts** enter the dataset only if a collective gathering related to boycott was reported. In specific circumstances, a boycott can also take the form of

[10] The list included: marches, demonstrations, mass meeting or gatherings (and specific types: escraches, caceroladas, etc.), direct-democratic meetings of citizens (and specific types: assemblies, plena, etc.), occupations, sit-ins, sieges, obstruction of roads-public spaces and infrastructures-transport, rioting/uprising, hunger strikes, symbolic/theatrical performance, boycott, strike, petitions (signature gathering), press conferences, leafleting, cyber-attacks (e.g. netstrike, mail-bombing, hacking, DoS attack), hanging banners/placards on public or private buildings, hostile confrontations, sabotage, assaulting, beatings, attacking people or facilities, self-harming and chaining.

[11] In the preparation of our protocol for data collection we consulted several similar projects, and we gratefully acknowledge Grzegorz Ekiert, Jan Kubik, Mark Beissinger, and Martin Portos for providing us with their codebooks.

[12] Given the broad criteria for inclusion in our dataset, modifications in the definition of protest event will lead to different total event counts. For example, media sources do not always specify dates when a protest started or finished, and in such cases we used the newspaper issue date as the proxy for the date of the event. If instead the inclusion criteria for a protest event is that it contains a specific start and end date, the overall event count will be smaller.

collective refusal to attend an event, like is the case when football fans boycott a match of the club they support.

- **Signature gathering (petitions), leafleting and press conferences** enter the dataset only as supplementary, side-methods and activities. They do not enter the dataset on their own. In other words, if a news item mentions only this kind of event, you skip it. When it appears together with a protest action, you record it under "methods and strategies of protest".

DETAILED CODING INSTRUCTIONS

1. **ID** is the number automatically assigned by the system when creating a new input, unique for each event.
2. **Coder's name** is automatically assigned to all new entries by a specific coder.
3. **Reviewer** is the person who monitors the work of a specific coder.
4. Choose the country in which the event has taken place.
5. **Newspaper**. Information on newspaper, issue and page used as a source.
6. **Start of the protest.** There are two steps to this question. First you specify the level of reporting accuracy on the start of the protest. Secondly you specify the information on the start of the protest. You choose among three options:
    a. If you can determine the exact starting date, choose 'exact'. This will open the calendar, where you mark the starting date.
    b. If the starting date is not specified, but you can determine it approximately based on available information, choose 'approximate'. This will also open the calendar, but instead of marking the exact date, you mark the week in which you locate the protest based on available data.
    c. If it is impossible to determine even an approximate starting date, choose 'data unavailable'.
7. **Duration of protest.** Newspapers often do not include the precise date of the end of the protest event. You have to choose among three options as follows:
    a. If the protest event lasted one day, or was shorter than a day, click 'one day'.
    b. If the protest event lasted multiple days, choose 'multiple days'. In this case, the cell 'number of days' will open. If the information is available, enter the number of days the event lasted.
    c. If you cannot determine the duration of the protest event from the information from your source(s), click 'data unavailable'. Do not make presumptions.

8. **Location and number of participants**. If there are several different participant numbers reported for a single location, you enter numbers from lowest to highest, separated with a comma.

   If the protest happened in several locations, the number of participants is linked to each location separately (e.g. number of protesters in Zagreb, and then separately for Rijeka etc.).

9. **Name or key message of the event.** If the name of the key message is reported, enter them with quotation marks, in the original language.

10. **Description of the protest event.** Summarising in a few sentences, please describe the event through 5W questions (what, where, who, why and how).

11. **Does this event look like it is part of a campaign?** If from available information you can define the protest as a single, separate event, choose option 'single, separate protest. If the protest looks like it is a part of a protest campaign choose 'part of a protest campaign'.

12. **Events related to this event**. If there are any related events, they should be linked via their unique ID. Please list IDs of all related events; when listing more than one, separate them with a comma. This does not include counter-protests, which are covered by questions 34 and 35.

13. **Identity of participants**. From the dropdown menu choose all identities of participants in the protest which are mentioned in your news source(s). Be careful not to jump to conclusions - make sure you are focusing on participants rather than organisers.

14. Choose 'yes' **if any organisation is reported as organiser**/sponsor/participant of the event.

15. **Organisers.** If you have chosen 'yes' in Q14, from the dropdown menu select all organisers that are mentioned in the news source(s). In many cases there will be no information on the topical categorization of an organisation, but you will be able to indirectly deduce about it. For instance, if the report mentions the 'Trade Union of Employees in Educational System', you can infer that the organiser is a trade union, or that 'Green Action' is an ecological/ environmental organisation. You are allowed to infer like this only based on the organisation's name, but not based on any additional, outside-of-your-newspaper sources or searches.

16. If you have chosen 'yes' in Q14, from the dropdown menu select whether the event was organised by a **single organiser or by a coalition of organisers**.

17. **Allies.** From the dropdown menu choose allies of the protest event. Allies of the protest are non-state actors who support the protest event, but who did not organise it.

18. **Strategies and methods.** From the dropdown menu choose strategies and methods used during the protest event. In case of multiple answers, check all strategies and methods which are mentioned in the newspaper source(s).

19. If the newspaper source(s) mention that **the method of protest has changed during the event**, choose 'yes'. If not, choose 'no'.

20. If the newspaper source(s) claim **the event or any actions during the event were reported as illegal**, choose 'yes'. If not, choose 'no'.

21. **Demands and grievances**. From the dropdown menu choose demands and grievances expressed during the event. In case of multiple answers check all demands and grievances which are mentioned in the newspaper source(s).

22. **Slogans**. If any slogans are reported, either in text or in photo. Do not translate from the original language.

23. **Songs.** If it was reported that any songs were sung during the event.

24. **Symbols**. If it was reported that any symbols were used during the event.

25. **Direct target of a protest action** is a person or an authority (e.g., the president), an institution or an organisation, whose building or offices are the scene of the given protest event, or who is physically or verbally harassed by protesters.

26. If from the news source it is recognizable that the 'ultimate object of protest action' is different from the 'direct target of protest action', choose yes. If not, choose no.

27. The 'ultimate object of protest action' is a person, an institution, or an organisation, which is to respond or react to the demands and grievances of the protesters.

28. If it was reported that the authorities intervened, choose the appropriate category.

29. Choose the authority which intervened.

30. **Casualties and Damages**. If the reported numbers differ, type in the most conservative assessments reported.

31. **Were negotiations undertaken with the protesters?** Check in the news source if negotiations were undertaken with protesters.

32. Choose the **outcome of mediation**.

33. **Was a counter-protest carried out by another group or organisation?** Check whether there was any counterprotest(s). The counter-protest is an action undertaken against the protest action you are coding.

34. Type in the ID of the counter-protest. If you are not sure if the ID or counter-protest event has not yet been registered in the dataset, make sure to type in a short description text which enables to detect the counter-protest event later on and connect it with the protest event.

35. **Has any representative of the direct target or ultimate object reacted in any way or taken any official position?** Check whether a representative of the direct target or the ultimate object has reacted or has taken any position.

36. Assess whether the position contains full or partial recognition of the protesters' demands and grievances.

37. Check the category which best describes the tone of the response given.

38. Check whether any other actor has reacted in any way or has taken any position. 'Other actor' does not include newspapers' regular commentators.

39. Type in the name of this actor. Actors are, for instance, public institutions, organisations, public officials, etc. Actors are not public personalities, celebrities and similar persons who are not representing any formal or non-formal organisational actor.

LIST OF VARIABLES

Protest_ID
: unique number of event

Country
: country in which event took place

Publ_date
: exact publishing date of the first newspaper that reported on event

Publ_year
: publishing year

Newspaper_1 - Newspaper_30
: information on each newspaper, issue and page used as a source

Start_of_the_protest
: exact
: approximate
: NA

Start_date
: exact starting date

Start_date_REC
: exact starting date - European standard format

Start_year
: exact year

Duration
: one day
: multiple days
: NA

Duration_days
: exact number of days event lasted

First_recorded_location
: geolocation of first recorded location

Country_location1
: country where the first recorded location is situated

City_1_REV
: corrected spelling of city where the first recorded location is situated (eg. Sibenik ->Šibenik) or used English name of the city (eg. Bilbo -> Bilbao, Beograd -> Belgrade)

Participants_all
: total number of participants on all recorded locations (the most conservative estimate in case of diverging reports, or rounded on the closest lower number (eg. “slightly over 100” -> 100)

Location_1 - Location_89
: all locations at which event took place

Geolocation_1 - Geolocation_89
: exact geolocation of all locations at which event took place

Protest_Name

Protest_description

Part_of_campaign

single, separate protest
part of a campaign
NA

Related_events

IDs of events that form the part of the same campaign

PARTICIPANTS IDENTITY (mark all applicable)

PI_Workers

PI_Farmers_peasants

PI_Agricultural_workers

PI_Employees_of_the_state_run_public_sector

PI_Employees_of_private_companies

PI_Unemployed

PI_Homeless

PI_Precarious_workers

PI_Pensioners

PI_Disabled

PI_Women

PI_Students

PI_Pupils

PI_Young_people

PI_Ethnic_groups_or_minorities

PI_Members_of_dominant_religious_group *(depending if country is predominantly catholic or ortodox, choose this option if participants identify as catholic or ortodox)*

PI_Members_of_minority_religious_groups

PI_atheist_agnostic_groups

PI_Refugees

PI_Immigrants

PI_Other

PI_Other_recoded

PI_Citizens

PI_Activists

PI_Consumers

PI_Labour_union_activists

PI_Sports_fans

PI_War_veterans

PI_Family_members

PI_Prisoners_and_detainees

PI_Business_owners

PI_Officials_and_politicians

PI_Crime_victims

Organizer_reported

- Yes
- No
- NA

ORGANIZERS (mark all applicable)

O_Political_party

O_Labor_union

O_Peasant_farmer_organization

O_Professional_organization

O_Youth_organization

O_Student_organization_or_pupil_organization

O_Ethnic_or_minority_organization

O_'War_Veterans'_organization

O_'War_Victims'_organization

O_Anti_eviction_organization

O_Humanitarian_caritative_organization

O_Ecological_environmental_organization

O_Feminist_organization

O_Human_rights_anti_war_and_pacifist

O_Extremist_right_wing_groups_and_paramilitary_groups

O_Roman_Catholic_Church_directly_involved

O_Orthodox_Church_directly_involved

O_Church_related_organization_or_socially_conservative_organization

O_Other_churches_or_religious_organizations

O_Transnational_advocacy_networks_international_movements

O_Small_and_medium_enterprises

O_Associations_of_émigrés

O_Victims_of_previous_regimes

O_Precarious_workers

O_Pensioners

O_Citizen_initiatives

O_Parents

O_Other

O_Other_recoded

O_Local_or_regional_government

Coalition_of_organizers

- Single organization
- Coalition of organizations
- NA

ALLIES (mark all applicable)

A_Political_party

A_Labor_union

A_Peasant_farmer_organization

A_Professional_organization

A_Youth_organization

A_Student_organization_or_pupil_organization

A_Ethnic_or_minority_organization

A_'War_Veterans'_organization

A_'War_Victims'_organization

A_Anti_eviction_organization

A_Humanitarian,_caritative_organization

A_Ecological_environmental_organization

A_Feminist_organization

A_Human_rights_anti_war_and_pacifist

A_Extremist_right_wing_groups_and_paramilitary_groups

A_Roman_Catholic_Church_directly_involved

A_Orthodox_Church_directly_involved

A_Church_related_organization_or_socially_conservative_organization

A_Other_churches_or_religious_organizations

A_Transnational_advocacy_networks_international_movements

A_Small_and_medium_enterprises

A_Associations_of_émigrés

A_Victims_of_previous_regimes

A_Precarious_workers

A_Pensioners

A_Citizen_initiatives

A_Parents

A_Other

A_Other_recoded

A_Local_or_regional_government

METHODS (mark all applicable)

M_march

M_demonstration

M_human_chain

M_mass_meeting_or_gathering

M_occupation

M_sit_in

M_obstruction_of_streets_roads_and_other_transport_infrastructure

M_riot

M_hunger_strike

M_symbolic_or_theatrical_performance

M_boycott

M_strike

M_petition

M_leafleting

M_filing_a_lawsuit

M_open_letter

M_press_conference

M_hanging_banners_or_placards

M_cyber_attack

M_assault_on_property

M_assault_on_people

M_self_harming

M_Other

M_Other_recoded

Method_of_protest changed (mark yes if more than one method was used during the event)

Yes
No
NA

Reported_as_illegal

Yes
No
NA

DEMANDS (mark all applicable)

D_cuts_to_public_services *(events directly addressing cuts to vast array of public services)*

D_austerity *(events directly addressing austerity in general or packages of austerity measures)*

D_inequality

D_unemployment_dismissals_redundancy_procedure *(events directly addressing general problem of unemployment - rate, youth unemployment; and events addressing specific cases of workers' dismissals and redundancy procedures in particular companies)*

D_workers_rights *(events addressing salary cuts and working conditions in the country, specific sector or particular company)*

D_precarity *(events problemitizing precarious employment)*

D_privatization *(events addressing privatization processes or consequences of it)*

D_financial_banking_system *(events addressing functioning of global financial and banking system as well as problems with particular banks)*

D_debt *(events addressing the problem of personal debt)*

D_globalisation

D_capitalism

D_housing_crisis *(events addressing the problem of speculation on the housing market, rent, mortgages)*

D_deliberative_inclusve_democratic_measures

D_reform_electoral_system

D_supranational_institutions *(events addressing functioning of supranational institutions such as EU, IMF, ECB, WB)*

D_foreign_goverments_and_institutions *(events addressing functioning of foreign governments and their implications in domestic issues eg. protest against German government in Greece during the austerity measures protest)*

D_political_parties_and_politicians

D_corruption_and_clientelism

D_education/academia/research *(events addressing policies and services in these sectors)*

D_health *(events addressing policies and services in these sectors)*

D_LGBTTIQ_rights

D_civil_rights_non_discrimination_and_freedom

D_disabled_rights

D_migration_refugee_race_and_borders_issues

D_urban_planning_and_quality_of_public_space

D_environment

D_animal_rights

D_right_to_abortion

D_specific_laws_and_policies *(events organized to support/against proposed law, policy proposal, their implementation, or for/against existing regulations)*

D_anti_war

D_self_determination_independence_sovereignty

D_minority_rights

D_condemn_Francoist_Salazar_Yugoslav_crimes *(events addressing crimes of previous regimes, depending on the country)*

D_Form_of_regime

D_Other

D_OTHER_recoded

D_judiciary_system

D_price_increase

D_anti_terrorism

D_gender_violence

D_veterans

D_violence

D_utilities_prices_and_quality

Slogans (type in slogans reported in the article or in the photos accompanying the article)

SONGS (mark all applicable)

S_National_anthem

S_Religious_songs

S_Patriotic_songs

S_Left_and_revolutionary_songs

S_Other

SYMBOLS (mark all applicable)

Sy_Flags

Sy_Crucifixes_and_other_religious_objects

Sy_National_emblem

Sy_Revolutionary_symbols *(eg. a hammer and a sickle, a carnation, a red star)*

Sy_Other

DIRECT TARGET (mark all applicable)

DT_President

DT_Parliament

DT_Government

DT_Commissioner_on_civil_rights *(ombudsman)*

DT_Armed_forces

DT_Ministers_ministries.

DT_Members_of_Parliament *(and/or Senators if a country has a Senat)*

DT_Police

DT_Local_or_regional_government *(governor, mayor, municipal council,_etc.)*

DT_Political_parties

DT_Labor_unions

DT_Peasant_farmer_organizations

DT_Civic_and_other_non_state_organizations

DT_Social_movements

DT_Radical_right_organizations

DT_Regional_local_organizations

DT_Roman_Catholic_Church_and_related_organizations

DT_Orthodox_Church_and_related_organizations

DT_Other_churches_and_related_organizations

DT_Management,_boards_of_directors

DT_Domestic_business_owners

DT_Foreign_business_owners

DT_International_institutions,_(e.g._the_World_Bank,_IMF,_EU)

DT_Foreign_governments,_trade_offices

DT_Other

DT_Other_RECODED

DT_Judiciary

DT_Banks

DT_Public_Services_(schools,_utilities,_hospitals)

DT_Identity_group

DT_Monarchy

DT_Media

DT_Perpetrators

DT_Public___raising_awareness

DT_Terrorist_group

Ultimate_object_different (yes if different than direct target)

Yes
No
NA

ULTIMATE OBJECT (mark all applicable)

UO_President

UO_Parliament

UO_Government

UO_Commissioner_(ombudsman)_on_civil_rights

UO_Armed_forces

UO_Ministers_and/or_ministries.

UO_Members_of_Parliament/Senators

UO_Police

UO_Local_or_regional_government_(governor,_mayor,_municipal_council,_etc.)

UO_Political_parties

UO_Labor_unions

UO_Peasant/farmer_organizations

UO_Civic_and_other_non_state_organizations_(professional,_youth,_ethnic)

UO_Social_movements

UO_Radical_right_organizations

UO_Regional_local_organizations

UO_Roman_Catholic_Church_and_related_organizations

UO_Orthodox_Church_and_related_organizations

UO_Other_churches_and_related_organizations

UO_Management,_boards_of_directors

UO_Domestic_business_owners

UO_Foreign_business_owners

UO_International_institutions

UO_Foreign_governments,_trade_offices

UO_Other

UO_Judiciary

UO_Banks

UO_Public_Services_(schools,_utilities,_hospitals)

UO_Identity_group

Authorities_intervention

- Intervention with use of force
- Intervention without use of force
- No intervention
- NA

(If "Authorities intervention" = "Intervention with use of force" or "Intervention without use of force", proceed here) Who_intervened

- Armed forces
- Police
- Private security
- Special forces/Riot politice
- NA

Casualties_1st_ report

- Police/Official authorities
- Protest organizers
- Other

Source unspecified

If one of the options chosen, type in reported numbers

No casualties
Death count
Wounded count
Arrested count
Material damage (in local currency, or a description of damaged objects and buildings)

Casualties_2nd_report

Police/Official authorities
Protest organizers
Other
Source unspecified

Negotiation_undertaken

Yes
No
NA

(If "Negotiation undertaken = Yes", proceed here) Negotiation_results

Rejected by the protestors
Rejected by the target of the protest
Accepted though did not lead to conflict resolution
Accepted and led to conflict resolution

Counter_protest_carried_out

Yes
No
NA

Counter_protest_description

ID of counter protest if recorded previously or description of protest

Official_reaction

Yes
No
NA

Official_recognition_of_grievances

Yes, entirely
Yes, partially
No
NA

Official_response

- Supportive
- Neutral
- Condemning
- Difficult to evaluate
- NA

Other_actor_reacted

- Yes
- No
- NA

Other_actors_reactions_1 - Other_actors_reactions_31 (list all actors who reacted in relation to protest event)

Appendix to Chapter 5

Chapter 5 relies on data collected by the Democracy, Citizenship and Elections research group from Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona within the POLAT project.

Anduiza E, Hernández E, Galais C, et al. (2021) POLAT Project. Spanish Political Attitudes. Dataset.

The data from the first 8 waves covering the time period from 2010 to 2016 is used for the analysis conducted in this dissertation. In the continuation I give an overview of used variables, procedure for their recoding, and English translation of the questions posed to the respondents in Spanish.

<u>Dependent variable:</u>

- Protest participation: Have you participated in a demonstration in the last six months?
    - dummy variable 1 - yes; 0 - no

<u>Independent variables:</u>

1) Objective economic situation
    - Income: What is your net monthly income?
        - 10 categories: 1 ≤ 300€; 2 = 301–600€; 3 = 601–900€; 4 = 901–1200€; 5 = 1201–1800€; 6 = 1801–2400€; 7 = 2401–3000€; 8 = 3001–4500€; 9 = 4501–6000€; 10 ≥ 6000€.
    - Job situation: What is your current job situation?
        - dummy variable: 0 - working and receiving the salary, 1 - unemployed, students, working without remuneration

2) Exposure to austerity policies

- Public subsidy recipient: Are you currently receiving any type of subsidy from the government?
    - dummy variable: 1 - yes, 0 - no

- Member of a public worker's household: Is the highest earning person in the household a public servant?
    - dummy variable: 1 - yes, 0 - no

3) Subjective economic situation

- Satisfaction with a personal economic situation: How would you rate your personal economic situation in a comparison to the one from a year ago?
    - ordinal: 1 - better, 2 - equal, 3 - worse

4) Political grievances

- Government evaluation: How would you rate the performance of the incumbent government?
    - ordinal: 1 - very good; 2 - good; 3 - average, 4 - bad; 5 - very bad
- Government evaluation: How would you rate the performance of the main opposition party?
    - ordinal: 1 - very good; 2 - good; 3 - average, 4 - bad; 5 - very bad
- Satisfaction with the state of economy: How are you satisfied with the current economic situation in the country?
    - ordinal: 1 - very good; 2 - good; 3 - average, 4 - bad; 5 - very bad

Controls

- Ideological self-placement: When we talk about politics, we normally use left-right scale. Where would you place yourself on the said scale?
    - 0 - maximum left - 10 - maximum right

- Political interest: How would you rate your interest in politics?
    - 1 - very interested; 2 - quite interested: 3 - somewhat interested; 4 - not at all