Do gender and party (still) matter for politics?
Conflict and Consensus in Political Institutions.
The Case of Regional Parliaments in Spain (1980-2007).

Paper prepared for the 2011 Annual Meeting of the
Asociación Española de Ciencia Política y de la Administración

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Abstract: Gender and party appear as the only two main variables explaining conflict and consensus in institutional politics. Contrary to what might be expected, the number of women in a parliament has an effect on the level of conflict in conducting politics. Similarly, the ideological nature of the party (leftist or conservative) has an effect in the level on conflict in parliaments in democratic systems. Using data coming from 17 regional parliaments, the authors present the interactions between consensus (and conflict) and different social and institutional factors.

Introduction

Like in many other parliamentary democracies, Spanish politics can be considered controversial although several works have found out that, in some respects, consensus is the dominant strategy among parties operating in the national parliament (Capo 1994, 2003, Mújica and Sánchez Cuenca 2006).[1] This pattern is common in other parliaments in Europe (Giuliani 1997, 2008, Saafeld 1990, Schmidt 2002, Burkhart and Lehnert 2008, Rose 1984). Factors like type of government, content of the bill, proponent of the bill (government, parliamentary group, citizens), have been considered explanatory factors of the level of consensus in parliaments.

However, there is no agreement on what should be considered consensus in politics (especially in parliaments passing bills). Furthermore, we know little about other explanatory factors like the social composition of parliaments or other institutional elements that could, theoretically, affect the level of agreement reached on parliaments to pass bills. Can we say, for instance, that a socially homogeneous chamber is more prone to pass legislation by consensus than a more diverse one? Can we expect that the ideology of the party holding the

[1] The investigation on which this study is based was partially financed by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Technology (CSO2008-02525). For comments, contact xavier.coller@aya.yale.edu or asantana@ceacs.march.es.

majority in Parliament affects the level of consensus? Or that the number of parliamentary groups in a chamber affects the chances for agreements among them? Our research indicates that gender and party, even after controlling for government color and parliamentary characteristics, are closely associated to the level of consensus in politics.

In order to asses the impact of social and institutional factors in the degree of agreement between parties, we have focused on the over 4000 laws passed by the 17 regional parliaments during the period 1980-2007.[2] Over half of them (53.8%) have been passed by consensus, which makes the Spanish regions a case prone to consensual politics, rather than a confrontational one. Data presented in this work are still provisional and, therefore, subject to revision and updates.

Dependent variable: consensus

Consensus is a slippery term that needs to be defined in order to become operative for research purposes. Consensus refers to a general agreement among the members of a group concerning a particular topic, values, beliefs, points of view, etc. It is different from the agreement between two or three large players in a group ignoring the rest of players. Consensus captures the idea that no member of a group is left out and that there is a common, widely shared, point of view, belief, value, etc. that is not actively rejected.

[2] We have worked with legislation passed until the end of the sixth legislature in regional chambers (until 2007). It should be taken into account that the so called "historical" regions have different electoral cycles (see appendix 1). We have included until the seventh legislature in Andalusia (ending in 2008), Catalonia (ending in 2007) and the Basque Country (ending in 2005), and until the sixth in Galicia (ending in 2005).

We understand “parliamentary consensus” in this vein. The main task of any democratic parliament is to pass laws. Parliamentarians can vote in favor, against or abstain. When a law has received negative votes, it means that the points of view, beliefs or interests of some individuals or groups are not taken into account during the lawmaking process and consequently, the bill is rejected by some parliamentarians or parliamentary groups.[3] If a bill is passed by unanimity or with no negative votes (ie, with some people or group abstaining), then, we can confidently say that no individual or group rejects or opposes the bill, showing therefore a degree of consensus. In order to make it operative the concept, we understand that “parliamentary consensus” can be measured by the proportion of laws passed in a legislature without negative votes. If a chamber passes 100 bills in a legislature and 30 of them have received, at least, one vote against it, then we will have a 70% of consensus in this term. We consider that the vote “abstention” is not a rejection of the bill and therefore contributes to the building of consensus.

This approach means that we are ruling out other ways of measuring “parliamentary consensus” as the one used by Mújica and Sánchez Cuenca (2006: 90) who understand it as “the concurrence between the main opposition party and the government in a parliamentary decision”. The reason is that these authors neglect that in parliamentary democracies, contrary to presidential ones, in a chamber there are other minority groups whose concurrence should be taken into consideration in the analysis of consensus building insofar they represent the interests, points of view, ideologies of other segments of society.[4] Our approach is

[3] See Appendix 3 for the law-making process in parliaments.

[4] We feel that an approach suitable to take into account all types of laws should be preferred to one that works best for laws that require only a qualified majority, i.e., the agreement of the two main parties to be passed, as Capo (1994, 2003) and Mújica and Sánchez-Cuenca (2006) do. These laws, called in Spain “organic” (leyes orgánicas), require a qualified majority of votes and, consequently, are conducive to some sort of consensus or agreement among the largest groups in a chamber. Considering only these laws to analyze the consensus level puts us in the path of what Giuliani (1997) calls “consociativismo” or agreement between two or three groups, rather than

closer to Giuliani's (2008:66) when he understands that a bill is consensual "only if it receives at least 95% of MP's votes in its favour".[5] Still, having a 5% of MPs representing different parties rejecting the bill might fit the consensus model with some difficulties and could raise concerns regarding the choice of this particular threshold: why not a 3%, a 10%, or a 25%?

We believe that the proportion of consensus as it is measured in this work is a solid, robust, clear and unambiguous indicator of the level of conflict in the parliaments. A high proportion of consensus indicates that, despite ideological and party rivalry, the members of the parliament were capable of incorporating the aspirations, interests and points-of-view of their rivals into the law (or more willing to do so). On the contrary, a low proportion of consensus indicates the existence of some degree of political conflict between the groups that compose the chamber. Perhaps this conflict is related to a certain incapability of dialogue and negotiation, basic aspects of the political system. A certain proportion of conflict is expected, as well as necessary to every democratic regime insofar as political parties (and their parliamentary groups) channel different interests, hopes, ways to face problems and their solutions, and different points-of-view. We will not enter into the debate on whether consensus or conflict is a better way to govern a society, which deals more with a moral problem, one in which, as social scientists, we are not interested in. We simply accept the fact that conflict occurs as often as consensus in democratic societies and both are necessary (in greater or lesser degree) to govern a society.

There is no a priori reason to believe that a different consensus level in the parliaments studied should be expected. Nonetheless, marked differences

consensus.

[5] There is no agreement on the way consensus is measured. An interesting approach might be the "agreement index" put forward by Hix, Noury and Roland (2007) that we still have to explore.

between chambers are visible in Table 1's data. There are very significant variations throughout time and territory. Also, the wealth of information allows us to ascertain different behaviors amongst the communities, beyond their "historical" or "common" regime distinction.[6]

Table 1. Proportion of consensus (1980-2007)

	Legislatures							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average
Andalucía	32.0	47.8	50.0	75.0	59.0	55.8	50.0	52.8
Aragón	84.1	78.3	64.8	56.6	84.8	52.4		70.2
Asturias	57.4	43.7	25.0	71.4	33.0	36.0		44.4
Cantabria								
Canary Islands	56.1	68.0	81.0	88.0	67.3	75.6		72.7
Castile- Mancha	61.9	43.6	25.9	73.6	57.8	88.2		58.5
Castile-León	63.3	75.0	45.4	35.7	38.7	57.1		52.5
Catalonia	93.7	62.8	75.0	77.2	70.4	76.1	63.3	74.1
Valencia	52.0	58.9	53.1	20.5	19.2	32.1		39.3
Estremadura	21.0	21.1	37.9	52.5	23.3	44.4		33.4
Galicia	57.5	45.2	13.6	20.4	25.0	22.5		30.7
Islas Baleares								
La Rioja	85.7	66.6	79.1	21.2	26.3	46.3		54.2
Madrid	48.0	72.9	78.9	63.1	39.7	37.0		56.6
Murcia	67.0	69.3	68.5	39.5	36.6	56.8		56.3
Navarre	**42.1**	**67.7**	61.5	**67.0**	**56.4**			58.9
Basque Country	57.3	58.3	74.3	59.4	50.8	33.8	35.4	52.8
Average	58.6	58.6	55.6	54.7	45.9	51.0	49.6	53.8
Average "common"	58.1	60.5	56.5	53.6	43.9	52.6		54.2
Average "historical"	60.1	53.5	53.2	58.0	51.3	47.1	42.7	52.3

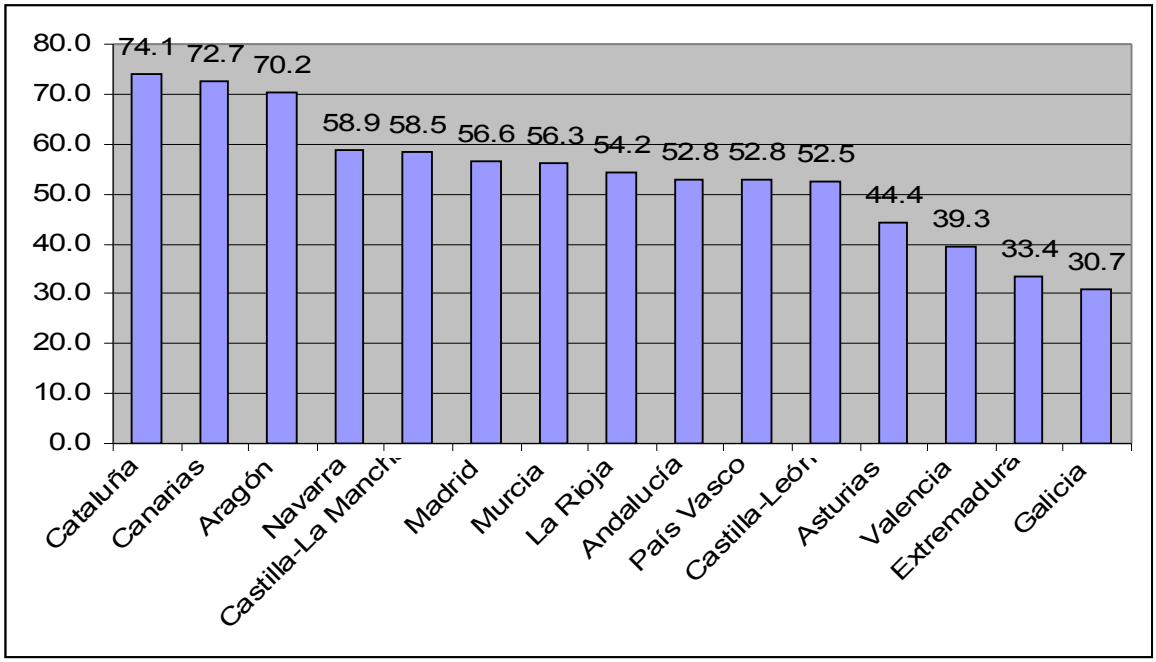
Source: Prepared according to information provided by the website of the regional chambers and the official newsletters (*boletines*) of the autonomous communities.
Notes: 1. Data in bold print are still provisional and being updated. 2. Missing data for Cantabria and the Balearic Islands. 3. The autonomous communities have different electoral cycles, which is why the legislative terms of the "historic communities" (Andalusia, Catalonia, Galicia and the Basque Country) do not coincide with the rest. In this respect, see appendix 1.

Table 1 reveals that the level of parliamentary consensus in the chambers is higher than expected if one pays attention to the ongoing battles maintained by the political parties in the public arena. Media tend to focus more on rivalries and dialectical battles than in agreements between rival parties. According to our data,

[6] Communities in Spain are divided into two groups. The regular ones (13) and the so called "historic" ones (4: Catalonia, the Basque Country, Galicia and Andalusia). The governments and parliaments of the latter have more powers and responsibilities in legislation and obtained earlier these powers. See Coller et al. (2008b) and Coller and Santana (2009) for the implications of these differences for parliaments.

more than half of the laws passed in the autonomous communities (54%) have been passed by consensus. The consensus rate is similar in historical communities (52%) as in the ones of the common regime (54%). On average, the most consensual community is Catalonia (74% of laws passed by consensus, without negative votes) and the most conflictive one is Galicia (only 31% of laws supported by all members of parliament). The legislature which shows the highest level of consensus is Catalonia's first (94%). The most conflictive one is Galicia's third (14%).

Figure 1. Average of consensus per region (1980-2007)



Source: See Table 1. **Note**: Still provisional values.

Figure 1 summarizes the average proportions throughout the period. The presence of three parliamentary blocs should be highlighted. On the one hand, there are the highly consensual communities such as Aragon, the Canary Islands and Catalonia, all with more than 70% of laws passed without negative votes. On the other hand, there is a bloc of more conflictive (or less consensual) communities, which are those whose proportion of laws passed by consensus is

lower than 45%: Galicia, Asturias, Valencia and Estremadura. Within this group, the low level of consensus reached by Galicia and Estremadura draws attention, with less than a third of their laws passed without negative votes, while the overall average is above 50%. Finally, we have the rest of the parliaments, whose proportion of consensus swings between 50% and 60%. These are the regional assemblies of the two Castiles, Rioja, Madrid, Murcia, Navarre and the Basque Country. Given this average variability, the first question to ask is why some communities have parliaments that pass laws with a high degree of consensus averages while in others MRPs are unable or unwilling to reach agreements as easily.

If we study the evolution of consensus, we also see some curious patterns. For example, in some cases, the level of consensus in the first legislative session (when the building of the autonomous community begins) is higher than that of the second. Catalonia, Aragon, Castile-La Mancha, Rioja, Asturias and Galicia follow along this line. At other times, for example, when there is a change of party in the government, a decrease in the level of consensus in the following legislative session is observed. Such is the case of the third and fourth sessions in Madrid, Valencia, Asturias, Rioja, and Murcia. In all of these cases, the PSOE ceases to govern the regional government and passes to the opposition in the fourth session while the PP comes from the opposition in the third to government in the fourth. This is also the case in the sixth and seventh legislature in Catalonia (changes from CiU to the three party coalition) and from the second to the third in Navarre (very preliminary results).

In any case in studying the behavior of parliamentary consensus, we are confronted with an enigma whose relevance lies less in its variability than in its

explanation. In the following section, we will explore some independent variables that might help to better understand the differences in the level of consensus. We rely on a double set of factors. On the one hand, we will work with some institutional hypotheses. On the other, we will discuss hypotheses of a more social character.

Results

Before the ample variation in the consensus rate, the question arises: which factors might account for this variation? Before advancing further, it is worth noting that, given that this is a fundamentally novel question, the analyses carried out here should be best interpreted as preliminary ones. We are still at our first steps at attempting to uncover the veil of the determinants of differential consensus, and results might vary somewhat because we are still improving some pieces of information of some of the legislatures for some regions. In order to shed light on this topic, we turned to sociodemographic, institutional and political variables:

The Sociodemographic model

The first set of variables that seems sensible to consider as possible explanatory factors of the differences in the average consensus rates among different parliaments are of sociodemographic nature. According to this approach, differences in the degree of political consensus of different parliaments might be traced to, might owe to social factors related to the characteristics of the

parliamentarians, such as their gender, place of birth, level of studies, age, and profession.

Are these variables actually relevant in determining the differences in the degree of political consensus of parliaments? In case they were, issues about the social composition of parliaments would have relevance beyond the traditional representation issues, such as whether certain groups (such as women) are represented fairly in our legislative bodies: they would also condition the consensual-conflictual propensity of parliaments.

To test for the possibility that the social characteristics of Members of Regional Parliaments (MRPs) affected the rate of consensus in parliaments, we ran a standard multivariate regression where "CONSENSUS" (the rate of consensus in a given parliament) is the dependent variable, and where we included as independent variables the proportion of women in that parliament (WOMEN), the proportion of MRPs born in the Autonomous Community or region (NATIVE), the proportion of MRPs holding a university degree (GRADUATE), the mean age of the MRPs (AGEMEAN), and the proportion of MRPs in the four largest or most common professional categories, i.e., lawyers, educators, business men and blue-collar workers (PROFESSION4). The results of this model are shown below, in Table 3.

As stated earlier, we have collected data on 15 autonomous communities for the period 1980 to 2007.[7] That includes data for legislatures 1 to 6 plus the seventh legislature in Catalonia, Andalusia and Basque Country. Considering that we have no data yet for the sixth legislature of Navarre, we have 92 data points for our dependent variable. The descriptive statistics concerning this variable have been presented above.

[7] For technical reasons we have not obtained data yet from Cantabria and the Balearic Islands.

As to our independent variables, the descriptive statistics are presented in the following table (we also include a summary for CONSENSUS):

Table 2. Sociodemographic variables: descriptive statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
CONSENSUS	92	54.0	19.5	13.6	93.7
WOMEN	92	18.3	12.0	0.0	48.9
NATIVE	92	84.8	10.2	49.5	100.0
GRADUATE	92	60.3	12.7	28.3	85.7
AGEMEAN	92	43.6	2.5	36.3	48.2
PROFESSION4	92	60.5	14.6	18.6	91.7

Thus, throughout this period and for the regions considered, the proportion of women has varied from a minimum of 0.0% up to a maximum of 48.9%, attaining a mean of 18.3%. The proportion of those who are native from the region ranged from 49.5% to 100.0%, with a mean of 84.2%. The proportion of graduates lied between 28.3% and 85.7%, with a mean of 60.3%. The mean age varied between 36.3 years and 48.2, and the mean among all parliaments was of 43.6 years. Finally, the proportion of those who belong to one of the overall most common professions (employers, blue-collar workers, lawyers and educators) lied between 18.6% and 91.7%, with a mean of 60.5%.

The results of the multivariate model just presented were the following ones:

Table 3. Baseline sociodemographic model

CONSENSUS	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	[95% Conf.	Interval]
WOMEN	**-0.49**	**0.23**	**-2.15**	**0.034**	**-0.95**	**-0.04**
NATIVE	-0.21	0.21	-0.99	0.325	-0.62	0.21
GRADUATE	-0.05	0.18	-0.27	0.79	-0.40	0.31
AGEMEAN	0.17	0.91	0.19	0.853	-1.64	1.97
PROFESSION4	-0.21	0.17	-1.21	0.23	-0.55	0.13
_cons	88.56	47.87	1.85	0.068	-6.60	183.72

N=92; F=0.262; R2=0.071; adjusted R2=0.018.

As Table 3 shows, only WOMEN turns out to be significant, and actually the model as a whole (F=0.262) does not contribute to a better understanding of the consensus rate. As to WOMEN, which it is significant at the 5% level (p=0.034), and its effect upon CONSENSUS is of a negative sign, indicating that, roughly, for each additional percentage point in the proportion of women in a regional parliament, the consensus rate drops by about half a percentage point (whether this is taken to be good or bad, an issue, we want to stress once again, we do not deal with in this paper; beta = -0.49). Given that the proportion of women varies from a minimum of 0.0% up to a maximum of 48.9%, this means that this variable may account for up to 24% of the consensus rate; it should be recalled that the total variation in the consensus rate is of 80.1% (93.7%-13.6%), so a substantial proportion of this variation would remain without explanation with a model exclusively focused in sociodemographic variables.

The significance of the gender variable raises the issue: which might be the causal mechanisms underlying such a relationship? As to the way we see it, two are the most promising lines of explanation: firstly, given that parliaments were clearly dominated by men at the beginning of the period –and still are, though to a lesser extent, at present) a higher proportion of women implies a higher heterogeneity of parliamentarians with regard to the gender variable. It might be that the higher the heterogeneity of parliamentarians (at least, with regard to gender), the more difficult it proved for them to strike agreements without dissenting voices. Secondly, it might be that women MRPs in regional parliaments were characterized by traits different to their male counterparts that might work as a hindrance towards high rates of consensus, such as a higher rotation and a lower permanence in parliaments, or a lower age. It might be argued that MRPs

who circulate more are likely to build weaker bounds with rivals and to have less experience so higher circulation of MRPs would lead to lower consensus;[8] similarly, younger MRPs might be less capable to arrive at agreements since younger people could be less pragmatic and more oriented by principles and ideology.[9] We intend to investigate on this possibility in a further study. We can already advance that, on average, women are younger than men (mean age for women is 40.5 versus 42.8 for men), and that this is actually true for all legislatures.

It might be suspected that these results could owe to the fact that some of the measures chosen were not the most appropriate. For instance, it might be suspected that the proportion of MRPs holding a level of studies of BA might not be the best measure for education: after all, there might be other educational levels MRPs might hold (primary, secondary, short career, or PhD), so including only the percentage of those holding a Bachelor degree might not capture the whole picture with regard to education.

We agree with this potential criticism, but we feel it to be preferable not to include information for the other categories since, for many region-year pairs, such information is based in a small number of cases; we also felt it inappropriate to include the mean of education since it is a categorical variable. In any event, we did test these alternatives. When the (to the best of our understanding, inappropriate alternative of the) mean of education is included instead of the percentage of graduates, it is actually insignificant (WOMEN retains its significance: for each percentage point more of women, the consensus rate falls

[8] This proposition is based upon one of the explanations given by Linz (1973:362-3) to understand the failure of the Second Spanish Republic.

[9] This idea is based upon the distinction between politicians that are oriented by an ethic of principles or those whose actions are oriented by and ethic of responsibility (Weber 1946). It is likely that political experience, usually associated to seniority, is not so common among young politicians, who might tend to be less pragmatic and more principled.

about half a percentage point, beta = -0.51; p=0.019; see Table 13, in the Appendix). When all categories (but one, to avoid the dummy variable trap: we left primary education as the reference category) are included, one of them, PhD, attains significance (for each percentage point more of PhDs in a parliament, the consensus rate increases a point and a half per cent; in this case, WOMEN looses its significance; see Table 14, in the Appendix). None of the remaining variables attains significance.

Similarly, it might be suspected that the mean age does not adequately reflect the whole picture with regard to age. Since we were actually concerned with this issue, we also included, in an additional model, the standard deviation of age. It was not significant, and results remained basically the same for all other variables (WOMEN fell just short of significance, p=0.052, beta=-0.046; see Table 15, in the Appendix).

A third line of inquiry might be to substitute the percentage in the four most common professions by the percentage of lawyers only. While the former could be taken as a measure of professional homogeneity (and the underlying hypothesis, that, the larger the homogeneity in professions, the larger the consensus rate), the latter could be defended on the basis that lawyers belong to what Norris and Lovenduski (1995: 115) label as “talking professions”: lawyers, so the argument goes, would be habituated to negotiate and to strike agreements, so a larger percentage of this particular professional group might be associated to higher consensus rates.[10] Nonetheless, the results of this alternative specification do not provide support for this hypothesis (the percentage of lawyers is clearly not significant, p=0.49; results available upon request).

[10] See as well Eulau and Sprague (1964).

Finally, since both regions and legislatures are repeated, the results could be subject to the suspicion that they might owe to the disregard of the panel nature of the data. In this case, since we are dealing with a population, a random effects model would not be appropriate, but several types of fixed-effects models could be computed.[11] We actually retested the model including dummies for each legislative period (leaving the first one as the reference category), but none of these dummies was significant, and results remained unaltered for the independent variables. We also retested the model including dummies for each region (leaving Andalusia as the reference category) and only the dummies for Canaries, Catalonia and Galicia were significant (nothing else changed). The following table shows the results obtained when we ran a model only with the dummies for these three regions:

Table 4. Sociodemographic model with fixed effects

CONSENSUS	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	[95% Conf.	Interval]
WOMEN	**-0.61**	**0.24**	**-2.6**	**0.011**	**-1.08**	**-0.14**
NATIVE	-0.17	0.20	-0.83	0.411	-0.58	0.24
GRADUATE	0.18	0.17	1.03	0.305	-0.17	0.53
AGEMEAN	0.45	0.97	0.46	0.645	-1.47	2.37
PROFESSION4	-0.27	0.15	-1.74	0.085	-0.58	0.04
Canary Isl.	**19.52**	**7.70**	**2.54**	**0.013**	**4.21**	**34.82**
Catalonia	**19.43**	**7.58**	**2.56**	**0.012**	**4.34**	**34.51**
Galicia	**-27.44**	**9.39**	**-2.92**	**0.004**	**-46.12**	**-8.76**
_cons	64.47	52.14	1.24	0.22	-39.23	168.17

N=92; F<0.001; R2=0.322, adjusted R2=0.257.

[11] Essentially, the main alternatives are the following ones: (1) dummies for each legislative period (but for one, to avoid the dummy variable trap) could be added to allow for different time intersects (to capture the idea that, all the rest being constant, average consensus rates would differ among different legislatures); alternatively, (2) dummies for each region (but for one) could be added, to allow for different regional intersects (to capture the idea that, all the rest being constant, average consensus rates would differ among different regions); (3) combination of the two former strategies; (4) dummies for the interaction among each legislative period (but for one) and each explanatory variable, to allow for different effects in different legislatures (to capture the idea that the effect itself of each variable could be time-dependent); notice, however, that, with four independent variables, this would imply 4*6=24 additional variables; (5) analogous to the former, but for regions –and, hence, with an even larger requirement of dummies.

As in previous models, WOMEN is significant at the 5% level (p=0.011, beta=-0.61). Its effect not only decreases, but it actually increases slightly: for each additional percentage point of women in a regional parliament, the rate of consensus drops by six tenths of percentage points. This result holds only once we take into account the panel nature of our data with a fixed-effects model that includes regional dummies. Now it is widely known that, from a theoretical point of view, such a strategy is subject to several criticisms.

In contemporary politics, most of the times, MPs vote according to the instructions of the parliamentary group' leaders. These leaders decide the direction of the vote and in so doing they can consult to the rest of the group, have a preliminary votation, check with experts or with the most influential MPs of the group. In any case, one could think that those MPs that make decisions concerning the passing of a law are those that should be studied in any analysis trying to discover the relationship between social features of a group and political consensus. Thus, a variant of the social demographic argument would consist in focusing in the social of this political hyperelite, that is to say, of those MRPs that conform the "nucleus" of decision making of the parliamentary groups (presidents and secretaries of committees, speakers of the group, chairpersons and secretaries of the regional chamber). At the end of the day, these MRPs are those who decide the orientation of the vote for the rest of the members of the parliamentary group.

To test for this variant, we reanalyzed our models for data regarding the hyperelite instead of the elite. The following table shows the descriptive statistics for the hyperelite:

Table 5. Sociodemographic variables: descriptive statistics (hyper elite)

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	M. ax
WOMEN	92	19.9	14.3	0.0	53.8
NATIVE	92	83.3	12.6	33.3	100.0
GRADUATE	92	60.6	15.2	25.0	94.4
AGEMEAN	92	43.5	2.9	34.3	49.2
PROFESSION4	92	67.1	11.5	33.3	100.0

As Table 5 shows, the figures for the hyperelite and for the elite do not differ too much; if we restrict the attention to the means, the average percentage of women increases from 18.3% in the elite to 19.9% in the hyperelite; for NATIVE, the corresponding figures are 83.3% versus 84.8%; for GRADUATE, 60.6% and 60.3%; for AGEMEAN, 43.5 years versus 43.6; the largest differences are for PROFESSION4: 67.1% and 60.5%. Overall, it seems that the hyperelite is a mirror image of the elite taken as a whole.

Nonetheless, average figures for the 92 region-legislatures might hide different distributions of the variables among the different parliaments, so it cannot be ruled out ex-ante that the effects of the sociodemographic variables for the hyperelite be different of those for the elite. Is it actually the case, then, that what matters is not so much the social background of all parliamentarians, but only the social background of the hyperelite, i.e., of those “who decide” within their parliamentary groups? The results retesting the model for the hyperelite do not support such a point of view:

Table 6. Baseline sociodemographic model for the hyperelite

CONSENSUS	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	[95% Conf.	Interval]
WOMEN(H)	-0.11	0.15	-0.71	0.481	-0.42	0.20
NATIVE(H)	-0.03	0.17	-0.2	0.838	-0.37	0.30
GRADUATE(H)	-0.18	0.14	-1.22	0.224	-0.46	0.11
AGEMEAN(H)	-0.78	0.75	-1.05	0.299	-2.28	0.71
PROFESSION4(H)	-0.02	0.18	-0.11	0.914	-0.38	0.34

_cons	105.13	41.20	2.55	0.012	23.23	187.04

N=92; F=0.619; R2=0.034; adjusted R2=-0.016.

In this case, none of the variables attains significance. We retested the model including the standard deviation of age, and results held qualitatively the same. The same is true for the inclusion of time- and regional-dummies (again, none of the time dummies was significant, and the regional dummies for the Canary Islands and Catalonia were significant, but the Galician dummy was not in this setting).

We also ran a model including both the sociodemographics for the elite and for the hyperelite. Results (see Table 16, in the Appendix) show that WOMEN remains significant and negative, and increases the size of its effect, while the corresponding variable for the hyperelite (WOMENH) is significant and of the opposite side, i.e., positive. Time-dummies do not add anything new to the model (and are not significant), and, when regional dummies are included, only the Galician dummy is significant, with results very similar to the ones just commented. We present these results in the following table.

Table 7. Sociodemographic model (elite, hyperelite, fixed model effects)

CONSENSUS	Coef.	Std. Err.	T	P>t	[95% Conf.	Interval]
WOMEN	**-1.79**	**0.46**	**-3.92**	**0**	**-2.70**	**-0.88**
NATIVE	-0.41	0.34	-1.19	0.238	-1.08	0.27
GRADUATE	**0.98**	**0.33**	**2.96**	**0.004**	**0.32**	**1.64**
AGEMEAN	2.34	1.27	1.84	0.069	-0.19	4.86
PROFESSION4	-0.33	0.18	-1.83	0.07	-0.69	0.03
WOMEN(H)	**0.76**	**0.35**	**2.16**	**0.034**	**0.06**	**1.47**
NATIVE(H)	0.47	0.28	1.66	0.1	-0.09	1.03
GRADUATE(H)	**-0.55**	**0.24**	**-2.28**	**0.025**	**-1.03**	**-0.07**
AGEMEAN(H)	-0.62	1.02	-0.61	0.545	-2.65	1.41
PROFESSION4(H)	-0.05	0.19	-0.24	0.812	-0.43	0.34
GALICIA	**-41.44**	**8.88**	**-4.66**	**0**	**-59.12**	**-23.76**
_cons	-8.35	48.82	-0.17	0.865	-105.51	88.81

N=92; F=0.002; R2=0.341; adjusted R2=0.251.

In this model, it is also noteworthy that a pattern similar to the one detected for gender applies to education: while the variable for elites (GRADUATE) is significantly positive (beta=0,98, p=0.004), indicating that each increase in the percentage of MRPs holding a graduate degree is matched by a similar increase in the consensus rate, this effect is downplayed by the negative sign of the corresponding variable for the hyperelite (GRADUATEH), which, again, has a lower effect in terms of magnitude (beta=-0.55; p=0.025). Note, finally, that the variable for the mean age of the elite (AGEMEAN) is not too far from having a significant positive effect upon the consensus rate (beta=2.34: p=0.069).

We also tried additional models (available upon demand) including the standard deviation of age and a measure of the heterogeneity of education for the hyperelite, as well as the percentage of those who conform the hyperelite (to test whether a smaller hyperelite vis à vis the elite would facilitate the achievement of consensual lawmaking), but none of these variables contributed to a better explanation of our dependent variable. Thus, in our view, the possibility of explaining the consensus rate on the basis of sociodemographic variables can be considered as exhausted with the previous analyses, and a further step needs to be taken.

It should be clarified that the results presented above for gender and graduates owe to a large degree to the high correlations between the variables for the elites and their counterparts for the hyperelites (0.93 for gender; 0.82 for native; 0.86 for graduates; 0.79 for the mean age; and 0.56 for the proportion in the four professions).

The Political-Institutional model

As opposed to the sociodemographic model (or as a complement to it), an alternative strand of explanation would place the differences in the degree of legislative consensus in parliaments in factors related to the nature of political competition and political institutions. We discuss them briefly and derive from them some preliminary hypothesis.

Any law that is passed without negative votes requires the (active or passive) support of every political group present in the chamber. The average number of groups per term is four, while the minimum is two (as in some of Castile-La Mancha's terms) and the maximum is eight (Navarre's second term). The parliament with the greatest number of groups is the Basque Country, followed by Navarre and Catalonia. Intuitively, it seems easier for three to arrive to an agreement than for eight, especially if we are speaking about polarized parliaments. Therefore, the **first hypothesis** that we want to test is the following: The greater the number of parliamentary groups, the lower the proportion of consensus in the chamber.

Now then, this hypothesis needs to be qualified, as a parliamentary group of 50 members in an 80-seat parliament is not the same as one of 3 in that parliament. Therefore, we have used to the Laakso and Taagepera index, called the Effective Number of Parties (ENP, cfr. Laakso and Taagepera 1979) whose use has been praised by Lijphard (1999:68).[12] Consequently, our **second hypothesis** consists of a reformulation of the first one in the sense that we consider not only the number of parliamentary groups, but alternatively their

[12] $N = 1/\Sigma s_i^2$, where N = effective number of parties, s = proportion of seats in the chamber, i = parliamentary group.

relative weight in the chamber. Consensus in the chamber of representatives is a function of the effective number of groups in a parliament.

The ENP has some virtues that may be surpassed by Sartori's Fragmentation Index (F, cfr Sartori 1976), which gives us a more accurate measure and indicates the degree of fragmentation in a parliament.[13] So then, our **third hypothesis** is also derived from the first one and it suggests that the degree of fragmentation of a parliament influences the level of consensus to pass laws. Take note that these three initial hypotheses do not take into account the degree of ideological distance between the groups present in a parliament. According to Capo (1983), it is much easier for two parties with opposite views to come to agreement if a mediator third exists which is ideologically equidistant from the polarized groups, moderating or drawing them closer. This could be the case of CDS (when it exists), of the UCD (in its very brief autonomous experience), or of other small parties such as the PAR in Aragon, the Majorcan Union in the Balearic Islands (who, in fact, have governed in coalition with the right and the left), the PA in Andalusia or some of other intermediate parties. Accordingly, the **fourth hypothesis** states that the existence of mediator parties between ideologically distant ones can promote political consensus in the parliaments.

According to the findings of Mújica and Sánchez-Cuenca (2006), a parliamentary group can be more or less inclined to build agreements based on the different number of votes (or seats) they have vis a vis its rivals independently of its position as supporter of the government or at the opposition in the chamber. When the difference in votes and/or seats between two parties is small, the opposition party may be tempted to mark out its own space in the public arena and

[13] $F = 1 - \Sigma s_i^{2,}$ where F = Sartori's Fragmentation Index, s = proportion of seats in the chamber, i = particular party.

reject pacts or agreements on laws with the aim to present a differentiated outlook to the electorate so as to overcome the voting gap in the subsequent elections. It is a way to prepare a victory in the next elections, which could result in a reduced level of consensus. A group could as well act with political responsibility and opt for legislative agreements in order to present themselves before the public opinion as a future governing party. In this case, the level of consensus will increase. Accordingly, the **fifth hypothesis** notes that the difference in number of votes (or seats) between the first and second parties may have an effect on the level of agreement between parliamentary groups at the time of passing laws in the chamber.

Now then, it can happen that a party wins the election and, due to parliamentary arithmetic, ends up in the opposition because two or more political groups have agreed to form a coalition to have the majority vote in the chamber. Such is the case of the three-party government in Catalonia in its recent sessions or the last legislature of the Canary Islands. It can happen that both the party that wins (but does not govern), as well as the majority party of the coalition government, want to present themselves as responsible parties for future governments, and therefore, they also end up agreeing on laws. It may be the case that the winner of the elections but not ruling party prefers to set distance with the coalition government to be perceived by the public opinion as having a distinctive outlook. In these cases the level of consensus in the chamber could also be affected by the presence of a party that wins but does not rule. Therefore, the **sixth hypothesis** derived is that the difference in number of votes (or seats) after the elections can have an effect on the level of consensus reached on laws passed in a session.

One might think that the national political climate between the two major contenders (The Popular Party and the Spanish Socialist Workers Party) can have an effect on the regional political climate. In times of political conflict and turbulence, the national parties can put strain on their relationship between and present themselves as unwilling to come to agreement, which can have an effect on the degree of cooperation between the regional branches of the national parties on law passage in the regional chambers. From here we derive the **seventh hypothesis**, which relates the consensus of the regional parliaments to the degree of national political conflict.[14]

After the elections, the parliament is formed by different parliamentary groups that may have a relative or absolute majority of seats. Absolute majorities facilitate government action as any legislative initiative that enters into the chamber can be passed by the group whose votes back the government. Therefore, the majority group will not need to build agreements nor to win the rivals group's votes when it comes to passing laws. On the contrary, the governments with the least backing will need the complicity (at the least) of other parliamentary groups when it comes to passing laws.[15] The group that backs the minority government must be guaranteed, at least, the abstention of other groups, in order to pass laws. Consequently, the **eighth hypothesis** derived is that the type of majority decided by the elections may impact the level of consensus in the

[14] To measure the level of national political conflict twenty outside observers were asked to rate their perception of political conflict on a scale of 0 a 10 in each of the legislatures of the Congress of Deputies. The observers were lawyers, journalists, university professors, but not politicians. The period mean was 5.88 and the mean score was from 4.75 for the second term (PSOE absolute majority) to 7.21 in the fifth and eighth legislature (both with a Socialist relative majority). The standard deviation was 0.84.

[15] This is the result obtained by Mújica and Sánchez-Cuenca (2006). In fact, absolute majorities of seats reduce the level of "viscosity" of the chamber (Blondel 1970:85) in the sense that the capability of resistance to government proposed legislation is dramatically reduced vis a vis legislatures in which no party has the absolute majority of seats.

legislature. Absolute majorities may generate a lower level of consensus than relative majorities.

In a similar manner, it is best to verify if the presence of one party or another in the government, or as a majority group, has some effect on the level of consensus registered in a parliament. For this study, we have chosen the two major national parties to check if differences exist in the proportion of consensus. The departure point of the **ninth hypothesis** indicates that no elements exist with which to consider that the party that governs, thanks to its parliament majority, will impact the proportion of laws passed by the regional assembly.[16] Nonetheless, for analytic purposes it is best to study whether the consensus increases or decreases when one of these parties governs alone. The **tenth hypothesis** seeks to clarify if there is a greater propensity to conflict or consensus when one or the other party governs, independently of the type of parliamentary majority that backs the government.

Perhaps it is best to stop briefly here in order to derive the **eleventh hypothesis**. On the one hand, we assume that the type of majority may affect the degree of consensus reached during the passing of different laws in a legislature. On the other hand, we point out that the governing party (and that which is in the opposition) can also show a greater predisposition toward consensus than other parties, which will affect the proportion of laws passed without negative votes. To test this hypothesis, we have decided to work with the information regarding the two major national parties, the PSOE and PP.

[16] A dummy variable was constructed in which the value 1 corresponds to the government participation of the PSOE and the value 0 corresponds to the government participation of the PP. The assignment of values is arbitrary and has no effect on the regression results. Note that the variable is “participating party of the government”. In most cases, and due to the strength of the two national parties, “participating” means leading.

The independent variables discussed above can be grouped into five groups of factors. Firstly, variables related to the political fragmentation of the parliament, which might be measured in several alternative ways, such as the number of parliamentary groups (NP), the effective number of parties, as defined by Laakso and Taagapera (NEP), Sartori's Fragmentation Index (FRAGMENTATION), or even by the presence or not of a mediating party (MEDIATOR, cfr. Capo 1983).

Secondly, variables related to the binomial of political concurrence and the existence of several parties with capacity to govern, which might also be measured several-fold: as the difference in votes among the two first parties (DIFVOTE), as the difference in seats (DIFSEATS), or as the existence of a party that wins in votes but does not conform the governing coalition (GOBTUR).

Thirdly, and somewhat related to the former, the type of parliamentary majority that exists in the chamber (MAJORITY), and whether the govern is a coalition of parties or not (COALITION). Fourthly, the ideology of the governing party; in most Spanish regional parliaments, either socialists (PSOE) or conservatives (PP) form part of the governing party or coalition. And, finally, the national political climate (CLIMATE), which measures de degree of national political conflict as perceived by a number of external observers.

Thus, the political model of the differences on the degree of legislative consensus in parliaments could be formalized as:

$$CONSENSUS_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 NP_i + \beta_2 NEP_i + \beta_3 FRAGMENTATION_i + \beta_4 MEDIATOR_i + \beta_5 DIFVOTE_i + \beta_6 DIFSEATS_i + \beta_7 GOBTUR_i + \beta_8 MAJORITY_i + \beta_9 COALITIÓN_i + \beta_{10} PSOE_i + \beta_{11} CLIMATE_i.$$ [17]

[17] Where NP = Number of parties; NEP = Laakso & Taagapera's effective number of parties; FRAGMENTATION = Sartori's fragmentation index; MEDIATOR = Number of mediating parties; DIFVOTE = Difference in votes between the two most voted parties; DIFSEATS = Difference in seats between the two most voted parties; GOBTUR = existence of a party that wins in votes but

Before presenting the results of the political model, we wish to show the descriptive statistics of the variables involved:

Table 8. Political variables: descriptive statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
NP	92	4.26	1.33	2	8
NEP	92	2.84	0.83	1.90	5.65
FRAGMENTATION	92	0.62	0.09	0.47	0.82
MEDIATOR	92	0.60	0.88	0	4
DIFVOTE	92	12.88	7.89	0.16	35.71
DIFSEATS	92	11.39	8.98	0	49
GOBTUR	85	0.06	0.24	0	1
MAJORITY	86	0.65	0.48	0	1
COALITION	87	0.20	0.40	0	1
PSOE	85	0.54	0.50	0	1
NONE	85	0.12	0.32	0	1
CLIMATE	81	5.87	0.85	4.75	7.71

As Table 8 shows, the number of parties in Spanish regional parliaments ranges from 2 to 8, with a mean of 4.3; the effective number of parties (which takes into account parties' relative size, and assigns lower wages to parties with less seats) is, naturally, lower, ranging from 1.9 to 5.7, and with a mean of 2.84. Sartori's fragmentation index ranges from 0.47 to 0.82, with a mean of 0.62. The number of mediating parties lies between none and four, with a mean of 0.60.

As it was to be expected, the first three variables (the number of parties; the effective number of parties; and Sartori's fragmentation index), capturing, as they do, very similar concepts, present an extremely high correlation among them (results available upon demand). Thus, only one of them can be included in a

does not form government (1 = existence of this trait; 0 = absence); CLIMATE = national political climate (0 to 10 scale, increasing with the degree of political conflict); MAJORITY = existence of a party winning with absolute majority (1 = existence; 0 = absence); COALITIÓN = existence of a coalition government (1 = coalition; 0 = without coalition); PSOE = participation of the PSOE in the governing coalition (1 = yes; 0 = no).

regression at a time. We opted for including the effective number of parties, NEP (although the difference of including one or the other should be minor, precisely given their high correlation, nearly reaching a perfect correlation; actually, we also ran a model with FRAGMENTATION instead of NEP, available upon request, and the results were qualitatively the same).

As to the variables related to the binomial of political concurrence, DIFVOTE ranges from the extremely close situation where the vote difference is of a bare 0.16% to the extremely non-competed situation where this difference amounts to a full 35.71%, with a mean of 12.9%. This translates into seat difference (DIFSEAT) between the two largest parties of a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 49. GOBTUR (the existence of a party that wins in votes but cannot be in government) is, logically, a dichotomous variable: this situation is characteristic of 6% of regional parliaments.

Not surprisingly, DIFVOTE and DIFSEATS display as well to high a correlation to be simultaneously included (ro=0.80). We opted for including the latter in our regression analyses, since the number of seats is more closely connected to power and, hence, to the law making processes and dynamics in parliament.

MAJORITY, COALITION, PSOE and NONE are all dichotomous variables. 65% of regional parliaments host majoritarian governments, and 20%, coalition governments. PSOE governed in 54% of regional chambers, while governments involving neither PSOE nor PP supposed 12% of the cases (hence, PP governed in 34% of the cases). Finally, CLIMATE (a measure of the level of national political conflict measured on a ten-point scale) ranges from 4.75 to 7.71, and has a mean of 5.87. None of these correlate highly with any other variables (the highest

correlation, 0.59, is between MAJORITY and FRAGMENTATION, which, in any case, is not included in the analyses).

Now the next thing to do is to attempt at answering to the question of whether political institutional variables play a role in explaining the rate of consensus in parliaments. The following table shows the results of our political institutional model:

Table 9. Baseline political – institutional model

CONSENSUS	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	[95% Conf.	Interval]
NEP	-2.21	3.28	-0.67	0.504	-8.76	4.34
MEDIATOR	4.11	3.63	1.13	0.262	-3.14	11.36
DIFSEATS	-0.36	0.25	-1.44	0.154	-0.86	0.14
GOBTUR	19.15	10.90	1.76	0.084	-2.63	40.94
MAJORITY	-9.50	5.77	-1.65	0.105	-21.02	2.03
COALITION	5.66	7.25	0.78	0.438	-8.82	20.13
PSOE	**9.77**	**4.43**	**2.21**	**0.031**	**0.92**	**18.62**
NONE	**24.96**	**7.37**	**3.39**	**0.001**	**10.24**	**39.68**
CLIMATE	-2.87	2.50	-1.15	0.254	-7.86	2.12
_cons	73.79	18.35	4.02	0	37.13	110.45

N=74; F<0.001; R2=0.388; adjusted R2=0.302.

Table 9 shows that most of the political institutional variables do not affect the rate of consensus in parliaments. The notable exceptions are PSOE and NONE (the reference category being governments conformed by PP). Both have a positive effect upon the consensus rate. The fact that a government is conformed by PSOE instead of by PP increases the consensus rate in nearly 10 percentage points, while the fact of not being conformed by any of the two parties increases the consensus rate in nearly 25 percentage points (we performed a Wald test to discern whether the effects of PSOE and NONE could be subsumed within a single variable, i.e. whether they were equal, but we had to reject such a hypothesis: p=0.042).

Naturally, most governments not conformed by neither PSOE nor PP take place in specific regions (with a marked national or regional identity; again, this is not the issue of our essay). The question, then, arises, as to whether this effect will still hold once the panel structure of our data is taken into account. As in all previous analyses, time-dummies were not significant and their introduction did not affect the results shown above. Only one regional dummy was significant, the one for Estremadura. The following table provides the results for such regression:

Table 10. Political – institutional model, fixed effects

CONSENSUS	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	[95% Conf.	Interval]
NEP	-2.28	3.08	-0.74	0.462	-8.43	3.87
MEDIATOR	3.27	3.42	0.96	0.343	-3.56	10.10
DIFSEATS	-0.37	0.24	-1.57	0.122	-0.84	0.10
GOBTUR	19.02	10.24	1.86	0.068	-1.44	39.48
MAJORITY	-9.10	5.42	-1.68	0.098	-19.93	1.73
COALITION	2.88	6.86	0.42	0.676	-10.84	16.59
PSOE	**13.16**	**4.30**	**3.06**	**0.003**	**4.57**	**21.75**
NONE	**25.25**	**6.92**	**3.65**	**0.001**	**11.42**	**39.07**
CLIMATE	-2.79	2.34	-1.19	0.238	-7.48	1.89
Extr	**-23.65**	**7.63**	**-3.1**	**0.003**	**-38.90**	**-8.40**
cons	74.00	17.23	4.3	0	39.57	108.44

N=74; F<0.001; R2=0.469; adjusted R2=0.385.

Results remain basically unaltered. Again, PSOE and NONE have positive effects. It is remarkable that the effect of NONE does not fade after taking the panel nature of our data into account (it actually mounts slightly); the effect of PSOE also increases somewhat. Again, a Wald test of the equality of these two variable yields to the rejection of the equality hypothesis.

Comprehensive model

Finally, we tested a comprehensive model, including both sociodemographic and political institutional variables (since sociodemographic variables for the elite and for the hyperelite correlate very highly with each other, we show here the results for the former, although the results for the latter are very similar to the ones shown here; they are available upon request):

Table 11. Political – institutional model, fixed effects

CONSENSUS	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	[95% Conf.	Interval]
WOMEN	-0.42	0.29	-1.43	0.157	-1.01	0.17
NATIVE	-0.13	0.22	-0.58	0.567	-0.58	0.32
GRADUATE	-0.01	0.20	-0.05	0.959	-0.42	0.39
AGEMEAN	0.87	1.14	0.76	0.448	-1.42	3.17
PROFESSION4	-0.10	0.20	-0.48	0.636	-0.50	0.31
NEP	-1.45	3.79	-0.38	0.704	-9.02	6.13
MEDIATOR	3.28	3.88	0.84	0.402	-4.49	11.04
DIFSEATS	-0.34	0.27	-1.25	0.215	-0.88	0.20
GOBTUR	12.26	12.09	1.01	0.314	-11.92	36.45
MAJORITY	-9.17	5.95	-1.54	0.129	-21.08	2.74
COALITION	8.10	7.95	1.02	0.312	-7.80	23.99
PSOE	**11.15**	**5.55**	**2.01**	**0.049**	**0.05**	**22.25**
NONE	**23.07**	**7.84**	**2.94**	**0.005**	**7.39**	**38.75**
CLIMATE	-0.86	3.24	-0.27	0.792	-7.35	5.63
cons	45.65	60.20	0.76	0.451	-74.82	166.12

N=74; F=0.002; R2=0.417; adjusted R2=0.278.

This latter model suggests that, once political variables are taken into account, sociodemographic variables are not significant. In particular, WOMEN ceases to be significant. PSOE and NONE maintain their significance and retain their effects relatively unaltered. These results hold also if only the variables that turned out in the previous models (WOMEN, PSOE and NONE) are included in the regression. We also retested the model for the sociodemographic variables for the hyperelites, and results were essentially the same.

Conclusions

This is a preliminary exploration using data that are still provisional. Therefore, we have to be very cautious about our conclusions. Our results indicate that the presence of women could be related to a lower level of consensus, but we still have to double check it and find out why. Also, when the PSOE governs and the PP is in the opposition, the level of consensus grows. Contrary, when the PP controls the regional government and the PSOE is in the opposition the level of conflict increases. Since agreements are always a matter of two (or more) parties, the responsibility for the growing levels of conflict or consensus should be attributed to both national parties.

Aside from the factors considered in this paper, there exist, following the findings of Mújica and Sánchez-Cuenca (2006) , a third group of factors that might impinge upon the degree of legislative consensus in parliaments, namely, factors related to the type of laws. It is highly likely that the degree of consensus that different types of laws may be apt to bring about depends on the nature of the law itself. Laws regarding the labor market, religious issues or the environment might be associated to different levels of conflict, not only among parties but also within a given party.

An analysis that took this into account would require to codify the 4148 of laws passed by the different regional parliaments during the period of study considered here.[18] It would also have the advantage of increasing the number of data points available for our analyses, since we would no longer need to deal with averages for each parliament. We have not been able to carry out this task yet, but it is one of our priorities for further studying this topic.

[18] Note that bills passed in Cantabria and the Balearic Islands are not included yet.

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Appendix 1

Table 12. Elections and seats in Spain

Appendix 2

Table 13. Sociodemographic model with EDUCMEAN

CONSENSUS	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	[95% Conf.	Interval]
WOMEN	**-0.51**	**0.21**	**-2.39**	**0.019**	**-0.94**	**-0.09**
NATIVE	-0.13	0.20	-0.64	0.521	-0.54	0.27
EDUCMEAN	13.49	9.42	1.43	0.156	-5.23	32.22
AGEMEAN	0.10	0.88	0.11	0.911	-1.66	1.85
PROFESSION4	-0.21	0.17	-1.23	0.223	-0.55	0.13
_cons	34.51	54.60	0.63	0.529	-74.02	143.05

N=92; F=0.132; R2=0.092; adjusted R2=0.040.

Table 14. Sociodemographic model with all educational dummies

CONSENSUS	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	[95% Conf.	Interval]
WOMEN	-0.20	0.27	-0.75	0.456	-0.73	0.33
NATIVE	-0.21	0.20	-1.03	0.307	-0.61	0.19
SECONDARY	-0.31	0.64	-0.49	0.625	-1.59	0.96
SHORTCAREER	0.63	0.52	1.21	0.228	-0.40	1.67
GRADUATE	0.22	0.53	0.42	0.672	-0.82	1.27
PHD	**1.26**	**0.59**	**2.16**	**0.034**	**0.10**	**2.43**
AGEMEAN	-0.65	0.94	-0.69	0.493	-2.53	1.23
PROFESSION4	-0.12	0.17	-0.7	0.487	-0.46	0.22
_cons	79.98	60.20	1.33	0.188	-39.75	199.71

N=92; F=0.051; R2=0.157; adjusted R2=0.076.

Table 15. Sociodemographic model with the standard deviation of AGE

CONSENSUS	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	[95% Conf.	Interval]
WOMEN	-0.46	0.23	-1.97	0.052	-0.92	0.00
NATIVE	-0.20	0.21	-0.94	0.350	-0.61	0.22
GRADUATE	-0.02	0.18	-0.09	0.925	-0.38	0.34
AGEMEAN	0.03	0.92	0.03	0.976	-1.80	1.86
AGESTD	1.32	1.39	0.95	0.343	-1.44	4.08
PROFESSION4	-0.21	0.17	-1.19	0.238	-0.55	0.14
_cons	79.40	48.85	1.63	0.108	-17.72	176.53

N=92; F=0.288; R2=0.081; adjusted R2=0.016.

Table 16. Sociodemographic model (elite and hyperelite)

CONSENSUS	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P>t	[95% Conf.	Interval]
WOMEN	**-1.49**	**0.51**	**-2.95**	**0.004**	**-2.50**	**-0.48**
NATIVE	-0.61	0.38	-1.6	0.114	-1.36	0.15
GRADUATE	0.42	0.35	1.2	0.232	-0.27	1.11
AGEMEAN	0.78	1.37	0.57	0.569	-1.95	3.51
PROFESSION4	-0.23	0.20	-1.13	0.261	-0.63	0.17
WOMEN(H)	**0.88**	**0.40**	**2.21**	**0.03**	**0.09**	**1.67**
NATIVE(H)	0.35	0.32	1.11	0.271	-0.28	0.98
GRADUATE(H)	-0.37	0.27	-1.4	0.166	-0.91	0.16
AGEMEAN(H)	-0.77	1.14	-0.68	0.501	-3.05	1.50
PROFESSION4(H)	0.00	0.22	0	0.999	-0.43	0.43
cons	96.73	48.55	1.99	0.05	0.13	193.32

N=92; F=0.131; R2=0.162; adjusted R2=0.059.

Appendix 3

How bills are produced and passed in parliaments?

It is beneficial to focus briefly on the legislative process in order to better understand the way in which the dependent variable has been measured.[19] Although parliamentary groups and citizens (*iniciativa legislativa popular*) can promote the presentation of laws to the chamber, generally speaking, legislative production is an activity that usually depends on the executive sending bills to parliament for their debate.[20] Once admitted to the chamber, the project or proposition is sent to one of the various committees in which MRPs work. The bill is debated and its contents negotiated and amended in these committees. If there is agreement between the members of the commission, a report (*dictamen*) will be issued to be voted on by all members of parliament in a plenary session (*pleno*). If there is no agreement, the law proposal and its amendments will be sent to the chamber's plenary session as well. In one way or another, all members of parliament take up the activity of the corresponding commission. The members can, at this time, recuperate the commission's un-passed amendments or continue debating the law's contents, structure, justification and articles. The final result of these deliberations is a vote, whether for the totality of the bill or for individual (or groups of) articles of it. Here we focus on the case of the bills passed by the chamber.

In the case that the entire law is voted on, the following situations can occur depending on the chamber: approval by simple or absolute majority, unanimity, or assent.[21] In any case, a law can be passed with or without negative votes. The existence of negative votes implies that a segment of parliament's members rejects it, although their number is not sufficiently large to obstruct its approval. The negative vote on a bill in a plenary session, after the commission's negotiation, indicates that the points of view, the proposals, the interests, and the aspirations of certain members have not been incorporated into the future law. Insofar as the members of parliament represent the portion of society who has elected them, it can be said that the existence of negative votes in the passage of a bill implies that it does not take into account part of the aspirations or interests of a portion of society. A law passed without negative votes may have received an abstention vote from one or various members of parliament that do not oppose the law, but neither

[19] There are other parliamentary activities such as questions, motions, non-law propositions, but none are as socially relevant as a law.

[20] When the government presents a bill to the parliament, we are dealing with what is called a "law project" (*proyecto de ley*). If the legislative initiative comes from parliamentary groups or organized citizens, we are dealing with what is called a "law proposition" (*proposición de ley*).

[21] In some of the first legislative sessions (for example, the first years of Estremadura's first legislative period) the votes were calculated by estimation (*tanteo*).

do they support it in an enthusiastic manner. In this case, it can be said that the law incites the consensus of the chamber as it brings together the points of view of different individuals and groups. This consensus can be “strong”, when there is unanimity or assent for a bill, or “weak”, when members of parliament abstain from voting in favor or against. For our study, we have opted to work with the “weak consensus” definition, considering that the laws passed by unanimity or assent are scarce.

In the construction of the “consensus” variable, we run into the following problem: when MRPs have not reached in the committee an agreement about the content of the future law, the normal process is to submit the amendments and the articles of the bill to a vote in the plenary session of the parliament. In such cases, we have a law that is voted on article by article, or in groups of articles. In order to take these laws into account, we have established a threshold of 25% of articles with negative votes, to consider whether an agreement on the law has been reached or not. Thus, for example, if in a law of 100 articles, 70 of them have negative votes, the law has been considered “unconsensed”. On the contrary, if 20% of the articles received negative notes, it has been considered that the law was closer to consensus. It is possible that we could have opted for a lower (or higher) threshold, but, on the analogy of the more strict qualified majorities, the decision was made to choose that of 25% of the articles of the laws voted by article or by groups of them.

Once the number of bills passed in a legislature was obtained, and the number of those that were passed by “weak consensus”, the proportion of parliamentary consensus was obtained. The inverse of this proportion is the measure of parliamentary conflict. For example, in the first legislature of Catalonia, 79 laws were passed, of which 94% were by consensus. On the contrary, in Galicia’s third legislature, 44 laws were passed with a consensus proportion of 14%. According to data on Table 2 (see below), both legislatures mark the maximum and minimum of parliamentary consensus, respectively. We believe it obvious to say that one legislature was more consensual than the other; that is to say that the members of parliament of Catalonia’s first legislature were more capable of integrating their rival’s points-of-view into the law making process than were members of parliament in Galicia’s third legislature.