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Political distrust and support for
anti-establishment parties in hard
times
Panel and longitudinal evidence of the
association between political distrust and
voting for anti-establishment parties

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TESI DOCTORAL UPF/2020

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For my family.

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Abstract

This thesis revolves around the relationship between distrust in the main actors of political representation (political parties and politicians) and voting for anti-establishment parties (AEP). While the research does not deny the argument according to which support for AEP largely depends on political distrust, it sheds new light on this association. First, the political attitude has not only a direct, but also a conditional effect on the voting behavior, especially when considering other factors like the economy. Second, supporting an AEP leads to a further political distrust. In other words, the political attitude and the voting behavior reinforce each other, by activating a 'spiral of distrust'. These arguments are developed in three empirical chapters. In the first article, based on pooled surveys from the European Social Survey (2004-2016) and macroeconomic data gathered from the Eurostat, we performed a multilevel analysis to analyze the individual and contextual factors of the voting for AEP. In the second paper we analyze, with an original panel survey conducted in Spain between 2014 and 2016, the rise of *Podemos* and *Ciudadanos* at the 2015 elections. Instead, the third study, based on a comparative analysis of five panel studies, evaluates the impact of having voted for an AEP on the change in the levels of distrust.

Resumen

Este trabajo de tesis se centra en la relación entre desconfianza en los principales actores de representación política (partidos políticos y su elite) y voto a los partidos anti-establishment (AEP). Mientras esta investigación no cuestiona el argumento según el cual el voto a los AEP se debe en gran medida a la desconfianza política, lo que sí hace es arrojar nueva luz acerca de esta asociación. En primer lugar, sostenemos que la desconfianza política no solo tiene un impacto directo, sino también condicional sobre el voto a los AEP, especialmente si consideramos otros factores (como por ejemplo la economía). En segundo lugar, el voto a los AEP lleva a una ulterior desconfianza política. En otras palabras, la actitud política y el comportamiento electoral se refuerzan recíprocamente, activando un mecanismo de 'espiral de la desconfianza'. Esos argumentos serán desarrollados a lo largo de tres artículos empíricos. En el primer *paper*, basado en un análisis agregado de la Encuesta Social Europea (2004-2016) y de los datos macroeconómicos obtenidos por el Eurostat, realizaremos un análisis multinivel para analizar los factores individuales y contextuales que explican el voto a los AEP. En el segundo artículo analizaremos, con inéditos datos de panel recolectados en España entre 2014 y 2016, el origen de *Podemos* y *Ciudadanos* en las elecciones de España del 2015. Finalmente, el tercer estudio, basado en un análisis comparado de cinco estudios de panel, analiza el impacto de haber votado por un AEP sobre el cambio en los niveles de desconfianza.

List of original publications

This PhD thesis consists of three original publications or papers under review.

Chapter 2

> Serani, D. (2019). A time-series cross-sectional analysis of the impact of political distrust and the economy in the aftermath of the Great Recession. *European Politics and Society*, online first. DOI: 10.1080/23745118.2019.1672918

Chapter 3

This chapter represents a more developed and refined version of a chapter published in an edited book. The author of this dissertation is the sole author of the chapter.

> Torcal, M. and Serani D. (2018). Confianza política y nuevos partidos en las Elecciones Generales de España del 2015. In Torcal, M. (ed.), *Opinión pública y cambio electoral en España. Claves ante el reto europeo y la crisis política y económica* (pp. 173-199). Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas.

Chapter 4

Under review in West European Politics at the time of writing.

> Serani, D. (2019). A spiral of distrust? Panel evidence on the association between political distrust and support for challenger parties in Europe. West European Politics. Manuscript number FWEP-2019-0217.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Under which conditions do people vote for anti-establishment[1] parties (from now, AEP), namely those parties that challenge the *status quo* in terms of major policy issues, perceive themselves as a challenger to mainstream parties and accuse all the establishment parties - either in government or in opposition – to be essentially the same? Why did these parties enjoy a considerable amount of success over the last three decades? These questions are not new in the academia, and a wealth of scholars devoted their efforts in explaining the increasing electoral success of those parties that challenge the traditional political establishment (Abedi, 2004; Betz, 1994; Mudde, 2007; Norris, 2005). Among the theoretical arguments that have been traditionally used to explain the support for AEP, the protest voting theory claims that such behavior is motivated by voters' distrust in the political system and its main institutions and it is a way to express people's discontent with the established political elite (Bergh, 2004; van der Brug, Fennema and Tillie, 2000; Passarelli and Tuorto, 2016).

The debate about the impact of political distrust on the support for challenger parties has been renewed in the wake of the Great Recession that hit Europe since 2008. As it has been discussed in the literature on public opinion and political attitudes, the severity of the economic crisis and the fiscal policies adopted by some national government in response to the crisis altered to a large extent the relationship between citizens and their elected representatives. In particular, the implementation of harsh austerity measures for structural reforms of the welfare state and the labor market -which have been explicitly imposed by supranational institutions, such as the European Central Bank- fueled the perception that the traditional political elite was more worried about responding to external demands than to citizens' needs, which in turn made completely ineffective the mainstream political consensus and the standard democratic discourse (Armingeon and Baccaro, 2012; Armingeon and Guthmann, 2014). As a consequence of that, the main actors of political representation (political parties and politicians) underwent a severe

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[1] As it will be explained in detail in Section 1.1.1, for the purposes of this thesis we will use the terms 'anti-establishment parties' and 'challenger parties' (given the nature of anti-establishment parties to challenge mainstream parties and oppose the *status quo*) as synonyms.

crisis of confidence and legitimization, which can be observed by the increasing distrust in the traditional political establishment (Bermeo and Bartels, 2014; Torcal, 2014).

According to a large number of studies, such an important increase in the distrust in the main actors of political representation led to a massive desertion of mainstream parties and a progressive breakdown of the established party system, which paved the way to a further electoral success of anti-establishment parties and the successful rise of new challenger contenders (Bermeo and Bartels, 2014; Hernández and Kriesi, 2016; Hino, 2012; Hobolt and Tilley, 2016). In fact, as can be observed in Figure 1, support for AEP increased in Europe in the aftermath of the Great Recession, at the same time as the vote share of mainstream parties sharply decreased over the same period. This process has been especially evident in Southern and Eastern Europe, which were the regions most hardly hit by the economic and political crises.

The success of AEP in detriment of mainstream political actors shall not be surprising, as the rise and success of the former has been often conceived as a reaction to the failure of the latter to respond to citizens' demands of political representation, as well as their incapacity in addressing new issues arising from the society -such as globalization or immigration- (Canovan, 1999; Gidengil *et al.*, 2001; Mény and Surel, 2002; Mudde, 2007). It is also a clear symptom of the rejection of mainstream European politics (Norris, 2005) and the product of the 'much-cited, but rarely defined, "political malaise", manifested in steadily falling turnouts, declining party memberships, and ever-greater numbers of citizens in surveys citing a lack of interest and distrust in politics and politicians' (Albertazzi and McDonnell, 2008: 2). Under these conditions, the economic crisis acted as a catalyst of people's discontent with the established political elite (Kriesi and Pappas, 2015), which in turn may have accentuated the protest voting mechanism by fostering even more rapidly the success of challenger parties.

Figure 1: Vote shares of different types of parties in Europe (2002-2018)
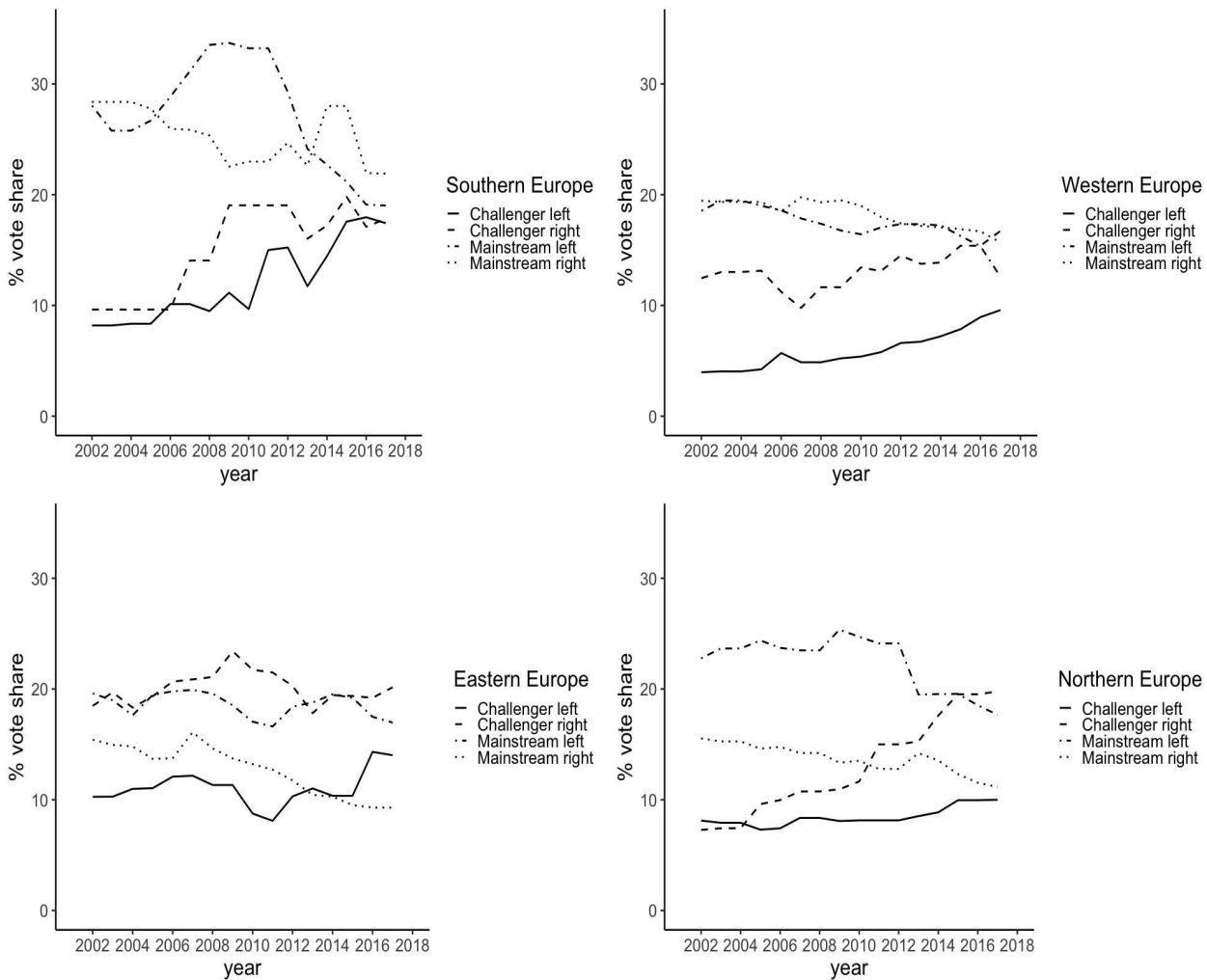
Source: Own elaboration. Electoral data are obtained by Parlgov. The classification of the parties has been established according to the list provided in Table 11 in the Appendix A2. Note: These graphs show the mean vote share in national general elections holding vote share constant between elections.

Nevertheless, the electoral success of challenger parties cannot only be explained by the lack of political trust, the bad macroeconomic conditions or the perception of the incumbents' mismanagement of the economic situation. The support for an AEP is also a matter of how far or close are mainstream parties with respect to the people's perception of their ideological positions. To a certain extent, this issue may also become relevant in a situation of economic hardship or during a political crisis, in which mainstream parties tend to converge towards the center or to adopt very similar policies to tackle the economic downturn (Lupu, 2014; Morgan, 2009; Roberts, 2013). In this regard, we should distinguish between two different scenarios: alienation and indifference (Dassoneville and Hooghe, 2016). As it will be explained throughout the dissertation, alienation and indifference represent two different situations, which may give rise to the

electoral fortunes of different kind of challenger parties. While the former implies the estrangement between voters and the whole established party system (which may favor more radical or extreme political options), the latter entails the lack of distinctiveness between the main established parties, which in turn may result to an increasing support for challenger non-radical formations. As in the case of the economy, also in this situation political distrust may intervene in the relationship between issue positions and voting for AEP. But, in contrast with the conventional wisdom, in this case the political attitude may alleviate the impact of alienation on the success of (radical) challenger parties.

Overall, the preceding arguments are related with the electoral consequences of people's distrust in the main actors of political representation, that is to what extent political distrust is (directly or conditionally) associated with the voting for anti-establishment parties. However, which are the consequences of having voted for a challenger party at the previous election on the individual change in the levels of political distrust? Did this kind of behavior contribute to fuel or alleviate voters' mistrust in their elected representatives? As far as this issue is concerned, these questions have been barely addressed in the literature on voting behavior and political attitudes, and the few studies carried out in this direction drew mixed, contradictory and inconsistent findings. This gap in the literature may be partially explained by the relatively scarce usage of panel data, which are the best-suited tool to address these questions (Hooghe and Dassoneville, 2016; Rooduijn, van der Brug and de Lange, 2016).

In this regard, two conflicting conclusions have been drawn. On the one hand, it has been argued that those who supported an AEP became more distrustful regarding the main actors of political representation than supporter of any other party, because of their exposition to the anti-establishment discourse. In this sense, the political attitude and the voting behavior reinforce each other, by activating a 'spiral of distrust' mechanism according to which those who voted for an AEP because of the lack of trust became even more distrustful towards the elected representatives (Hooghe and Dassoneville, 2016). On the other hand, the 'alleviating distrust' mechanism claims that the supporters of challenger parties tend to reduce their distrust in the traditional actors of representation (Miller and Listhaug, 1990). Due to the potentiality of AEP of representing and giving voice to the excluded groups of the society, this kind of parties are able to channel back

in the political arena people's discontent, by acting as 'safety valve' for the stability of the political system (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012).

All in all, this thesis will address all these issues, in order to shed light on the complex relationship between distrust in the main actors of representation (political parties and politicians) and support for challenger parties. In the next sections of this introduction, we will first provide an operational definition of the main concepts used throughout the thesis. Successively, we will offer a brief although exhaustive review of the principal theoretical frameworks that have been adopted in the literature, as well as its main critiques. After that, we will detail the structure and the main contribution of the research. The last paraphs will be devoted to discussing the analytical approach, the dataset used and other methodological considerations.

1.1 Anti-establishment parties: tackling an elusive concept
1.1.1 Basic features of anti-establishment parties

Before describing the mechanisms at the basis of the relationship between political distrust and support for AEP, it is worth examining the core characteristics of these parties. To begin with, it is something of a cliché to address this issue with the observation that agreement on a definition is lacking and that the concept has been used for identifying many different types of parties across time and space. In fact, a large variety of terms has been used to describe such parties that challenge the mainstream, including 'niche parties' (Adams *et al.*, 2006; Meguid, 2005), 'challenger parties' (Hino, 2012; Hobolt and Tilley, 2016), 'populist parties' (Albertazzi and McDonnell, 2008; Mény and Surel, 2002; Mudde, 2007; Rooduijn *et al.*, *2016*), 'new politics parties' (Poguntke, 1987), 'anti-immigrant parties' (van der Brug and Fennema, 2003), 'anti-establishment parties' (Abedi, 2004), 'anti-parties' (Bélanger, 2004), 'radical right-wing populist parties' (Betz, 1994), 'far-right parties' (Golder, 2016).

As can be observed, a wealth of scholars used the term 'populism' to define challenger parties and to capture the phenomenon of anti-establishment sentiments. Over the last years, we can actually witness an excessive use of this term. As for 2019, a quick search of the word "populism" on Google Scholar returned 221 thousand results, and every conference or journal has at least a section dedicated to this topic. Directly related with

that, there is no agreement about the definition of populism and what it really is. In particular, it is unclear whether populism is an ideology, a political style or an organizational structure (Canovan, 1999; Mudde, 2007; Rooduijn, 2013). Nevertheless, it is indisputable the contribution of this concept to the definition of AEP.

In 1969, Ionescu and Gellner laid the foundations of the modern definition of populism, by identifying two core characteristics: 'it emphasizes the supremacy of the will of "the people" (the political establishment is seen as pursuing some kind of special interest that is distinct from that of the people as a whole). Second, populism is characterized by negativism, that is, it defines itself more by what it is against than by what it is for' (Ionescu and Gellner, 1969: 3). Thirty years later, Mudde made one of the most cited definitions of populism. According to him, populism is 'a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite," and which argues that politics should be an expression of the general will of the people' (Mudde, 2007: 543). The ideological component of populism has been reclaimed by other scholars. Albertazzi and McDonnell (2008: 3), for instance, defined populism 'an ideology which pits a virtuous and homogeneous people against a set of elites and dangerous "others" who are together depicted as depriving the sovereign people of their rights, values, prosperity, identity and voice'. All in all, these definitions agree about a key concept: the juxtaposition between 'the pure people' and the 'corrupt elite'. In other words, anti-elitism is (together with the people-centrism) the core element of populist parties. According to that, AEP defy the mainstream political consensus, challenge the established party system and accuse the traditional political elite of being disconnected from the needs of their citizens. Based on the above, it is undeniable that populism goes hand in hand with AEP. Nevertheless, not all of challenger parties put people at the center of their project. As it will be discussed later, extreme left-wing parties have a clear and strong anti-elite stance, but people-centrism is absent in their core ideology – although some of the them can be considered populist (March and Mudde, 2005).

The literature on 'niche parties' is another framework that could serve to define challenger parties. By focusing on the issues, a large number of scholars identified 'niche parties' with challenger parties (Adams *et al.*, 2006; Hobolt and Tilley, 2016; Meguid, 2005; Wagner, 2012). According to the seminal work of Meguid (2005: 347-348), niche

parties characterize themselves by three characteristics: 'they politicize issues which were previously outside the dimensions of party competition; the issues raised by the niche parties often do not coincide with existing lines of political division; they rely on the salience of their one policy stance for voter support'. In other words, this strand of the literature argues that niche parties challenge the political establishment by mobilizing the electorate on issues that are ignored (or not sufficiently addressed) by mainstream parties. In this way, AEP distinguish themselves from their competitors by emphasizing the lack of distinctness among all the other parties. This occurs either by adopting an extreme position on some issue (such as economic redistribution or immigration) or by introducing in the political agenda new issues that have not been contemplated by traditional parties (such as environmentalism).

The importance of the issue dimension when analysing the core characteristics of anti-establishment parties has been recently renewed by a branch of the literature on political parties and party competition (Hobolt and de Vries, 2015; de Vries and Hobolt, 2012; van der Wardt, de Vries and Hobolt 2014). According to this theoretical approach, challenger parties in national party systems are defined as new *issue entrepeneurs,* i.e. parties that 'mobilize issues that have been largely ignored in party competition and adopt a policy position on the issue that is substantially different from the mainstream status quo' (Hobolt and de Vries, 2015: 1161). Although this strategy is particularly risky and dangerous (as the mobilization of new issues may destabilize the established logic and patterns of party competition, put away certain moderate voters and jeopardize the negotiation of future coalition governments), it results especially successful and lucrative for anti-establishment parties, given their same nature of challengers to mainstream political parties. In particular, they occupy a very peculiar condition in most national party systems in Europe, since traditionally anti-establishment parties characterize themselves for being 'losers' on the dominant position of political competition. In fact, they tend to have never held political office, they usually experience a much less percentage of vote and seat share compared with mainstream parties – especially the government mainstream parties- , and they occupy a non-majoritarian position on the traditional issues that are at the core of the standard pattern of party competition. Therefore, because of their losing positions in the political system, they have a very high incentive on adopting an issue entrepreneurship strategy, which makes these parties much more likely to mobilize issues that could disturb the political equilibrium to potentially reap electoral benefits. As de

Vries and Hobolt (2012: 250 - 252) claimed in their study (see also Hobolt and de Vries, 2015), such benefits can be distinguished between political parties' office- (inexperience in government), vote- (electoral defeat) and policy- (positions on the main dimension of party competition which are far away from the mean voter) seeking objectives. Under these circumstances, the rising divide between 'old and new politics' – namely the contrast between the 'old way' of doing politics adopted by mainstream parties and the 'new way' of addressing the political issues, providing an answer to those unsolved problems and taking care of the real interests of the people - (Hutter, Kriesi and Vidal, 2018) represents a new cleavage which may manifest itself not only in Southern Europe, but also in all the contemporary representative democracies.

To summarize, both strands of the literature provide an important contribution to the concept of challenger anti-establishment party, as they stress different but interrelated aspects of such party category. By building upon these key concepts, in this dissertation we will follow Abedi' (2004: 11) definition of AEP. According to him, an AEP is:

- 'A party that challenges the status quo in terms of major policy issues and political system issues;
- A party that perceives itself as a challenger to the parties that make up the political establishment;
- A party that asserts that there exists a fundamental divide between the political establishment and the people, which implies that all establishment parties be they in government or in opposition are essentially the same'.

1.1.2 *Criteria and types of anti-establishment parties*

Not surprisingly, in the literature there is no consensus either on the criteria used to select AEP. Some studies relied upon the participation in government. In this sense, challenger parties are opposed to mainstream parties, 'those parties that frequently alternate between government and opposition' (Hobolt and Tilley, 2016: 974). Abedi (2004: 10) added to the latter definition an interesting element: the willingness of a party 'to cooperate with the main governing parties by joining them in a coalition government'. In line with this definition, mainstream parties are not only those parties that traditionally govern (for instance, the *SPD* and the *CDU/CSU* in Germany), but also all those minor liberal or

Christian democratic parties that aim to participate in the national government by joining the main parties in a coalition. This aspect is especially relevant in a multi-party system, where two main parties coexist with other minor traditional parties whose support could be crucial for the formation of the government.

Certainly, this approach overcomes some of the definitional problems present in the literature and offers a straightforward criterion to identify such parties. Nevertheless, the focus on the governmental aspect may take the risk of including in the 'mainstream parties' category some of the most studied AEP that joined (or even leaded) a coalition government. *Lega Nord* and *Forza Italia* in Italy, *Syriza* in Greece, the *FPO* in Austria and *Fidesz* in Hungary are some of the clearest examples. It can be argued that, once in power (especially if they join a coalition government with a traditional party), challenger parties lose the purity of their anti-establishment messages by being seen to cooperate with the mainstream parties (Canovan, 1999; Mény and Surel, 2002; Mudde, 2007). In particular, it has been shown that, as a consequence of having made their anti-establishment rhetoric much less credible by joining a coalition government, these parties suffer an additional 'cost of governing' that is bigger than the one incurred by traditional parties (van Spanje, 2011).

Nevertheless, these arguments have been refuted by Albertazzi and McDonnell (2015). By analyzing three challenger parties in government (the Italian *Lega Nord* and *Forza Italia* and the *Swiss People' Party*), they demonstrated that AEP are able to survive the experience of government without losing their anti-establishment appeal or abandoning their status of 'challengers of the political establishment'. Their established structure and grassroot organization, their success in introducing in the political agenda key policies in line with their core ideologies and the loyalty of their supporters are some of the factors behind their capacity to maintain their characteristics without being doomed to failure. In other words, challenger parties don't lose their essence of 'anti-establishment parties', despite their governmental participation with mainstream parties.

Another strand of the literature identified AEP with extreme right-wing parties, by assuming that this is exclusively a phenomenon of such party family (Betz, 1994; Golder, 2016; Norris, 2005). This association could be explained by the fact that radical right-wing parties are the most successful party family to have emerged in post-war Europe

(Mudde, 2007), making them 'one of the most studied political phenomena of the postwar western world' (Mudde, 2017: 22). These nativist, authoritarian and populist parties accuse all the other parties to focus on obsolete issues, instead of addressing the real conflict between national identity and multiculturalism; and they present themselves as the true champions of democracy (Mudde, 2007). It is true that radical right-wing parties are mainly focused on the immigration issue, which is probably the most stigmatized issue in the public debate (Albertazzi and McDonnell, 2008; van der Brug and Fennema, 2003). In a similar way, it can't be denied that they adopt a clear anti-establishment stance, situating these parties at the fringe of the political spectrum.

Nevertheless, the status of challenger party is not a prerogative of the radical right. In this regard, it is worth highlighting that also radical left-wing parties present themselves as a challenger of the traditional political establishment (March, 2011; March and Mudde, 2005; March and Rommerskirchen, 2015). These parties 'can be termed "radical", first because they reject the socio-economic structures of contemporary capitalism. Second, they advocate "root and branch" transformation of capitalism in order to take power from existing elites' (March and Rommerskirchen, 2015: 41).

In relation with the latter, one could argue that ideology is a good criterion to select AEP. More specifically, it can be claimed that all radical parties are challenger contenders. As a consequence, the association between radicalism and anti-elitism is recurrent in the literature (Golder, 2016; March, 2011; Norris, 2005). While it is true that radical parties may be considered the anti-establishment actor *par excellence*, they are not the only challenger of the mainstream consensus. In fact, given their 'chameleonic nature' (Taggart, 2002), AEP may be found across the whole political spectrum. It implies that they are not necessarily radical, and some of them have been able to reframe their anti-establishment discourse within a moderate (or even non-ideological) position. In this regard, recently there has been an increasing interest in analyzing a 'new' party category: the centrist populist parties (Pop-Elches, 2010; Učeň, 2007). These parties are not radical or anti-democratic, but 'in a true populist vein, their though anti-establishment appeal is directed against all previous configurations of the ruling elite' (Učeň 2007: 54). By trying to sidestep ideology altogether and presenting themselves as nonideological antipolitical formations, these parties appeal to a vague electorate and they 'are almost completely

unencumbered by ideological constraints and are therefore free to tell the voters what they want to hear' (Pop-Elches, 2010: 231).

Neo-liberal populist parties would also fall into this category of non-radical AEP. Neoliberal populism can be defined as 'a core ideology of neoliberalism and populism' (Mudde, 2007, p. 30). They differ from radical right parties because nationalism and xenophobia are not the core element of their ideology; and the policy proposals promoted by these parties to address the multiculturalism issue are not so radical as in the radical right parties (de Lange and Rooduijn, 2015; Pauwels, 2010).

Following the literature on niche parties (Adams *et al.*, 2006; Hobolt and Tilley, 2016; Meguid, 2005), the party family approach could be another good criterion to identify AEP. In line with this theoretical framework, radical (right- and left-wing) parties fall into the category of challenger parties. Nevertheless, and in contrast with the dominant literature about niche and challenger parties (see Abedi, 2002), the inclusion of all green parties in this category is controversial and it could pose some theoretical challenge. It is true that, at the beginning of their life cycle, green parties perceived themselves as a real challenger of mainstream parties (Adams *et al*., 2006; Meguid, 2005; Poguntke, 1987). Nevertheless, over the last decade most green parties abandoned the initial anti-elitism, which permitted these parties to participate in national government in coalition with social democratic parties. In other words, green parties shifted their focus 'from protest to acquiescence' (Poguntke, 2002), which implies that 'they evolved into moderate left-wing parties and no longer play a significant role within the radical left' (March and Mudde, 2005:33).

All in all, the association between party family and AEP is a very good approximation, but it represents an imperfect strategy. In addition to the case of green parties, the presence of centrist and neoliberal challenger parties hinders the perfect association between party family and anti-elitism. Therefore, and in light of the lack of agreement about the criteria to be used, in this dissertation we will adopt a novel approach, which consists in using the anti-elite salience dimension that has been included in the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey[2]. The survey has been administrated in 2014 and asked 337

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[2] https://www.chesdata.eu/2014-chapel-hill-expert-survey

political scientists to place 268 political parties in 31 countries on the most relevant issues, such as the party position along the left-right scale. But, even more importantly, for the first time the dataset provides information about the positioning of political parties on the salience of anti-establishment rhetoric (Polk *et al.*, 2017). This aspect is especially relevant, namely because 'there are no existing party-level measures of anti-establishment and anti-elite rhetoric salience' (Polk *et al.*, 2017:3). Furthermore, this criterion is easy to operationalize, it represents to a certain extent an 'objective' measure of anti-elitism and it is easily comparable between parties and countries. For the purposes of this thesis, we classified all the parties with a score higher than 6 on the anti-elite salience dimension (measured on a 0-10-point scale) as "challenger parties". The full list of parties and their categorization may be consulted in the Appendix.

1.2   Defining the concept of trust: a brief overview

1.2.1 Core characteristics of political trust

In this thesis we will focus on political trust, which is oriented towards the organizations from the political institutions and it is connected with the legitimacy of political systems. In this sense, it has been conceived as a measure of citizens' support for the regime (Dalton, 2004; Norris, 1999). As a conceptual instrument, we can thus consider this attitude as a 'middle-range indicator between the specific political actors in charge and the principles of democracy in which specific institutions are embedded in a polity' (Zmerli, Newton and Montero, 2007: 41).

According to a branch of the literature on political trust, this attitude comprises a relational and a situational component (Zmerli and van der Meer, 2017). It is relational because it has a subject who trusts ('A') and an object that is trusted ('B'). But, at the same, it is a situational concept, since it refers to a specific type of actions or environments ('X'). In other words, political trust involves a relationship between at least three different elements, and it is therefore expressed as 'A trusts B to do X' (Hardin, 2002: 26).

In addition to the relational and situational component of political trust, another important aspect of this attitude is the subject's degree of uncertainty about the object's future behavior on a specific context (Newton, 1999). In other words, political trust refers to the expectation that citizens place in political actors and institutions not to act in ways that will do them harm (Levi and Stoker, 2000). In order to establish a link between the subject

and the political object, this political attitude requires that there is an agreement of the norms that constitute an institution and institutions are perceived to work according to these norms. The institutional actors can thus be trusted 'as far as the normative idea of the institution is widely accepted and there are good reasons to believe that institutional actors follow these norms' (Warren, 1999: 348–349). In other words, political trust is related with the normative expectation that 'the system is responsive and will do what is right even in the absence of constant scrutiny' (Miller and Listhaug, 1990: 358). The latter implies that 'political trust entails a positive evaluation of the most relevant attributes that makes each political institution trustworthy, such as credibility, fairness, transparency, and openness to competing views' (Levi and Stoker, 2000: 484).

1.2.2 Trust in the main actors of representation: the key trust indicator

Leaving aside the debate about the unidimensional or multidimensional nature of political trust (Dalton, 2004; Easton, 1975; Norris, 1999), in this thesis we will focus on trust in the main actors of political representation (political parties and politicians). As it has been empirically showed in recent studies (Denters, Gabriel and Torcal, 2007; Torcal, 2014), trust in political parties and politicians is one of the three objects of trust – being trust in the institutions of liberal democracy (national Parliament and cabinet) and trust in the institutions of the *Rechtsstaat* (courts and the police) the other two dimensions-. While mainstream parties and the traditional political elite are essential to contemporary party-based democracy and they are the core linkage between society and the state (Bélanger, 2004; Dalton and Weldon, 2005; Morgan, 2011), they are also the main target of challenger parties' rhetoric (Mudde, 2007; Rooduijn *et al.*, 2016). They are thus the best-suited object to study the relationship between voting behavior and political trust.

In this thesis, we will rely upon the European Social Survey approach to measure and operationalize trust in the main actors of political representation. In particular, we will use items *d* and *e* of the following battery of questions to construct our indicator. As it will be shown in the empirical chapters, the additive measure is a very reliable indicator (Crombach' *alpha:* 0.9) of citizens' attitudes towards their representatives. The questions on trust in political institutions are phrased as follows: 'Using this card, please tell me on

a score of 0-10 how much you personally trust each of the institutions I read out. 0 means you do not trust an institution at all, and 10 means you have complete trust'

a) country's Parliament
b) the legal system
c) the police
d) *political parties (from the second ESS wave onwards)*
e) *politicians*
f) the European Parliament
g) the United Nations

1.3　The electoral consequences of political distrust
1.3.1 The protest voting theory: a short overview

In the literature on voting behaviour, the association between political distrust and support for challenger parties has been theorized by the protest voting framework (see Alvarez, Kiewiet and Núñez, 2018 for a recent review). According to this theoretical approach, protest voters are rational individuals who vote 'with the boot' in favour of fringe or challenger parties as a way to express their discontent with the performance of mainstream parties and to frighten the traditional political elite. Following this argument, the decision of supporting a challenger party does not involve any policy preference, or at least such component plays a minor role (Bergh, 2004; van der Brug and Fennema, 2003). In other words, AEP 'are not chosen for their program or policy potential, but for the pain they cause the established parties' (Mudde, 2007: 227). Under these conditions, the protest voting seems to be an irrational act if we frame it into the traditional spatial voting theory (Kang, 2004). In particular, 'if voters do not vote for the party which is closest to their policy preferences, they should not vote at all' (Passarelli and Tuorto, 2016: 2).

However, protest voting is not entirely an apathetic behaviour, but it is an expressive act (Passarelli and Tuorto 2016), 'an exit-with-voice option in which voters choose to send a signal of dissatisfaction to their party' (Kang, 2004: 84). More specifically, protest voting may be conceived as 'the act of voting for a political party in order to express political distrust' (Bergh, 2004: 376). Under these conditions, citizens desert their preferred party

in favour of a challenger party because they expect their first option to perform better in the forthcoming elections. As Kselman and Niou claimed, protest voting is thus the act of 'choosing a party other than one's most-preferred to send that most preferred party a signal of dissatisfaction' (Kselman and Niou, 2011: 400). As it will be discussed in the empirical chapters, the expressive nature of the protest voting mechanism plays a relevant role when explaining both the direct and conditional impact of political distrust on the electoral success of challenger parties.

1.4 Critics to the protest voting theory

1.4.1 The relationship between issue positions and support for AEP

The protest voting framework has been challenged by competing theories. In particular, it has been questioned the argument according to which voting for AEP is only a way to express distrust and policy preferences are expected to be irrelevant. In this regard, some studies claimed that voting for challenger parties is driven by the same factors that explain voting for any other party. Among them, ideological proximity and satisfaction about the most salient issues of challenger parties (namely immigration for the right-wing contenders and economic redistribution for their left-wing counterparts) are the strongest predictors of the voting for AEP (Birch and Dennison, 2017; van der Brug, Fennema and Tillie, 2000). These findings showed that, as in the case of mainstream parties, the spatial voting theory is one of the most relevant explanations for the decision to vote for a challenger party: the less the distance between an individual and a party on the left-right scale or the policy dimension, the higher the likelihood to vote for that party (Downs, 1957).

Passarelli and Tuorto (2016) added an interesting insight to the former claims. According to them, it is not only a matter of protest or policy preferences, but it is a combination of the two factors which better explains the mechanisms underlying the decision of voting for an AEP. By analyzing the voting for the *M5S* (the new challenger party in Italy) at the 2013 parliamentary elections, they found that the interaction between political distrust and issue closeness further explains its electoral success. In other words, the voting for *M5S* was a 'reasoned vote supporting the protest'. As they conclude in the paper, 'policy preferences seem to have not counted for those voters without an intense protest attitude,

while they improve the explicative effect of protest […] The point is that the protest effect is amplified by the issues, which enlarge the probability of success' (Passarelli and Tuorto, 2016:10). All in all, these studies shifted the focus from the voting for a challenger parties as a mechanism expressing political distrust to the decision of supporting an AEP because of the satisfaction with its policy proposals.

Nevertheless, it is worth pointing out that the distance between the party and the median voter is not the only possible explanation. It is also a question of how voters perceive all the other parties competing within the national party system. In this regard, in the literature on voting behavior it is well-established the argument according to which the positions adopted by mainstream parties in the ideological space are related to the success or failure of challenger parties (Adams *et al.*, 2006; Ezrow *et al.*, 2011; Kitschelt and McGann, 1995; Meguid, 2005). More specifically, challenger parties may benefit from two different situations: *indifference* and *alienation* (Adams, Dow and Merrill, 2006; Dassoneville and Hooghe, 2016; Plane and Gershtenson, 2004).

Kitschelt and McGann's convergence thesis (1995) may help to better understand the indifference scenario. According to them, support for challenger parties may be favored by the ideological proximity of mainstream competitors. While a polarized party system has more intense partisan competition and produces clearer and more party choices (which in turn stimulates participation and improves representation), convergent parties fail to present voters with a platform that distinguishes their different positions (Dalton 2008). In the absence of any party differentiation, the party system undergoes an indifference problem, which means that 'there is no meaningful distinction between the locations of the candidates, even though both may be close to the citizen' (Plane and Gershtenson, 2004: 71). Under such conditions, voters are not able to appreciate any difference between them, making the party system less representative. The lack of a recognizable difference between the traditional parties may also contribute to the growing discontent that voters feels towards these parties (Mair, 1995). Another possible explanation could be related with the incapacity of a converging party system to absorb new conflicts and represent new demands, which facilitates the emergence of niches within the political space (Kriesi, 1999). Challenger parties may also benefit from another situation. This is the alienation (Dassoneville and Hooghe, 2016), which occurs when voters perceive themselves to be distant from the traditional options. Unlike the case of

indifference, 'alienation does not require comparing competing candidates, and it refers to the extent to which the citizen feels neither candidate will represent his or her policy preferences' (Plane and Gershtenson, 2004: 72).

In both situations the utility from voting for mainstream parties is reduced (Adams *et al.*, 2006; Downs, 1957; Meguid, 2005), representing an 'electoral market failure' scenario, in which 'the number of parties that voters are willing to vote [for] are lower than the number of parties competing' (Lago and Martinez, 2011: 7). However, alienation and indifference represent two different situations with diverging electoral consequences for the dynamics of change in a party system. On the one hand, alienation entails a massive rejection of the most relevant parties provided by the supply, since citizens do not feel represented by any of the parties for two reasons: they look quite similar and they are far away from an important part of the electorate. Under these conditions, alienated citizens might be more likely to support more extreme options, especially if they hold an anti-system discourse. On the other hand, indifference is the situation in which mainstream parties become not distinguishable and citizens perceive that all of these parties would adopt very similar policies once in government (Plane and Gershtenson, 2004). This scenario might favor more moderate options trying to distinguish themselves from the mainstream parties but without necessarily adopting radical positions.

In this relationship between indifference, alienation and support for challenger parties, political trust may act as a mediating factor. As it has been discussed, the voting for a challenger party is also an ideological-driven vote, which means that these parties benefit from the ideological closeness with the electorate. What is more, support for challenger parties is a 'reasoned voting' in which policy preferences combine with the lack of trust to further increase the likelihood of voting for these parties (Passarelli and Tuorto, 2016). Therefore, it may be that alienated and indifferent citizens who still have faith in the main actors of representation desert the established parties in favor of new challenger suppliers as a way to express their disconformity with the established party system.

1.4.2 The impact of voting behavior on political distrust

Another strong criticism to the protest voting theory concerns the extent to which the voting for a challenger party may actually have on impact on the variation of political distrust. In this regard, recent panel data studies showed that those who have voted for a challenger party at the previous election became more distrustful than supporters of any other party (van der Brug, 2003; Hooghe and Dassoneville, 2016; Rooduijn *et al.*, 2016). In other words, the voting behaviour and the political attitude reinforce each other, making the latter both cause and consequence of the success of AEP and leading to a 'spiral of distrust' (Hooghe and Dassonneville, 2016).

According to the corresponding literature, this mechanism is activated by voters' exposure to the illiberal and anti-establishment messages of challenger parties. More specifically, 'if a voter supports a party that expresses the message that the elite is incompetent or even corrupt, s/he might be inclined to incorporate this idea in his or her way of thinking about politics' (Rooduijn *et al.*, 2016: 34). In other words, through a persuasive mechanism of 'emotionalized blame attribution' (Hameleers *et al.*, 2017), AEP manage themselves to prime citizens about the untrustworthiness and the incompetence of the traditional political establishment, at the same time as they polarize the society by exacerbating the divergences between 'us' (challenger parties and their constituency) and 'them' (mainstream political parties and their elite).

In the literature, the 'fueling distrust' mechanism is challenged by the 'alleviating distrust' argument, according to which the presence of protest parties in national party systems may actually restore trust in the main actors of political representation (Bélanger, 2004; Fisher, 1974; Miller and Listhaug, 1990). Although this conclusion has been drawn on the basis of cross-sectional evidence, the rationale behind this association is that challenger parties provide disaffected voters with an alternative way of representation within the existing partisan structure. As it has been argued, 'by serving as vehicles for party discontent, challenger parties make it possible for those alienated from the party system to participate in it instead of abandoning party politics altogether' (Bélanger, 2004: 1055). These parties are thus essential for the stability of contemporary representative democracies, because of their capacity to channel back in the political

arena citizens' distrust in the main actors of political representation and allow them to express protest in a pacific and democratic way.

Challenger parties may also restore faith in the main actors of political representation in de-consolidating democracies or in countries where they gain access to the highest political institutions. In these cases, charismatic leaders (especially those who govern during a long period of time) establish in their own countries a plebiscitary leader democracy, which is democratic in form but authoritarian in substance (Körösényi, 2019). This kind of political regime is based upon the use of plebiscitary elections as the main mechanism of democratic legitimization, at the same time as the demonization of 'the others' is a recurrent way to maintain the political power. In a plebiscitary leader democracy context, charismatic leaders thus build their legitimacy on public trust and direct mass-support rather than formal and institutional processes (Körösényi, 2019). It is thus plausible to assume that a relatively high level of trust in the main actors of political representation is crucial for 'challenger governments', as it allows them to act independently from institutional constraints and deeply rooted democratic norms. This phenomenon is especially visible in Eastern European countries, where charismatic political leaders emerged in low-trust environments and yet have successfully increased trust at a moderate level (Körösényi and Patkos, 2017). Levels of institutional trust between government ('us') versus opposition ('them') supporters diverge strongly in countries with reduced democratic performance. This suggests that a viable strategy for political actors may be to build trust in a selective manner, concentrating only on holding together their own supporters and, at the same time, widening and deepening the gap between their own camp and the opposing one(s).

Under these conditions, an important tool for building political trust is the anti-elitism used by the new charismatic leaders (Albertazzi and McDonnell, 2008). In particular, the linguistic shift adopted by most challenger actors is 'usually accompanied by populism in a substantive sense. Their ideology has strong anti-establishment elements and they often justify their policy with the will of the people vis-a-vis corrupt political elites' (Körösényi and Patkos, 2017: 616). These actors thus increase people' trust by challenging the legitimacy of the traditional political elite and destroying their trust capital.

1.5   **Structure of the thesis**

In the previous sections, we provided a theoretical definition of the main concepts that will be used throughout the thesis. Subsequently, we analyzed and discussed the possible mechanisms that are at the basis of the relationship between political distrust and voting for challenger parties. Considering the definitional confusion in relation with the nature of this kind of parties, we devoted a special effort in identifying and defining them.

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter 1, the introduction, defines the main concepts and provides a brief overview of the main theoretical frameworks that are at the basis of the whole research. Then, it addresses all the methodological challenges that have hindered the empirical analyses and the strategies that have been adopted to overcome such caveats. Finally, it presents the dataset that have been used to test the hypotheses. Chapter 5 concludes this dissertation, in which we summarize the main findings and open up the field for future lines of investigation on political distrust and support for challenger parties. The three empirical chapters will be described in detail in the next section.

Different parts of this thesis have been presented at different national and international conferences or seminars as the "7th Annual General Conference of the European Political Science Association" (Universitá di Milano; June 2017); the "WAPOR Regional Conference on Political Trust" (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, November 2016); the "European Consortium for Political Science General Conference" (University of Hamburg; August 2018). Some of the chapters have been published in specialized journal or books. Chapter 2 has been published by "European Politics and Society"; Chapter 3 represents a more developed and refined version of a chapter that has been published in Spanish (co-authored with Prof. Torcal) in a book edited by Prof. Torcal, while Chapter 4 is currently under review in "West European Politics".

1.5.1 The direct and conditional impact of political distrust on the voting for anti-establishment parties

Chapter 2 addresses the following research question: *which were the electoral consequences of the economic and political crises that unfolded during the Great Recession?* The first empirical chapter thus takes a closer look at the (direct and conditional) relationship between distrust in political parties and politicians, the

subjective perception of the economy, the country macroeconomic conditions and the voting for AEP after and before the Great Recession. As such, Chapter 2 builds upon the insight that both the protest and economic voting theories are *per se* insufficient to explain the magnitude of the changes which take place from 2008 onwards. As highlighted by previous studies (Hérnandez and Kriesi, 2016; Hobolt and Tilley, 2016), the predictions expressed by the economic voting theory have been rejected in the first post-crisis elections in most European countries, opening the field for a revision of this framework. In line with the above, the focus has been shifted on the long-term consequences of severe economic crises, especially regarding the impact of the economy on citizens' attitudes (Armingeon and Guthmann, 2014) and voting behavior (Hérnandez and Kriesi, 2016).

To the best of our knowledge, until now there is no empirical evidence on whether economic crises amplify or alleviate the impact of political distrust on the voting for challenger parties (Bermeo and Bartels, 2014; Mudde, 2007). Furthermore, there is not available research in which the individual-level determinants have been analyzed in conjunction with the country-level factors, especially in a longitudinal multilevel setup. In this respect, Chapter 2 tries to go beyond the existing research on the economic and protest voting theories, by trying to bridge the gap between the two theories. The first empirical chapter will also assess whether the relationship between the country economic conditions and citizens' attitudes towards the main actors of representation hold true for both right and left-wing challenger parties. In particular, the chapter tries to contribute to the growing debate on whether the increasing support for challenger parties is just the product of the negative economic situation or it is the consequence of a deeper crisis of legitimacy of the traditional actors of representation (Hobolt and Tilley, 2016; Mény and Surel, 2002). To test the direct and conditional effects of the economy and the political distrust on the voting for challenger parties after and before the Great Recession, we will estimate a multilevel model with a repeated cross-sectional dataset. The empirical analysis relies on two different levels: individual and aggregate. At individual level, we rely on the European Social Survey (ESS), which is an academically driven cross-national survey that has been conducted across Europe since 2001. The survey guarantees the maximum comparability over time and between countries and it is conducted with the highest standards in survey methodology, which makes the ESS one of the reliable cross-sectional datasets in social sciences. At the aggregate level, the main macroeconomic indicators are obtained from the Eurostat and IMF datasets.

In Chapter 3 we address a different research question: *under which conditions voters'* *perception of the ideological positions adopted by mainstream parties is related with the* *success of AEP?* As it was discussed in Section 1.4.1., the argument according to which parties' ideological positions have an impact on the success of AEP is one of the most accredited theories in comparative politics (for a review, see Meguid, 2005). More specifically, we should distinguish between indifference and alienation (Plane and Gershtenson, 2004). While the former reflects the lack of significant differences among the traditional parties representing the political supply, the latter is a signal of voters' rejection of the whole traditional offer.

The second empirical chapter thus analyzes the direct and conditional impact of political distrust and people' perception of alienation/indifference regarding the established party system on the voting for anti-establishment parties. For the purposes of this research, we selected Spain (and, more precisely, the 2015 parliamentary elections) as case study. The Iberian country meets all the requisites to be conceived the best scenario to test these theoretical arguments. Despite its short democratic history, the Spanish party system evolved very quickly into a stable two-party system since the '80s (Gunther and Montero, 2009; Mainwaring and Torcal, 2006). Such stability started crumbling at the 2014 European Parliamentary elections (Cordero and Montero, 2015) and, finally, the Spanish party system collapsed at the 2015 parliamentary elections (Torcal and Serani, 2018). The change from a two-party to a multi-party system was the result of the successful rise of two new challenger parties: the populist radical left-wing *Podemos* and the center-right *C's*. This process took place in the whirlwind of the Great Recession, which was nasty in Spain (Bosch and Durán, 2017). But, even more importantly, Spain underwent a severe crisis of political representation: Spaniards' distrust in their representatives rose dramatically (Torcal, 2014) and most people took to the streets to protest against the traditional political establishment, by blaming mainstream parties for not addressing their demands of political regeneration (Barreiro and Sánchez Cuenca, 2012). In addition to analyze the impact of alienation and indifference on Spaniards' changing voting patterns, Chapter 3 checks whether the increasing distrust in the political elite had a conditional impact on the two dimensions of the supply/demand mismatch. In brief, while we assess the direct impact of alienation, indifference and political distrust, the second empirical chapter also explores whether the political attitude alleviated or amplified voters'

indifference and alienation at the 2015 parliamentary elections. For the purposes of this study, we rely on the CIUPANEL dataset (Torcal *et al.*, 2016). This is an original panel study which consists of an online national sample of 4.459 Spaniards. Individuals were selected by fixed gender, age, education, habitat and autonomous community quotas and were followed between 2014 and 2016. The empirical analysis of this study is based upon the last two waves[3] (respectively, the pre-electoral and the post-electoral survey for the 2015 parliamentary elections), with 2.264 cases.

1.5.2 The impact of the past voting behavior on the over-time change in the levels of political distrust

The last empirical part overturns the focus of the research, by analyzing the consequences of having voted for an AEP at the previous elections on the over-time changes in the levels of political distrust. Therefore, Chapter 4 tackles a completely different issue, which can be addressed by the following research questions: *does the voting for anti-establishment parties have any impact on the over-time change in the levels of political distrust? If so, to what extent the previous voting behavior is associated with a change in the political attitude?*

These questions have been already addressed by providing two competing answers. On the one hand (and complementing what said by the protest voting theory), it has been claimed that voters of AEP tend to become more distrustful than supporters of any other party (Hooghe and Dassoneville, 2016; Rooduijn *et al.*, 2016). Under such conditions, the voting for a challenger party activates a 'spiral of distrust' (Hooghe and Dassoneville, 2016) which further increases people' mistrust in their elected representatives. Nevertheless, in the literature we can also found convincing proof of an alternative mechanism linking voting for AEP and political distrust: those who have voted for an AEP became more trustful towards the actors of representation (Bélanger, 2004; Miller and Listhaug, 1990). Although both approaches represent a valid explanation to the relationship between the voting behavior and the political attitude, there are scarce empirical tests of these two mechanisms. Furthermore, the few empirical studies are either focused on case studies (see Hooghe and Dassoneville, 2016) or they base their conclusions on the cross-sectional evidence (Miller and Listhaug, 1990). Therefore, in

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[3] The other waves of the panel have been excluded from the analysis because of the absence of the relevant variables of interest.

Chapter 4 we will test the alleviating and fueling distrust mechanisms, in order to assess under which conditions the voting behavior affects changes in political distrust.

The impact of the previous voting behavior on people' distrust in the main actors of political representation is analyzed by making use of five different panel studies. They are the CIUPANEL dataset for Spain, the LISS panel data for Netherlands, the British Election Study internet panel for the United Kingdom, the Norwegian Citizen Panel for Norway and the German Longitudinal Election Study for Germany. Despite their differences in terms of question wording, coding and sample size, the five surveys are high-quality studies which consist of an online national sample. The interviews have been conducted approximately in the same period (between 2013 and 2017) and therefore cover the same electoral cycle. The data used in chapter 4 are from the individuals that participated at the post-electoral survey (when the vote recall variable is more reliable) and the farthest survey (which includes all the political trust indicators) that has been conducted in the country.

1.5.3 Contribution of the thesis

As can be deducted from the previous sections, while the lowest common denominator of the whole dissertation thus revolves around the relationship between distrust in the main actors of political representation (political parties and politicians) and support for (right- and left-wing) anti-establishment parties, each empirical chapter represents a small part of the jigsaw. In Chapter 2, we analyzed the causes behind the electoral success of anti-establishment parties in Europe, with a special focus on the interactive relationship between the political attitude and the economy. As it will be discussed, our results show that political distrust is associated with the voting for (right- and left-wing) AEP. Even more interestingly, the impact of political distrust on the success of challenger parties seems to be more accentuated when the country economic conditions are bad, compared with a period of economic prosperity. In other words, the protest voting mechanism led by political is stronger when things go bad in the economic area. This finding is especially relevant in the context of the Great Recession, which represented not only a strong economic shock, but also a severe political stress test.

As in Chapter 2, the third chapter of the thesis analyzes the factors which lead people to support AEP, by centering its attention on the direct and conditional impact of political

distrust. But, unlike Chapter 2, Chapter 3 is focused on a specific election (the 2015 parliamentary elections in Spain) and it analyzes the extent to which alienation and indifference have a conditional impact on the success of the two new AEP in Spain (the center-right *C's* and the radical left *We Can*). In this way, the focus is shifted from anti-establishment parties in general to brand new AEP in a very specific context. Another relevant difference with Chapter 2 lies in the fact that, when analyzing the relationship between political distrust and alienation, the latter has a moderating effect on the impact of the former on the electoral success of *We Can.* That is, in sharp contrast with the conventional wisdom, alienation alleviates the impact of the political attitude on the voting for the new AEP on the left. Finally, Chapter 4 completely shifts the focus of the research, by evaluating the consequences on political distrust of the voting for anti-establishment parties. As it will be showed, the results hint at the existence of a spiral of distrust: in most cases, those that supported an AEP at the previous elections became significantly more distrustful than supporters of any other party.

To summarize, the three empirical chapters contribute to several ongoing discussions within the literature on political trust and voting behavior in relation to the electoral consequences of the crisis of confidence in the main actors of representation, as well as the relationship between the political attitude and the voting behavior. In particular, this thesis aims to represent a small but significative step forwards a better understanding of such a complex phenomenon in several ways. First, despite the increasing interest in explaining the electoral success of AEP and the abundance of studies addressing the impact of political distrust on the voting for these parties, the empirical analyses provided hitherto inconsistent and contradictory findings. Second, as we discussed, much less is known about the impact of having voted for an AEP at the previous election on the individual change in the levels of political distrust. Finally, the definition and selection of challenger parties always posed a theoretical and empirical challenge. This thesis tries to fill in these gaps by combining recent theoretical contributions with more advanced methodological tools. More precisely, it explores the twofold relationship between the political attitude and the voting behavior by combining the analysis of original panel data with the usage of more conventional cross-sectional data. However, before going to the empirical part it is important to present the data employed and the analytical approach.

1.6 Analytical approach, data and methodological considerations

The main purpose of this thesis is to study the relationship between distrust in the main actors of representation and voting for anti-establishment parties. To do this, we will adopt a research design based on quantitative techniques. While the first two empirical chapters will analyze the impact of political distrust on the voting for challenger parties, Chapter 4 will be devoted to investigating how the previous voting behavior has an impact on people' distrust. In order to tackle such relationship from distinct points of view, we will employ different statistical techniques.

Before analyzing such association, it is important to point out that the analytical strategies adopted through the research have some caveat. Thus, in this final section we will first present the research design and the methodological choices that have been taken to overcome the main challenges, and then we will provide more details about the data.

1.6.1 *Analytical strategy*

As it was mentioned, the researcher has to face several methodological challenges when exploring the relationship between political distrust and support for challenger parties. The first dilemma concerns the level of analysis. In fact, the voting for an AEP can be analyzed either at individual (Bergh, 2004; Hobolt and Tilley, 2016) or at aggregate (Abedi, 2002; Hérnandez and Kriesi, 2016) level. While the former makes use of survey data and relies mostly on the recalled vote choice as dependent variable, the latter draws its conclusions by analyzing the official electoral results.

Both strategies have their pros and cons. On the one hand, the aggregate-level analysis is framed in a longer time span, which might be more appropriate to study the over-time variation in the success of challenger parties (Abedi, 2002). Furthermore, the usage of official results overcomes some of the most common biases related with survey data, such as the social desirability bias (Hooghe and Reeskens, 2007) or the fact that the party choice variable is often contaminated by other factors (Evans and Andersen, 2006). On the other hand, this strategy has also some important drawbacks that may question the validity of the findings. First, this approach overlooks that the decision of voting for a party is first and foremost an individual-level decision (Anduiza and Bosch, 2004; Blais, 2000; van der Eijk *et al.*, 2006) and, as such, can best be studied at the individual level.

Second, we shall be aware of the ecological fallacy that prohibits generalizing from the aggregate to the individual level (Robinson, 1950). As it has been recently argued, 'country-level studies using aggregate data make it difficult to disentangle the individual-level motivations for voting for a challenger party' (Hobolt and Tilley, 2016: 977). Furthermore, we must consider that the relationship between two variables may not work in the same direction at two levels of analysis, which means that the findings observed at the aggregate level may be challenged by the evidence found at the individual level (Gelman and Hill, 2007).

Overall, an individual-level analysis of the decision of voting for challenger parties fits best with the purposes of the thesis. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that voters are surrounded by a political and economic environment that shape their attitudes and, lastly, they influence their voting decision (Arzheimer, 2009; Jackman and Volpert, 1996). In this regard, we should distinguish between the demand-side and the supply-side determinants when explaining the voting for AEP (Golder, 2016). While the former is focused on the characteristics of the voters, the latter emphasizes the importance of the contextual factors.

In short, 'the literature has come to recognize that the electoral success of challenger parties is jointly determined by demand-side (*individual*) and supply-side (*contextual*) factors' (Golder, 2016: 490, emphasize added by the author). Despite that, most studies failed in taking into account the impact of both factors when analyzing the voting for challenger parties. By focusing on 'either demand-side or supply-side factors as if they can be examined in isolation from each other, most scholars ignored the inherent interaction between supply and demand' (Golder, 2016: 490). In this sense, we should conceive the voting for challenger parties as a process in which the individual-level decision is jointly influenced by voters' features (such as socioeconomic status or attitudes) and the characteristics of the environment in which people live (for instance, the situation of the national economy). In the literature on quantitative techniques, it has been demonstrated that multilevel models are the workhorse for analyzing such structures (see Snijders and Bosker, 2011). However, a cross-sectional multilevel model is insufficient *per se* to gauge the impact of possible exogenous shocks (such as the Great Recession) mediating the relationship between political distrust and support of challenger parties. Furthermore, this strategy does not fit either with the purpose of analyzing the

between-countries and over-time variation in the electoral success of AEP. In order to deal with these issues, in the first empirical chapter we will perform a multilevel model with repeated cross-sectional data (see Fairbrother, 2014).

Another challenge the researcher has to face when addressing the association between political distrust and voting for challenger parties is the endogeneity of this relationship (Alvarez *et al.*, 2018). As it has been claimed by the protest voting framework (Bergh, 2004), one explanation of the decision to support an AEP concerns people's lack of political trust. But, at the same time, we must take into account that these parties characterize themselves for a clear anti-elitism (Mudde, 2007) which could have an impact on their voters' trust (Hooghe and Dassoneville, 2016). Therefore, the main threat to validity may be reversal causation, as far as it might be difficult to identify with cross-sectional data whether political distrust lead people to support anti-establishment parties, rather than the other way around. In other words, are challenger parties just benefitting from a pre-existing reservoir of political distrust (Bélanger and Aarts, 2006), or is distrust in the main actors of political representation fueled by challenger parties themselves with their rhetoric (Hooghe and Dassoneville, 2016)? Until recently, the usage of cross-sectional data made difficult to address this point, and previous research interpreted the correlation between the political attitude and the voting behavior in the sense that distrust pave the way for the success of challenger parties (Rooduijn *et al.*, 2016). Furthermore, the analysis of cross-sectional data hinders researchers' capacity of drawing causal conclusions from their findings, which implies that we must take the observed relationship between distrust and anti-establishment voting with a grain of salt.

As it has been previously mentioned, these issues have been recently addressed by panel studies (van der Brug, 2003; Hooghe and Dassoneville, 2016; Rooduijn *et al.*, 2016). Although is undeniable the contribution of these findings on the relationship between political distrust and voting behavior, they have been conducted in a single country, which makes harder to generalize the findings. Furthermore, there can be another potential mechanism explaining the impact of party choice on the change in political distrust (Miller and Listhaug, 1990). However, the researchers based their conclusions on the observation of cross-sectional correlation, which questions the validity of the findings. Therefore, it would be interesting to test these competing arguments with panel data.

A similar problem can be observed for the connection between the voting behavior and other types of variables. As it was previously argued, another relevant explanation for the success of challenger parties is people' alienation and/or indifference from the mainstream parties (Plane and Gershtenson, 2004). However, the relationship between ideological distance and support for challenger parties might also be contaminated by some kind of bias, which might represent a serious problem if both party choice and policy distances have been measured in the same survey (Bélanger and Aarts, 2006; van Holsteyn, Irwin and den Ridder, 2003). A possible solution could be to rely on the sample means of the parties' position (Plane and Gershtenson, 2004), or, alternatively, to use an external source of data (Lachat, 2008). However, 'the theoretical validity of this strategy is questionable' (Queralt, 2012: 378) and the 'use of voter-specific placement is preferable' (Merrill and Grofman, 1999: 176). First, the use of idiosyncratic party placements better reflects the information used by citizens in their voting decision processes. Second, the use of subjective party placements better captures people' personal perception that mainstream parties are no longer capable of representing their positions (which is the dimension that best fits with the purposes of this dissertation). In the literature, there already exists a procedure to correct this issue (Merrill and Grofman, 1999). Although it is always recommendable to adopt such kind of strategy, panel data analysis might further contribute to solve the problem. More specifically, if we use the lagged covariates to estimate the reasons to vote for a challenger party (Birch and Dennison, 2017), we should be able to reduce the main source of biases. By following this approach, we first measure people' political distrust and alienation or indifference before the election takes place, and then, in the post-electoral survey, we ask the same people which party they voted for at the election.

As it has been discussed in Sections 1.5.1 and 1.5.2, this dissertation makes use of different datasets to test the hypotheses and achieve the research goals. The usage of different datasets offers a number of benefits. First, we will be able to disentangle the complex relationship between political distrust and support for challenger parties not only cross-sectionally but also in a panel data setup. Second, it permits us to test the determinants of the electoral success of AEP at different levels of analysis. Moreover, it will grant us the flexibility to address different research questions and to tackle the object of study from different perspectives. Finally, the empirical analysis conducted with different datasets will allow us to address some of the most important methodological

challenges. This aspect is especially relevant in the case of panel data, which offer some important advantage over and above the analysis conducted with cross-sectional data (van der Brug, 2003; Rooduijn *et al.*, 2016).

2. A TIME-SERIES CROSS-SECTIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF POLITICAL DISTRUST AND THE ECONOMY IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE GREAT RECESSION

Abstract

The Great Recession that hit Europe since 2008 sparked the interest of many scholars in understanding its impact on voting behaviour. Some studies have argued that the economic crisis paved the way for a new resurgence of challenger parties, whereas others have argued that their success is driven by the crisis of political representation. However, the analysis of the interplay between these two competing arguments is still scarce. In this paper, we build upon the protest and economic voting theories to explain the success of challenger parties in the aftermath of the Great Recession. By performing a multilevel analysis with time-series cross-sectional data, we found that political distrust and the economy have had an impact on the voting for challenger parties, and the interaction between the two dimensions explains the further increase in their electoral success.

2.1 Introduction

The Great Recession that hit Europe in 2008 was the worst economic crisis since World War II. This strong economic shock worsened the economic conditions of most countries, developing in some cases into severe political crises (Kriesi and Pappas, 2015). Governments of debtor states came under great stress, as supranational institutions required them to implement harsh austerity measures to tackle the sovereign debt crisis. The draconian policies adopted by national executives reshaped the relationship between citizens and their representatives by fuelling the perception that the political elite was more worried about responding to external demands than to citizens' needs. As a consequence, political distrust increased in the aftermath of the Great Recession, especially for the main actors of political representation -political parties and politicians- (Bermeo and Bartels, 2014; Torcal, 2014).

In response to this situation, people rejected the argument that 'there is no alternative' made by traditional parties and turned instead towards challenger anti-establishment parties (AEP) (Hernández and Kriesi, 2016; Hobolt and Tilley, 2016). By making use of radical (and in most cases populist) rhetoric, these parties defy the mainstream consensus and offer an alternative solution to the government of the country. The rise of *Podemos* in Spain, the increasing support for established far-right parties in Northern Europe and the election of 'anti-establishment' governments in Greece and Hungary demonstrate that the success of AEP has spread across the continent and along the left–right spectrum.

Why have AEP enjoyed such considerable success in the aftermath of the Great Recession? The literature provides two alternative explanations for this question. The first one attributes a role to the economy for the success of such parties (Hernández and Kriesi, 2016; Hobolt and Tilley, 2016; Stockemer, 2017). By building upon the economic voting argument that voters 'throw the rascals out' from government when the economy performs poorly, it has been argued that the severity of the economic crisis provoked the sanctioning mechanism to extend to all mainstream parties in favour of challenger parties. The second explanation is based on the relationship between political distrust and voting for AEP (van Kessel, 2015; Vidal, 2017). The protest-voting model argues that people's support for these parties is a way to express their discontent towards mainstream parties.

Both arguments provide useful insight into the electoral consequences of the Great Recession in Europe. Voting for challenger parties in the aftermath of the crisis is still an understudied topic, however. First, although it has been demonstrated that protest and economic theories explain the voting for AEP, the interplay between the attitudinal and the economic predictors has not yet been analysed, especially regarding their impact on the voting behaviour. In particular, it is not clear how the individual-level determinants interact with contextual factors to explain the voting for AEP. We know that political distrust may be the consequence of bad economic conditions (Armingeon and Guthmann, 2014; Foster and Frieden, 2017). We also know that the economic and the protest voting arguments start from the premise that the success of AEP is driven by people's dissatisfaction with the performance of the political establishment (Vidal, 2017). We should therefore expect the protest voting mechanism to be more accentuated in hard times. Second, most studies on the voting for challenger parties are based on cross-national comparisons, omitting longitudinal variation from the research design. While this approach is useful for explaining why these parties succeeded in some countries and failed in others, it is insufficient for studying their evolution over time. In a similar way, a cross-sectional design is unable to gauge the impact of exogenous shocks (such as the Great Recession) on electoral behaviour. Third, the few studies that adopted a longitudinal approach (see Hernández and Kriesi, 2016; Stockemer, 2017) focused on the aggregate level. While this strategy may have some advantage, it overlooks that the decision of voting for a party is first and foremost an individual-level act (Hobolt and Tilley, 2016) and, as such, can best be studied at the individual level. We shall also be aware of the ecological fallacy that prohibits generalizing from the aggregate to the individual level. In this regard, 'country-level studies using aggregate data make it difficult to disentangle the individual-level motivations for voting for a party' (Hobolt and Tilley, 2016: 977). Finally, the existing research addressing the impact of the objective status of the economy drew mixed, inconsistent and contradictory results (Golder, 2016; Stockemer, 2017). Such inconsistence may be explained by the fact that previous studies focused on a specific aspect of the economy (namely unemployment) and limited their analysis to the voting for radical right-wing parties in Western Europe.

The study contributes in several ways. First, it connects the protest voting theory with the economic voting framework, by analysing the direct and conditional impact of the economic and attitudinal indicators on the success of challenger parties. Second, it uses

improved measures of key variables. These include using the Economic Performance Index (Khramov and Lee, 2013), which is a macro-indicator that examines the overall performance of a country's economy. Third, it increases the geographical scope of the analysis by including Eastern European democracies. Four, the research extends the coverage to the left-wing challenger contenders. Furthermore, a longitudinal analysis is conducted, by studying people's voting behaviour before and after the Great Recession. Finally, the empirical analysis relies upon the individual-level factors that have been connected with the voting for AEP, but it also takes into consideration the aggregate-level determinants (in this case, the objective status of the economy).

For these purposes, a multi-level logistic regression with time-series cross-sectional data has been conducted. The dataset, which combines survey data—obtained by the European Social Survey (ESS)—with the main macroeconomic indicators (obtained from the Eurostat and IMF databases) covers 96 elections in 26 countries. Three conclusions may be drawn. First, at individual level, political distrust, the sociotropic and egotropic evaluation of the economy are strong determinants of voting for am AEP. Second, at the aggregate level, the economy does not have a direct impact. Finally, the impact of political distrust on voting for challenger parties is more accentuated when a country's economic conditions are bad. In other words, the protest voting mechanism is stronger in hard times, when mainstream parties find it harder to satisfy people's needs.

2.2 Theoretical arguments

2.2.1 The impact of the economy on the support for AEP

The association between the economy and voting for AEP has been traditionally framed on the realistic conflict theory and has focused on the relationship between unemployment and immigration (Golder, 2016; Stockemer, 2017). However, 'the evidence linking far right support to the economic context is mixed […], and the impact of economic contextual factors on far-right success has been undertheorized' (Golder, 2016: 484).

Under these conditions, the economic voting theory (Duch and Stevenson, 2008) may help to better understand the impact of the economy on the voting behaviour. This framework argues that voters are rational actors who support the incumbents when the economy is performing well and punish them in bad times. Nevertheless, this approach

is not sufficient either to explain how a severe economic crisis reshapes citizens' preferences (Hernández and Kriesi, 2016). Particularly, the preceding literature fails to account for the long-term consequences of the economy. To fully understand how challenger parties benefitted from the Great Recession, it is therefore necessary to consider the literature on long-term processes of party system change (Morgan, 2009).

This strand of the literature argues that the economy may erode the link between citizens and their representatives by provoking a decline of partisanship and leading to a process of realignment for the whole party system. These effects may be accentuated during a severe economic crisis, in which mainstream parties fail to cope with the economic downturn. Unlike the scenario predicted by the economic voting theory, in which 'voters are likely to turn to mainstream opposition parties, under extraordinary circumstances voters may lose confidence in all the parties that have habitually governed' (Hernández and Kriesi, 2016: 207). If mainstream parties fail to provide a response to the crisis, 'people reject the *status quo* and at the same time do not see any distinction between the major parties' policy offerings. Under such arrangements, people translate one party's policy failing to the other parties, and all share the blame' (Morgan, 2009: 11).

At the aggregate level, this mechanism has been confirmed by Hernández and Kriesi (2016), who found a positive correlation between the worsening of the economic conditions and the electoral success of challenger parties. This pattern was accentuated in the first post-crisis elections, showing the impact of the Great Recession on voting choices. Nevertheless, these results have been challenged by Stockemer (2017), who found that the crisis had only a moderate impact on the success of the radical right in Europe between 2009 and 2013. But, even more importantly, right-wing parties performed better in those regions that have been spared from the gust of the crisis. In light of the above, the author claimed that 'the hypothesis that the stronger the economic crisis, the more the radical right benefits is wrong' (Stockemer, 2017: 1537).

In this regard, it is important to note that the crisis had an uneven impact among the European countries. As Figure 2 shows, the economic downturn hit the debtor countries in Southern and Eastern Europe hard, where the difference between the pre- and post-crisis period is stark. This situation stands in contrast with the Western European countries, which did not experience any crisis at all.

Figure 2: Evolution of the country economic conditions in Europe (2002-2018)
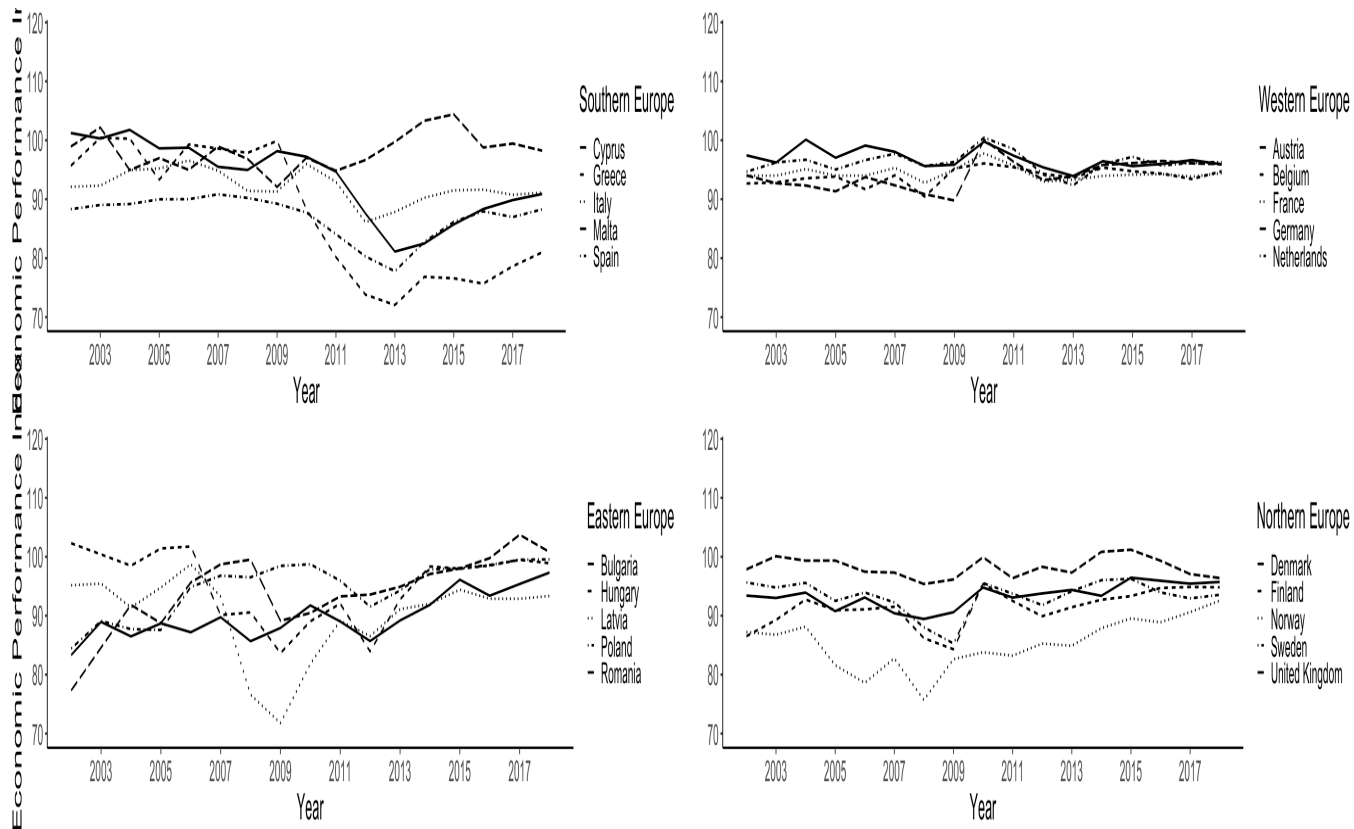
Nevertheless, it is also useful to look at the individual-level determinants, for which the literature identifies two mechanisms: sociotropic and egotropic evaluation of the economy (Duch and Stevenson, 2008). According to the former, those who hold a more optimistic evaluation of the economic situation have a higher propensity to support the incumbents. However, such an evaluation is contaminated by partisanship (Vidal, 2017). Therefore, the evaluation of the personal economic situation may help to understand the impact of the economy on voting decisions.

The latter gained relevance during the Great Recession, where the financial distress produced by the deterioration in individuals' personal situation increased people's anxiety (Hobolt and Tilley, 2016). At the same time, the interference of supranational institutions in the domestic economic policy caused centre-right and centre-left parties to adopt similar measures to tackle the economic downturn, by increasing taxes and cutting

spending on pensions, health and education. The austerity measures approved by socialist governments in Spain and Greece are a good example of this. These mechanisms might explain why those who experienced a worsening of their personal situation deserted mainstream parties in favour of AEP. This leads to the following hypotheses:

H_1: Positive evaluation of the country's economic situation is associated with a lower likelihood to vote for AEP as opposed to mainstream parties.

H_2: Those who experienced a worsening in their personal economic conditions are more likely to vote for an AEP in opposition to mainstream actors.

H_3: The worse the economic conditions of the country, the higher the individual propensity to support anti-establishment parties instead of voting for a mainstream party.

2.2.2 The political distrust argument and the Great Recession

Although the preceding argument represents a valid explanation of people's support for challenger contenders, the economy *per se* only tells a partial story about the success of AEP. To have a better understanding of the process, it is necessary to consider also the crisis of representation that unfolded alongside the economic downturn. This crisis can be observed by the increasing distrust in political parties and politicians (Torcal, 2014).

In the literature, the impact of political distrust on voting for AEP has been analysed based on protest voting theory. According to this framework, protest voters are rational individuals who vote *'with the boot'* in favour of fringe parties as a way to express their discontent with the performance of mainstream parties (van der Brug and Fennema, 2003). That said, such behaviour is not only an expressive voting cast against mainstream parties but is also a decision in which policy preferences are expected to be irrelevant. In other words, AEP 'are not chosen for their program, but for the pain they cause the established parties' (Mudde, 2007: 227).

This argument fits in very well with the context of the Great Recession. The economic crisis demonstrated the interconnection between financial markets, as well as the reduced room for national governments to manoeuvre in some key areas. In response to the sovereign debt crisis, the national governments of debtor countries implemented austerity measures and structural reforms to their welfare programs. These policies were mostly imposed by supranational institutions (such as the European Union) in return for the credit necessary to repay their debt. The external constraints on domestic policymaking reduced the power and credibility of the national governments. At the end of the day, citizens paid the highest price, and in no stage of this process did anyone ask them their opinion about the measures that affected them directly (Armingeon and Guthmann, 2014).

This situation exacerbated the tension that mainstream parties face between acting 'representatively' or 'responsibly' (Mair, 2009). As actors of representation, they are expected to respond to the demands of their constituencies, and to act in the best interests of the society. On the other hand, as responsible actors, they are expected 'to act prudently and consistently and to follow accepted procedural norms and practices, which implies living up to the commitments that have been entered into by their predecessors in office' (Mair, 2009: 12). However, the external constraints in domestic policy areas limited the room for traditional parties to manoeuvre, making them not only less capable of listening to and representing their voters, but also of implementing the policies their voters asked for. Under these conditions, people's frustration grew in most countries, and distrust in the main actors of representation can be viewed as a result of their failure to accomplish the democratic functions of linking citizens to the state, responding to citizens' demands, and effectively representing the people's interests (Vidal, 2017).

In fact, as Figure 3 shows, trust in political parties decreased in Southern and Eastern Europe after 2008. This situation stands in contrast with the evolution of political trust in Western and Northern Europe, exacerbating the differences between Southern and Northern European countries regarding their levels of trust (Torcal, 2014).

Figure 3: Evolution of trust in political parties in Europe (2002-2017)
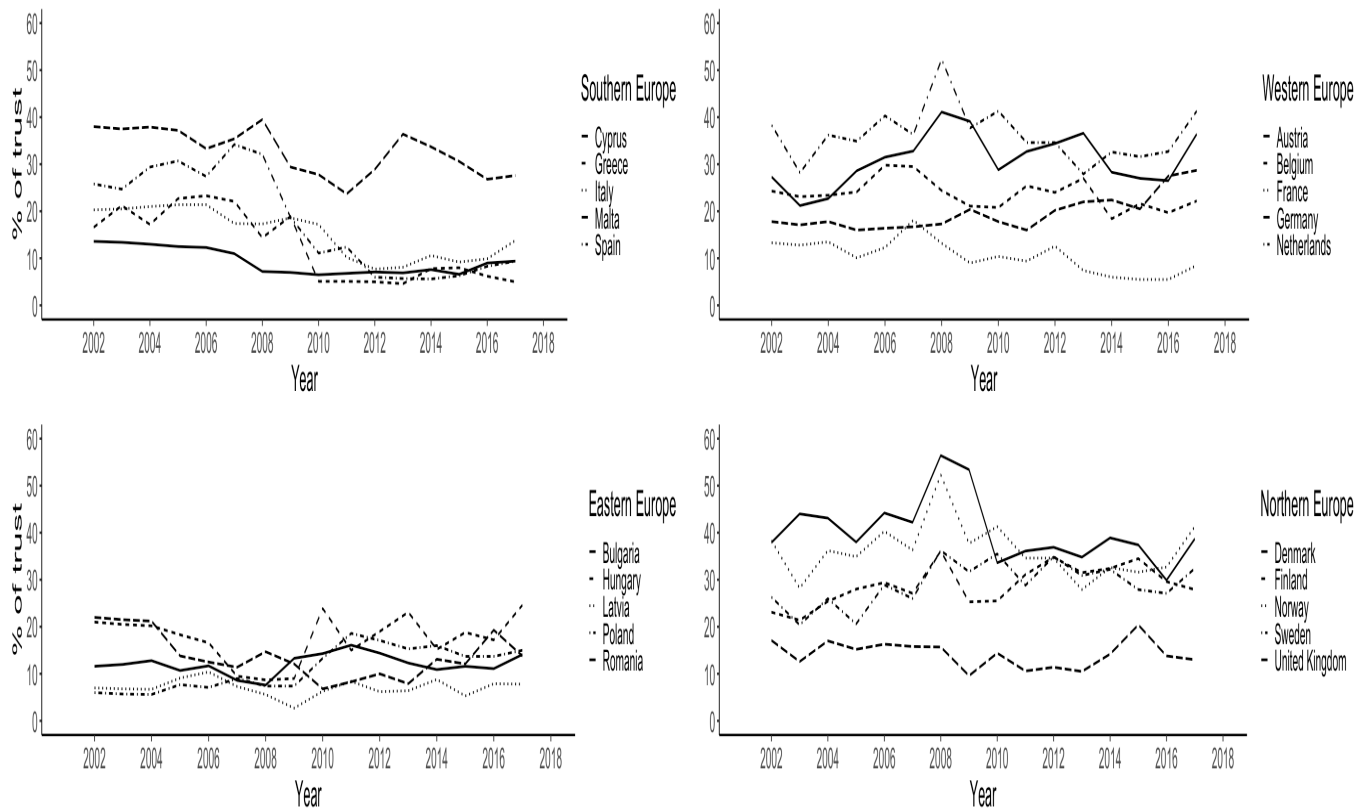
Sources: Own elaboration. Data on trust in political parties are obtained by the Standard Eurobarometer surveys (www.ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/). The lines represent the percentage of people who declared to trust in political parties. The question is 'I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it. Political parties.'

As predicted by the protest voting theory, this scenario may have favoured the success of challenger parties. This leads to the fourth hypothesis:

> *H4: High levels of distrust in political parties and politicians are associated with a higher likelihood of voting for a challenger party.*

2.2.3 The interplay between economic and attitudinal determinants

Previous studies have either focused on the objective economic conditions or individuals' attitudinal factors to explain the voting for AEP since 2008 (Hernández and Kriesi, 2016;

van Kessel, 2015). It may also be the case, however, that both dimensions are mutually reinforced, fostering even more rapidly the electoral success of challenger parties.

In bad times, public grievances with the *status quo* is expected to increase, and people are more likely to accuse the incumbents and distrust the traditional political establishment as a whole for having lost touch with their constituency (Armingeon and Guthmann, 2014). Following the traditional instrumental approach of the erosion of public support (Norris, 1999), such blaming mechanism is intensified if the country experiences an abrupt credit crunch, making people even more suspicious of their representatives (Foster and Frieden, 2017). These arguments may lead to claim that, to some extent, the economic discontent and the increasing mistrust in the main actors of political representation feed themselves from the same source and represent the two sides of the same coin, which is the increasing estrangement between the elected representatives and those that, in theory, should embody the popular sovereignty.

On the demand side, we should recall that AEP perceive themselves as the real champions of democracy, the only political actors that represent the most authentic and genuine form of representative democracy (Canovan, 1999). As it has been claimed, anti-establishment parties 'bring the concept of democracy to its extreme and promote the purest definition of government of the people, by the people and for the people' (Mény and Surel. 2002: 5). Therefore, the joint effect of the economic and distrust-based estrangement between voters and the elected representatives may constitute the perfect breeding ground for a further increase in the AEP electoral success. In other words, anti-establishment parties may combine people's distrust in their elected representatives with citizens' economic discontent as a more compelling mobilizing factor, which makes their anti-establishment argument even more appealing and persuades distrustful voters to support their radical vision of representative democracy during an economic crisis.

The interaction between the objective economic conditions and individual-level distrust may thus clarify the reasons for the increasing success of AEP in the aftermath of the Great Recession. As Kriesi and Pappas (2015: 9) argued, the economic and political grievances that had their origin in the crisis are correlated, but they might interact in different ways: 'a political crisis may occur independently of an economic crisis, but the political crisis may also co-occur with an economic crisis; the political crisis may precede

the economic crisis and contribute to it, or a deep economic crisis may serve as a catalyst for the development of a political crisis'. In this sense, the political crisis (which can be conceived as a crisis of legitimization of the traditional political elite and it can be observed by the increasing distrust in the main actors of political representation) and the economic downturn (traditionally associated with the worsening of the main macroeconomic indicators, such as the increase of the unemployment rate) may develop in parallel and may be signalling the same malaise, which in turn lead to the same outcome. In sum, distrustful people may be more likely to cast their 'protest voting' when the economic conditions are bad, compared with a period of prosperity. This leads to the last hypothesis:

> H_5: *Political distrust has a higher impact on votes for AEP when a country's economic conditions are bad, compared with a good economic condition.*

2.3   Data

The empirical analysis relies on two different levels: individual and aggregate. At individual level, we rely on the ESS, whereas the main macroeconomic indicators (GDP, unemployment, inflation and deficit/surplus as percentage of GDP) are obtained from the Eurostat and IMF datasets.

For this analysis, we pooled the data from seven waves covering the period from 2004 to 2016[4]. The timespan of the ESS allowed me to study the impact of political distrust on voting for AEP before and after the Great Recession. Although the survey consists of 32 countries, the cases included here are for the countries where the survey covered at least one election before and after the Great Recession. Under this criterion, the sample consists of 96 elections in 26 countries, which included: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

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[4] The first wave has been excluded because of the lack of the variable "trust in political parties".

2.3.1 The dependent variable: identifying anti-establishment parties

The dependent variable is the self-reported vote at the latest national election. It is a dummy variable, which takes the value 1 if the respondent reported having voted for an AEP and 0 if he or she supported a mainstream party. Our theoretical argument is concerned with the anti-establishment rhetoric of challenger parties and the relationship between political distrust and the economy, and this potentially includes parties from the whole political spectrum. In line with the notion of protest voting and the impact of the economy on votes for challenger parties, we do not expect the effect of political attitudes and economic factors to differ between left- and right-wing challengers. Nevertheless, it is also true that right-wing parties differ from their left-wing counterparts and they compete on different issues (see Hobolt and Tilley, 2016), so we ran two separate models.

In this study, we will adopt a novel approach in identifying challenger parties, which consists in using the anti-elite dimension that has been included in the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Polk *et al.*, 2017). The survey asked 337 experts to place 268 parties on the most relevant issues. But, even more importantly, for the first time the dataset provides information about the positioning of political parties on the salience of anti-establishment rhetoric (Polk *et al.*, 2017). This aspect is particularly relevant, especially because 'to our knowledge, there are no existing party-level measures of anti-establishment rhetoric salience' (Polk *et al.*, 2017:3). Furthermore, this criterion eases the comparability between parties and among countries. In this research, we classified all the parties with a score higher than 6 (measured on a 0-10-point scale) as "challenger parties", whereas the value of 5 on the left/right position has been used to distinguish between left- and right-wing parties. Further information may be found in Table 11 in Appendix A2.

2.3.2 Independent variables

There are two sets of covariates that are crucial in our argument: trust in the main actors of political representation and the economy. The former is an additive scale measured at the individual level and is created from the average of trust in political parties and trust in politicians. The scale is a reliable indicator (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.933$) of citizens' support for the main actors of political representation. For the sake of interpretability, the scale has been reverted: higher values mean high levels of distrust.

The economy entails three different variables, measured at individual and aggregate levels. At the individual level, we used the satisfaction with the country's economic conditions as a measure for the sociotropic evaluation of the economy. The egotropic evaluation of the economy has been operationalized by the perception of experiencing income difficulties, which captures the sensation of economic insecurity.

At the aggregate level, the objective status of the economy has been captured by the weighted EPI (Khramov and Lee, 2013), which is a synthetic measure that captures the overall state of the country's economic condition. This reflects the active in the economy's three main sectors (households, firms, and government) and comprises variables that influence all three sectors simultaneously: 'the inflation rate as a measure of the economy's monetary stance; the unemployment rate as a measure of the economy's production stance; the budget deficit as a percentage of total GDP as a measure of the economy's fiscal stance; and the change in GDP as a measure of the aggregate performance of the economy' (Khramov and Lee, 2013: 5). Unlike the raw measures (which provide only a snapshot of the economy), the EPI 'has the benefit of summarizing information about the general performance of the economy while avoiding problems associated with collinearity among the macroeconomic variables' (Christmann, 2018: 82). The formula is:

Economic Performance Index (EPI) = $\quad 100\% - W_{Inf} \; X \; (|Inf \; (\%) - I^*|)$

$\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad - W_{Unem} \; X \; (Unem(\%) - U^*)$

$\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad - W_{Def} \; X \left(\dfrac{Def}{GDP(\%)} - \dfrac{Def}{GDP*} \right)$

$\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad + W_{GDP} \; X \; (\Delta GDP \; (\%) - \Delta GDP^*),$

where 'I* is the desired inflation rate (0%), U* is the desired unemployment rate (4.75%), (Def/GDP*) is the desired government deficit as a share of GDP (0%) and ΔGDP* is the desired change in GDP (4.75%)' (Khramov and Lee, 2013: 6). The weights (W) are generated by estimating the inverse standard deviation for each economic variable multiplied by the average standard deviation of all the variables. The higher the index,

the better the economic performance. In the models, we introduced the EPI calculated for the same year of the national election held in the country.

2.3.3 Control variables

Added to the model are those variables that have been considered the most relevant alternatives to the protest and economic voting theories. Among them, the support thesis argues that a vote for an AEP is driven by the same factors that explain votes for any other party; that is, people vote for these parties because they want their policy proposals to be implemented (van der Brug and Fennema, 2003). This is where voters of right-wing parties differ from their left-wing counterparts. As has been shown (Hobolt and Tilley, 2016), anti-immigrant attitudes are one of the strongest predictors of voting for right-wing challengers, whereas those who favour greater economic redistribution are more likely to vote for a left-wing party. The anti-immigrant scale has been created from the average of three items tapping attitudes towards immigrants (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.852$), whereas attitudes towards economic redistribution have been operationalized by a specific question.

The sociological approach represents another potential explanation. This branch of the literature argues that challenger parties are more successful among a given social group. Among these models, the 'losers of globalization' thesis argues that these parties are more successful among manual and low-skilled workers, as well as people with lower levels of education (Oesch, 2008). The market position of this sector of the society has been weakened as a result of the intensification of international trade, and they paid the highest price in the globalization process. Their social marginalization makes them more vulnerable to the discourse that politicians do not care about them and that challenger parties are the true champions of democracy. We therefore included in the model of Oesch's (2008) scheme of occupation and social class, as well as educational level. It should also be observed that, because of the emphasis of communist parties on working-class rights, trade union members are more likely to support left-wing AEP (Oesch, 2008).

It is also necessary to control for the fact that the ESS has been conducted in each country at different points in their national electoral cycle and that voting behaviour in national elections is collected at different times after the date of the elections. We therefore

computed the distance (in months) between the date of the survey and the date of the most recent prior election. Finally, all the models have controls for the other main socio-demographic variables (gender, age, residence area). The descriptive of all the variables are shown in Table 10 in the Appendix A2, while further information about the operationalization of the variables can be consulted in the Appendix A2.1

2.4 **Methods**

In this paper, we are interested in analysing the impact of the economy and distrust on voting for AEP within a country. We thus eliminated all cross-national variance, by including dummy variables for countries. At the same time, the inclusion of the wave in the pooled model allowed me to control for the timing of the survey. In this way, the only variance to be explained is left at the election[5] and individual level. The hierarchical structure of the data (with individuals nested into elections and the dependent variable measured at the individual level) calls for a multilevel model, which is the workhorse for analysing such structures (Snijders and Bosker, 2011). Given the dichotomous nature of the dependent variable, we performed a multilevel logistic model. The formal model is:

$$Y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 trust_i + \beta_2 economy_i + \beta_3 EPI_t + \gamma X_i + country_j + wave_k + u_t + e_{it}$$

where the subscript *it* indicates an individual *i* belonging to the election *t*, Y_{it} denotes the outcome (voting for a challenger right or left party in the most recent national election); *X* represents the individual level control variables; trust and economy measure the levels of political trust, the sociotropic and egotropic evaluation of the economy (measured at the individual level); EPI measures the objective conditions of the state of the national economy (measured at level 2); country *j* and wave *k* represent the country and wave fixed effects, u_t and e_{it} represent the error terms at the election and individual levels. The error terms are assumed to be uncorrelated and to be normally distributed.

In this study we are also interested in the conditional impact of political distrust on voting for challenger parties, depending on the change of the objective economic conditions. We

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[5] Respondents that have been asked about their voting behaviour for the same election in the country have been grouped together in the same level-2 unit, even if they have been interviewed in different waves. Further information may be found in Table 12 in the Appendix A2.

thus estimated two additional regression models that include a cross-level interaction between political distrust and the EPI:

$$Y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 trust_i + \beta_2 economy_i + \beta_3 EPI_t + \beta_4 EPI_t * trust_i + \gamma X_i + country_j + wave_k + u_t + e_{it}$$

2.5 **Results**

Table 1 contains the parameters for all the models estimated. Model I deals with voting for right-wing anti-establishment parties, whereas model III analyses the success of their left-wing counterparts. To begin with the discussion of the first two theoretical hypotheses (about the direct impact of the individual-level economic determinants on the likelihood to support an anti-establishment party), Table 1 shows that the egotropic evaluation of the economy is a good predictor of the voting for AEP. On the one hand, models I and III suggest that unemployed people are more likely to support right- and left-wing parties. On the other hand, those who found it difficult to cope on their income tended to support a challenger party, compared with those who could live comfortably. These findings confirm that the social consequences of the Great Recession had a clear impact on voting choices, and the insecurity provoked by the financial distress made those people most affected more prone to support the 'alternative narrative' offered by the AEP. The same argument can be made for the evaluation of the economic situation: the higher the satisfaction with the economy, the lower the propensity to turn towards challenger contenders. Focusing now on the direct impact of political distrust on the voting behaviour, it appears that this attitude is positively associated with voting for either right- or left-wing contenders. In order to have a better understanding of the impact of political distrust on the voting for right- and left-wing anti-establishment parties, Figure 4 displays the predicted probabilities of voting for both type of political parties according to different levels of political distrust.

As can be observed in the coefficients of political distrust in the four empirical models and in Figure 4, the impact of the political attitude on the voting behaviour is stronger in the case of right-wing anti-establishment parties. In such case, the line is steeper than in the case of left-wing parties. In terms of predicted probabilities, the likelihood of voting for a right-wing party ranges from 0.07 in case of minimum political distrust to 0.15 when people strongly distrust the main actors of political representation. In the case of left-wing

anti-establishment parties, the change is much less accentuated (passing from 0.07 in case of maximum trust to 0.08 in case of maximum distrust) but, nonetheless, the relationship between the political attitude and the voting behaviour is still significant at 99%. These results empirically confirm our fourth hypothesis by showing that, despite the differences between right- and left-wing anti-establishment parties, both kind of parties channel voters' distrust in the main actors of political representation.

Focusing now on the most relevant alternatives to protest and economic voting, it is worth highlighting that political distrust and the sociotropic-egotropic evaluation of the economy are not the only explanations of the success of anti-establishment parties in detriment of the mainstream political actors. In line with previous findings (Hobolt and Tilley, 2016), anti-immigrant attitudes are a strong predictor for the success of far-right parties. The direction of the relationship is as expected: more intolerant attitudes towards immigration are associated with a higher propensity to vote for a right-wing party. Nevertheless, it is also very surprising to observe that the relationship between attitudes towards immigration and voting for left-wing parties is significant and goes in the opposite direction. As model III shows, anti-immigrant attitudes are negatively related to the success of left-wing parties, which suggests that their supporters favour the integration of immigrants in the host countries. Regarding the attitudes towards economic redistribution, the results are in line with the original expectation: those who favour more economic redistribution are more prone to support left-wing parties. Conversely, this relationship goes in the opposite direction in the case of right-wing challenger parties.

Figure 4: The impact of political distrust on the voting for left and right anti-establishment parties
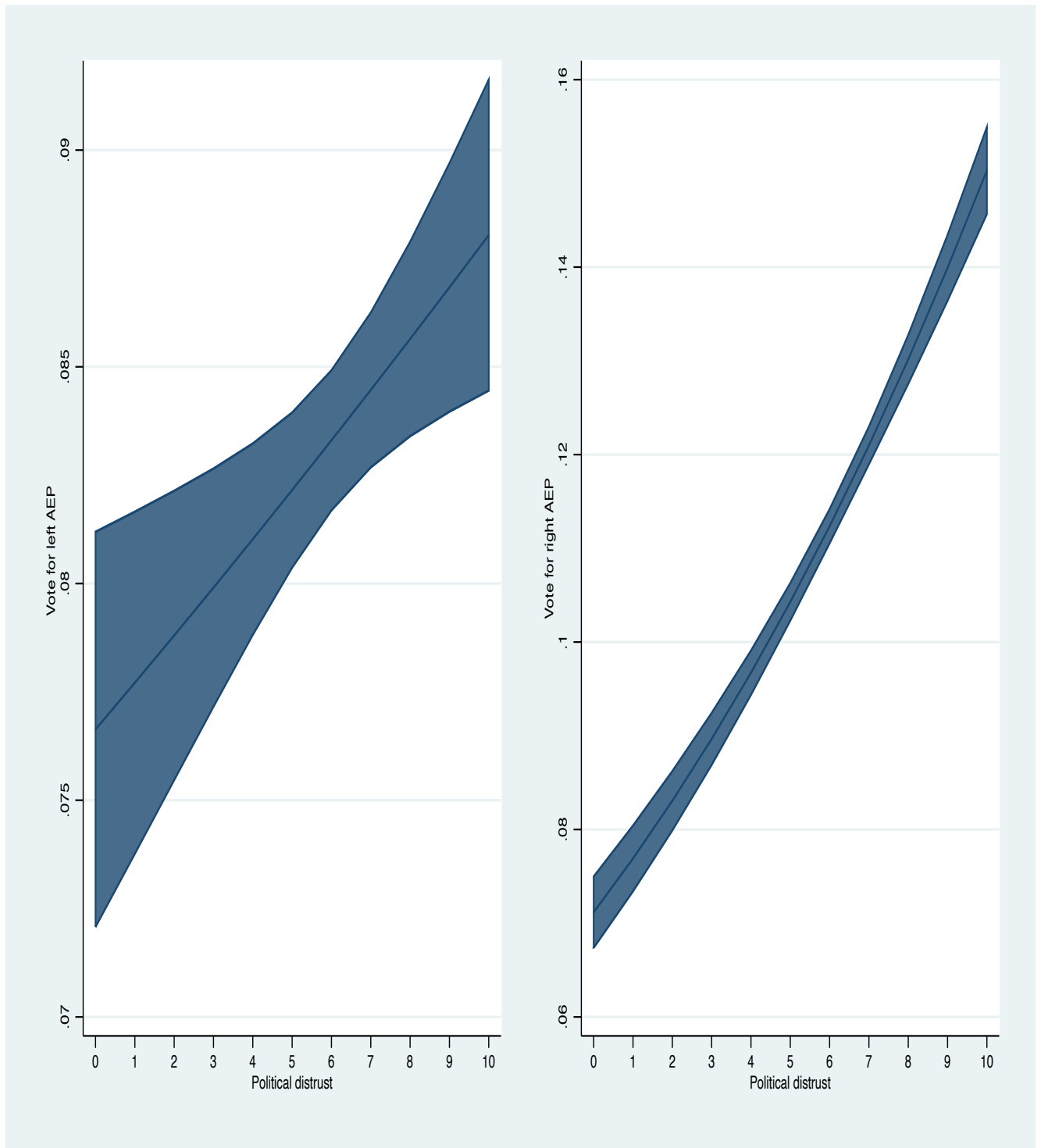
Predicted probabilities of voting for a left (on the left) and right (on the right) anti-establishment party, according to different values of political distrust. The predicted probabilities have been computed holding the other covariates at the mean values and according to the coefficients in models I and III (Table 1). Confidence intervals at 95%.

Table 1: Explaining the voting for anti-establishment parties (logistic regression estimates)

	Model I Challenger right	Model II Challenger right [interaction]	Model III Challenger left	Model IV Challenger left [interaction]
Level 1 variables				
Political distrust	0.088***	0.412***	0.060***	0.096***
	(0.005)	(0.097)	(0.006)	(0.007)
Satisfaction with the economy	-0.023***	-0.023***	-0.113***	-0.112***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Anti-immigrant attitudes	0.239***	0.239***	-0.086***	-0.087***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Attitudes towards redistribution	0.022*	0.022*	-0.482***	-0.481***
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Income difficulty	0.036*	0.036*	0.209***	0.208***
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)
From 18 to 24 years old (ref.)				
From 25 to 30 years old	0.009	0.008	-0.204***	-0.206***
	(0.059)	(0.059)	(0.063)	(0.063)
From 31 to 64 years old	-0.239***	-0.239***	-0.433***	-0.439***
	(0.054)	(0.054)	(0.059)	(0.059)
65 and older	-0.587***	-0.586***	-0.859***	-0.864***
	(0.063)	(0.063)	(0.069)	(0.069)
Gender (ref.male)	-0.271***	-0.271***	-0.135***	-0.135***
	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.022)	(0.022)
Low education (ref.)				
Middle education	-0.024	-0.024	-0.072*	-0.071*
	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.03)	(0.03)
High education	-0.376***	-0.375***	0.317***	0.319***
	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.040)	(0.040)
Trade union membership	-0.104***	-0.103***	0.373***	0.370***
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.024)
Area of living (urban area ref.)	0.026	0.025	-0.175***	-0.176***
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.023)	(0.023)
Higher-grade service class (ref.)				
Lower-grade service class	0.165***	0.167***	-0.014	-0.015
	(0.046)	(0.047)	(0.044)	(0.044)
Small business owners	0.328***	0.330***	-0.155**	-0.157**
	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.058)	(0.058)
Skilled workers	0.504***	0.505***	-0.011	-0.013
	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.045)
Unskilled workers	0.540***	0.540***	-0.034	-0.038
	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.060)	(0.060)
Student	0.091	0.092	0.211**	0.208**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	(0.074)	(0.074)	(0.053)	(0.070)
Unemployed	0.383***	0.385***	0.363***	0.361***
	(0.061)	(0.061)	(0.056)	(0.056)
Retired/disabled	0.266***	0.266***	0.072	0.068
	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.048)
Housework	0.338***	0.338***	-0.087	-0.090
	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.062)	(0.062)
Distance from the election				
(months)	-0.006**	-0.006**	-0.001	-0.002
	(0.050)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Level 2 covariates				
EPI Weighted	0.031	0.057	0.009	0.006
	(0.051)	(0.051)	(0.033)	(0.056)
Cross-level interaction				
Distrust#EPI		-0.003***		-0.016***
		(0.001)		(0.002)
Constant	-6.907	-9.289	-5.277	-4.844***
	(4.818)	(4.868)	(3.146)	(0.484)
Wave fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of individuals	132,835	132,835	127,472	127,472
Number of elections	94	94	94	94
Variance components				
Elections	0.605**	0.604**	-0.376	-0.417*
	(0.194)	(0.194)	(0.205)	(0.206)
Log likelihood	-34,617.88	-34,517.53	-34,789.60	-34,489.60

Estimation is via maximum likelihood. Standard error in parentheses. The levels of significance are
*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

All in all, two conclusions may be drawn from these findings. First, voting for an AEP is not exclusively driven by people's dissatisfaction, but it is also motivated by policy preferences. Second, in terms of immigration and economic redistribution, supporters of right-wing parties are diametrically opposed to their left-wing counterparts.

Social background is another relevant factor. There appears to be a gender gap, with men showing a lower propensity to vote for AEP. Age has a significant impact as well, and older people are less likely to support both party categories. Regarding the educational level, it is worth highlighting the differences between right- and left-wing voters. While right-wing parties flourish among low-educated people, those with a higher educational level are more likely to support a left-wing party. In a similar way, the 'losers of

globalization' thesis seems to hold true only for right-wing parties. As model I shows, blue-collar workers show a high propensity to vote for right-wing parties, whereas they are not attracted by the far left. This finding is quite surprising, considering their focus on the economic inequalities. However, it is also true that members of trade unions have a strong preference for left-wing parties, whereas they are less likely to vote for the right.

Nevertheless, it is worth highlighting that, at the aggregate level, the economy does not have any impact. As displayed by models I and III, the objective situation of the economy does not explain the individual decision to vote for an AEP. This finding should not be surprising, as other studies reported a null relationship between the direct impact of the economy and the voting for challenger parties (see Coffé *et al.*, 2007).

As was discussed in the fifth hypothesis, however, the contextual and individual-level determinants of voting for AEP may not be a sufficient condition for their success. Particularly, it could be expected that both predictors go in the same direction and reinforce each other, by triggering the success of such parties. To better investigate this conditional argument, models II and IV replicate the preceding analyses by adding the cross-level interaction between distrust and the EPI. As can be observed, the coefficient of the interaction term is negative and significant, which means that political distrust has a higher impact on the voting for AEP in those elections held in bad times, compared with a period of economic prosperity. That is, the protest voting mechanism is more accentuated during an economic downturn. For the sake of interpretability, Figure 5 shows the marginal effects of the impact of political distrust as the EPI changes. As we can see, a one-point increase in the political distrust scale has, on average, a stronger effect on voting for AEP when the country's economic status is very bad. Conversely, as economic conditions improve, a one-point increase in distrust has a lower impact on the voting. This relationship holds true for both right- and left-wing parties. Although the magnitude of the change is not high, these findings empirically support the initial expectation that AEP benefitted from the crisis and political distrust had a stronger impact on their success in bad times.
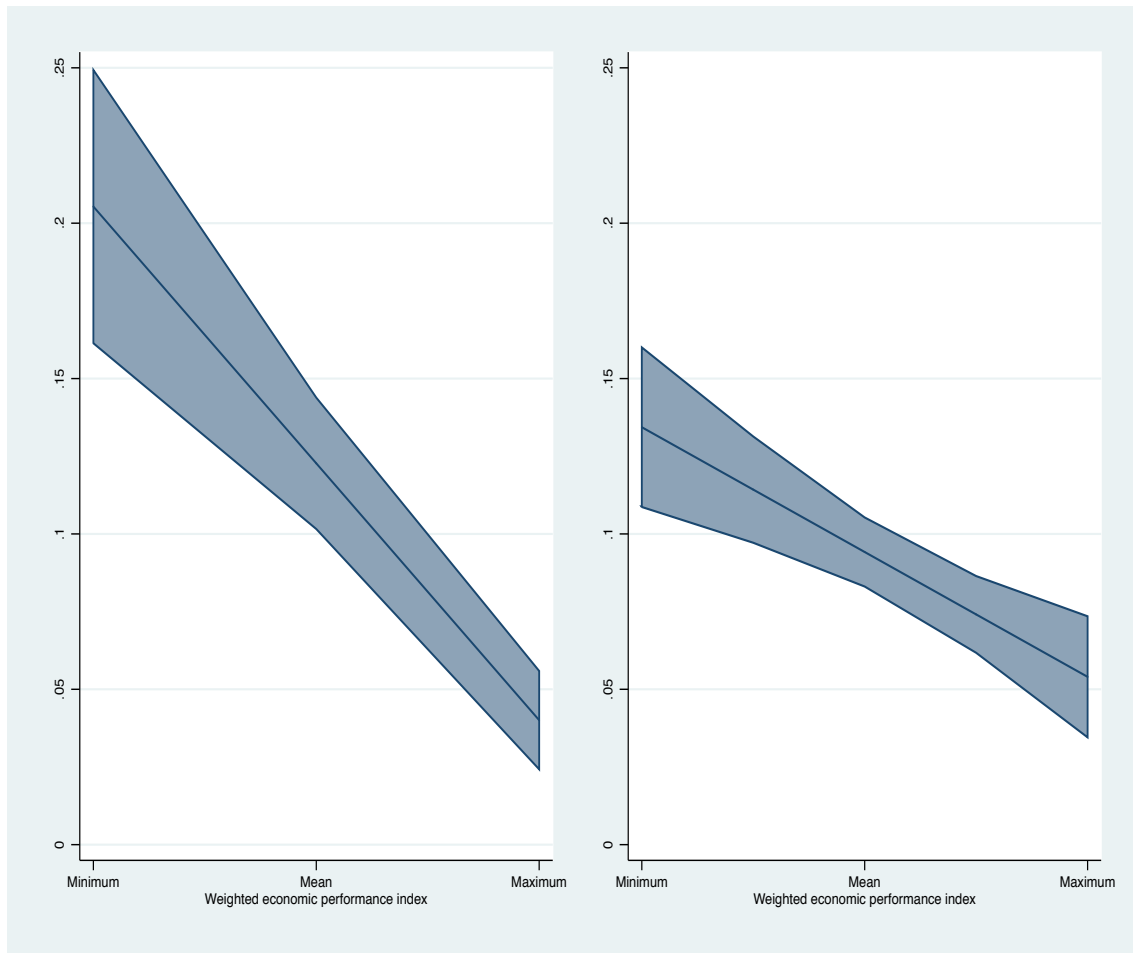
Average marginal effects of political distrust on the voting for anti-establishment left (on the left) and right (on the right) parties, depending on the EPI. The marginal effects have been computed holding the other covariates at the mean values and according to the coefficients in models II and IV (Table 1). Confidence intervals at 95%.

2.6 Robustness tests

Tables 13-15 in the Appendix A2 provide some robustness tests using alternative macroeconomic predictors. In Table 13 (which analyses the voting for right-wing parties) the EPI has been substituted by its raw indicators. Given the high correlation between the variables, GDP, unemployment, government deficit and inflation have been added, one at a time, to Models I-IV. These models confirm the findings observed in the main model by showing that, even including the original economic predictors, there is still a null relationship between the economy and the voting for AEP. In Table 14 the same models

are replicated to analyse the voting for the left-wing anti-establishment parties. As in Table 13, the results show that the objective economic conditions are not related with the individual decision of supporting an AEP. The only exception is unemployment, which is positively related with the voting for left-wing parties. In other words, the higher the unemployment, the higher the likelihood of voting for the far left. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that such relationship is not very strong, and it is significant at 90%. All in all, it seems that the objective status of the economy does not have a direct impact on the voting for AEP.

In Table 15, a dummy variable indicating the post-2008 period is added to the models. As it was showed in Figure 2, the economic crisis unfolded differently in each country, and it was especially nasty in Southern and Eastern European countries. As reported in models II-IV in Table 1, the uneven impact of the crisis played a relevant role when further exacerbating the protest voting mechanism (both for the right- and the left-wing parties). In the light of the above, we may claim that the economic crisis acted as a catalyst of citizens' discontent against the traditional political establishment, by triggering people's distrust in the main actors of representation into support for AEP. Nevertheless, the remaining question to address is whether there are further unobserved economics or politics factors that are not gauged by the EPI and that may have played a role on the voting for AEP. More specifically, it would be interesting to analyse whether these dynamics had a different conditional impact on political distrust when studying people's patterns of voting behaviour after and before the Great Recession. Beyond the economy, did political distrust have different political consequences in the crisis period, compared with the pre-crisis one?

To test this possibility, models I (for right-wing AEP) and II (for their left-wing counterparts) in Table 15 in the Appendix A2 add an interaction term between the post-2008 dummy variable and political distrust. Even controlling by the EPI, the coefficient of the interaction is positive and significant in both models, which means that political distrust had a higher impact on the success of AEP in the post-2008 elections, compared with those elections that have been held before the economic downturn. This conditional argument can be better appreciated in Figure 9 in the Appendix A2, which shows that, on average, a one-point increase in political distrust have a stronger influence on the voting for AEP after 2008, compared with the pre-crisis period. All in all, these results suggest

that, beyond the macroeconomic factors, the Great Recession has contributed to amplify the protest voting mechanism, that is the voting for challenger parties motivated by distrust-related factors.

In addition to the economy, a wealth of scholars claimed that, at the aggregate level, the electoral fortunes of (right-wing) anti-establishment parties are conditioned by long-term institutional factors, namely the proportionality of the electoral system (see Arzheimer and Carter, 2006; Jackman and Volpert, 1996; Mudde, 2007; Norris, 2005). Following the theoretical argument supported by this branch of the literature, the proportionality of the electoral system activates a strong psychological mechanism that affects both the supply and the demand side. On the one hand, the more proportional the electoral system, the greater the incentives for political entrepreneurs to join the electoral arena and to run for the elections. On the other hand, the more permissive the electoral system, the higher the incentive for voters to support a fringe, extreme or anti-establishment party. In opposition to this psychological mechanism, the stricter (less proportional) the electoral system, the more leaders of fringe or extreme parties will be dissuaded from entering the electoral arena and the more discouraged voters will be from supporting such parties since they stand very few chances of gaining political representation. In view of this relationship, AEP should record low electoral scores under disproportional electoral systems.

Nevertheless, as in the case of the economy, also in this case the evidence is mixed, and the findings are contradictory. While some scholars found empirical evidence in support of the aforementioned relationship (Jackman and Volpert, 1996; Mudde, 2007; Norris, 2005), others actually discovered the opposite association – AEP are more successful in disproportional electoral systems, compared with a more permissive electoral system – (Arzheimer and Carter 2006). Finally, Arzheimer (2009) found a null relationship between the electoral system and the electoral success of (right-wing) anti-establishment parties. Despite these inconsistencies and contradictions, all these studies suggest that the proportionality of the electoral system is a relevant factor to control for when investigating the individual and contextual determinants of the voting for AEP. Therefore, Table 16 in the Appendix A2 replicates the analysis displayed in Table 1 in Chapter 2, by

adding the well-known Gallagher Index. [6] The higher the values, the higher the disproportionality of the electoral system. Leaving aside the discussion of all the variables included in the model (which have been already discussed in the previous section) and focusing on the relationship between the Gallagher Index and the voting for right- and left-wing AEP, Table 16 shows a null relationship between the institutional factor and the voting behaviour. More specifically, the sign of the coefficients are in line with the conventional wisdom (see Jackman and Volpert, 1996; Mudde, 2007; Norris, 2005) arguing that high levels of disproportionality of the electoral systems are harmful for the electoral success of AEP (since their voters have very few incentives in voting for these parties). However, such association does not reach the statistical significance, which confirms empirically the findings observed by Arzheimer (2009). While the psychological mechanism produced by the proportionality of the electoral systems seems to work quite well at the aggregate level, at individual level such association does not function properly.

2.7   **Conclusions**

This article established a dialogue between the literature on protest and economic voting and the success of anti-establishment parties in the aftermath of the Great Recession, by analysing the direct and conditional impact of political distrust and the economy on voting for this kind of parties.

Confirming previous studies (van Kessel, 2015), it was first demonstrated that political distrust has a direct impact on voting for right- and left-wing challenger parties. Their anti-elite orientation and their alternative narrative to *the status quo* are more likely to flourish among those who are discontent with the traditional political establishment. In this sense, a vote cast for a challenger party is driven by the crisis of representation of the main political actors. The impact of political distrust on the voting behaviour is stronger in the case of right-wing AEP than in the case of their left-wing counterparts but, despite

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[6] The data come from Gallagher (2015). Missing values are replaced with data from Carey and Hix (2011).

that, in both cases the relationship between the political attitude and the voting behaviour is statistically significant.

The economy also plays a significant role in explaining the electoral success of challenger parties. It is important to highlight, however, that individual-level experiences and evaluation of the economy are much more important than the objective state of the economy. Additionally, the extraordinary severity of the Great Recession made the traditional sanctioning mechanism discussed by the literature on economic voting extend beyond the mainstream governing parties in favour of challenger contenders.

Nevertheless, it has been also shown that a vote for these parties not entails only a component of discontent with the performance of the traditional political elite or the mismanagement of the national economic situation, but is also a vote in favour of these parties, and policy preferences play an important role when explaining their success. In this regard, right-wing voters are diametrically opposed to supporters of left-wing parties. While the former group has a strong anti-immigrant attitude and opposes more economic redistribution, the latter is much more tolerant towards immigrants and prefers more economic redistribution.

Even more importantly, we have also demonstrated that the impact of political distrust on the success of AEP depends on the economic context, and the protest voting mechanism is more intense in bad times than in periods of economic prosperity. In other words, when things go wrong in the economic arena and mainstream parties find it harder to deliver their promises, distrustful people are even more likely to support the alternative narratives presented by challengers of the traditional political establishment.

These findings make important contributions to the literature on political attitudes and voting for challenger parties. First, it demonstrated that the Great Recession was much more than an economic crisis and the economy was only a part of the equation in explaining the increasing success of challenger contenders. The economic and financial crisis not only reshaped the relationship between citizens and the main political actors in most European countries (Armingeon and Guthmann, 2014; Foster and Frieden, 2017), but it also showed the incapacity of mainstream actors to respond to the citizens' demands and needs, contributing to a strong electoral realignment and pushing distrustful people

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towards the main challengers of the power holders. In this situation, the anti-elite messages of challenger parties could be heard more clearly, and people considered them a solution to the failure of the traditional actors. Second, it also demonstrated that cross-national differences are the not the only criteria people rely on when supporting a challenger party. By focusing on the longitudinal within-country variation, this study has also proved that citizens contemplate the possibility of voting for these parties longitudinally, that is, by looking into the evolution of the political and economic situation in their own country. Third, this paper extended the traditional analysis of challenger parties beyond the well-studied radical right-wing (Mudde, 2007) by including their left-wing counterparts.

This study also has broader political and societal relevance. Despite their presence in national party systems since the '70s, over the past few years several challenger parties on both the left and the right have managed to achieve an even more prominent position for themselves in national political systems. By focusing on the citizens' distrust in the main actors of political representation, this study has argued that the electoral success of challenger parties may be due to the political representation crisis, which is linked to the loss of credibility confronting mainstream parties and their perceived incapacity to deal with citizens' demands (Torcal, 2014). Furthermore, this research has shown that political distrust has the same explanatory power as the economic determinants. This evidence raises the politically salient question of whether the success of political challengers is all about the economy and challenger parties are just benefitting from the bad economic performance, or whether there is something deeper and their success is tapping into the political establishment's crisis of legitimacy. If the latter is the case, then it would not be sufficient to go back to the pre-crisis economic situation, but mainstream parties will need to restore the voters' faith in their performance (or least a minimum level of credibility) to stop the challengers' gains.

Obviously, this study is not without limitations. First, although the analysis covers a reasonable timespan (12 years, including the pre- and post-crisis period) to study the impact of political distrust and economic variables on challenger voting, a more extended period may more convincingly prove the association between the financial crisis, political attitudes and the success of challenger parties. Second, the empirical findings rely on a time-series cross-sectional dataset, in which new individuals are selected in every wave.

Although the ESS adopts the highest standards in survey methodology and data collection, it is still hard to draw causal conclusions on the association between the observed variables. In this regard, panel data or experimental designs may be useful in uncovering the causal mechanisms linking the economic crisis with populist voting.

The following chapter represents a more advanced and developed version of an article that has been published (in Spanish) as a chapter in a book edited by Professor Mariano Torcal.

The full reference is as follows: Torcal, M. and Serani D. (2018). Confianza política y nuevos partidos en las Elecciones Generales de España del 2015. In Torcal, M. (ed.), *Opinión pública y cambio electoral en España. Claves ante el reto europeo y la crisis política y económica* (pp. 173-199). Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas.

3. THE 'NEW NICHE PARTIES OF POLITICAL REPRESENTATION'. THE ROLE OF POLITICAL TRUST, ALIENATION AND INDIFFERENCE ON THE VOTING FOR NEW ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT PARTIES. THE CASE OF SPAIN IN 2015.

Abstract

In this paper, we analyse the successful rise of Podemos and Ciudadanos, two new different anti-establishment parties that put an end to the stable two-party system in Spain. We drew three conclusions from the analysis of an online panel survey for the 2015 parliamentary elections. First, the desertion from mainstream actors in favour of third parties responds to two different supply-demand mismatches: indifference and alienation. Second, distrust in political parties and politicians is the factor mostly related with the success of new anti-establishment parties, becoming the 'niche parties of political representation'. Third, unlike the conventional wisdom, political distrust does not reinforce the impact of voters' alienation. In fact, alienated citizens tend to support new anti-establishment parties when they display greater level of trust.

3.1 Introduction

Over the last few years, most party systems in Europe underwent a huge change in their composition. While traditional parties have consistently lost support, brand new anti-establishment or challenger contenders have successfully joined the national electoral arena, by jeopardizing the *status quo* in terms of major policy issues, perceiving themselves as a challenger to mainstream parties and accusing all the other parties to be essentially the same (Hobolt and Tilley, 2016). The successful rise of *AfD* in Germany, the *M5S* in Italy or *Citizens* and *We Can* in Spain are just few examples of the comeback of anti-establishment parties (AEP) in Europe. How can we explain this phenomenon? Why did new challenger parties rise and establish themselves in institutionalized party systems? In the literature, these questions have been addressed by relying upon two different arguments.

The first one deals with the supply-side theoretical framework. This branch of the literature is focused on the political opportunity structure, i.e. on the exogenous characteristics of the political environment that provide the incentives to new political entrepreneurs to rise in established party systems (Golder, 2016; Mudde, 2007). Among this kind of factors, the nature of party competition and the positions occupied by mainstream parties in the ideological or policy space are an important explanatory factor. In this regard, the literature identifies two possible mechanisms. The first is the *indifference* problem, which results from the absence of differentiation between the main traditional parties (Plane and Gershtenson, 2004). The second dimension is the *alienation*, which occurs when voters are far away from the traditional options. Both phenomena might increase electoral instability, but they may have a different impact on the voting behaviour and the nature of parties benefitting from these situations. On the one hand, indifference might favour non-radical challenger parties that do not try to break away the *status quo* and attract non-extreme voters. On the other hand, alienation entails a greater distance from the *status quo* and the positions adopted by the main actors of political representation, and therefore it might foster support for more radical parties with an anti-system or anti-elite discourse.

Nevertheless, if alienation and indifference produce voters' desertion from mainstream government parties (those that were traditionally alternating between government and

opposition), why has recent voters' discontent not resulted in a simple realignment in favour of existing minor mainstream parties addressing same issues? How this discontent has mostly resulted in the successful emergence of various new anti-establishment parties from different areas of the ideological spectrum?

In this paper, we argue that the demand-side explanations, even though are crucial to explain the desertion from mainstream parties, they are not sufficient to explain the emergence and consolidation of new challenger contenders in institutionalized party systems. We thus defend that the grievances that make these new parties appealing, by representing the 'perfect breeding ground' of its emergence (Mudde, 2007: 202), are related with the profound crisis of political representation contemporary democracies are coping with during the last decade (Dalton and Weldon, 2005). In this sense, many new-born AEP are emerging nowadays to channel people distrust towards the main actors of representation (political parties and politicians) (van Kessel, 2015; Vidal, 2017).

Certainly, it is not new to claim that political distrust has an effect on fostering changes in party preferences -especially in favour of anti-establishment parties - (Bergh, 2014; Dalton and Weldon, 2005). We add to this preceding work by arguing that the increasing vote-switching produced by political distrust is directed in favour of all new parties as long as they are an expression of the new conflict between 'old and new politics' (Hutter, Kriesi and Vidal, 2018), positioning themselves against 'politics as usual' (Bélanger and Nadeau, 2005). In this sense, we consider that many new AEP may be considered to be 'niche parties of political representation', addressing unsatisfied demands of democratic regeneration and political renewal.

Additionally, some studies have also argued that the two factors, supply/demand mismatch and political distrust, reinforce each other, fostering the success of new parties (Bélanger and Nadeau, 2005; Hetherington, 1999). In this sense, distrustful people who are frustrated with their party tend to extend these sentiments towards the party system as a whole, becoming more likely to switch their vote (Dassoneville *et al.,* 2015; Zelle, 1995). Nevertheless, and in contrast to these works, we argue that political distrust does not reinforce the impact of a favourable political opportunity structure on voting for new AEP. On the contrary, the activation of protest voting – voting for a challenger party as a mechanism to express political distrust (Bergh, 2014) -seems to be greater when citizens

display high levels of trust. In fact, a minimum level of trust is required to translate the supply/demand mismatches to support for new parties, and this specially so for alienated voters, who in general tend to be far away from mainstream parties.

These arguments will be tested in Spain where the successful irruption of two very different new challenger parties – Citizens (*Ciudadanos*) and We Can (*Podemos*) – provoked a dramatic change from a stable two-party to a multi-party system (Cordero and Montero, 2015). The empirical analysis relies on the CIUPANEL dataset, an original online panel carried out in Spain between 2014 and 2016.

3.2 Theoretical arguments and hypotheses

3.2.1 The supply-side explanations

In the literature, it is well-established the argument according to which the positions adopted by mainstream parties in the ideological or policy space are related to the success or failure of new AEP (Adams, Clark, Ezrow and Glasgow, 2006; Ezrow, de Vries, Steenbergen and Edwards, 2011; Meguid, 2005). In this regard, Kitschelt and McGann's convergence thesis (1995) claims that support for new challenger contenders may be favoured by the ideological proximity of mainstream competitors. In fact, if traditional parties are too much alike, they fail to present voters with a platform that distinguishes their different positions. In the absence of any party differentiation, the party system undergoes an *indifference* problem, which means that 'there is no meaningful distinction between the locations of the candidates, even though both may be close to the citizen' (Plane and Gershtenson, 2004: 71). The inability of voters to appreciate any difference between the parties that traditionally govern makes the established party system less responsive and representative (Dalton, 2008), configuring a favourable political opportunity structure for the rise of new political actors with the aim of replacing the traditional political parties.

New challenger parties may also benefit from another situation. This is the *alienation* (Dassoneville and Hooghe, 2016), which occurs when voters perceive themselves to be distant from the traditional options (see Figure 6). Unlike the case of indifference, 'alienation does not require comparing competing candidates, and it refers to the extent

to which the citizen feels neither candidate will represent his or her policy preferences' (Plane and Gershtenson, 2004: 72).

Figure 6: Graphical representation of the alienation and indifference dimensions

Indifference

TP₁ = Traditional Party 1
TP₂ = Traditional Party 2
TP₃ = Traditional Party 3
V₁ = Voter 1
V₂ = Voter 2

$PD \cong 0$

a)

Party differential $\cong 0$

Since the distance among traditional parties (the party differential) is close to zero for all the voters, voters-parties distance becomes irrelevant in the indifference scenario.

Alienation

Vn = Voter n
TP₁ = Traditional Party 1
TP₂ = Traditional Party 2
TPₙ = Traditional Party n

$\overline{TP}$ = Average position of traditional parties

b)

Graphical representation of the indifference (a) and alienation (b) dimensions of the supply-demand mismatch. Source: own elaboration.

In both scenarios the utility from voting for mainstream parties is substantially reduced (Adams *et al.*, 2006; Downs, 1957; Meguid, 2005), representing an 'electoral market failure' situation, in which a large number of voters cannot find any party able to respond to their demands, making 'the number of parties that voters are willing to vote [for] lower than the number of parties competing' (Lago and Martinez, 2011: 7). However, alienation and indifference represent two theoretical and empirical different situations with diverging potential electoral consequences for the dynamics of change in a party system.

On the one hand, *alienation* provokes a sense of voters' rejection of the most relevant parties provided by the supply, since citizens do not feel represented by any of the parties for two reasons: they look quite similar and they are far away from an important part of the electorate. Under these conditions, alienated citizens might be more likely to support more extreme or radical options, especially if they hold an anti-system discourse. On the other hand, *indifference* is the situation in which mainstream parties become not distinguishable and citizens perceive that all of these parties would adopt very similar policies once in government, which may reduce the incentive to vote for any of them (Plane and Gershtenson, 2004). This last scenario might favour more moderate political options challenging the established party system but without necessarily adopting radical positions. Therefore, our first hypotheses are:

H_{1a}: *High levels of indifference between the mainstream government parties are associated with a higher likelihood of supporting all minor parties (both mainstream and anti-establishment).*

H_{1b}: *Alienation from mainstream government parties explains increasing support for radical anti-establishment parties.*

3.2.2 The demand-side explanations: new parties as 'niche parties of representation'

The preceding argument, based on the external characteristics of the political environment, might be applied also to existing mainstream minor parties addressing the same issues of government parties (see Downs, 1957), but it might not be sufficient to explain the rise of new parties in stable party systems. This phenomenon might be due to success in addressing new voters' demands and grievances that are avoided by the mainstream parties and ignored by the other minor parties in the party system. In fact, it could be that the increasing electoral volatility produced by citizens' discontent benefits all new parties because of an important crisis of political representation, which manifests itself in the low levels of trust in political parties and politicians. As has been argued recently (Hérnandez, 2018), the effect on voting of 'democratic discontent' depends on the subjective understanding of which institutions of the democratic system seem to be defective. Thus, the effect of distrust in political parties and politicians could be significant in explaining the support for new parties regardless of their ideological

position and regardless of the presence of populist discourses, so long as those new parties try to be the expression of the new conflict between 'old and new politics' (Hutter *et al.*, 2018), positioning themselves against 'politics as usual' (Bélanger and Nadeu, 2005). As Morgan (2011) has claimed, the new political division may become especially salient when parties lose their credibility as 'actors of political representation and aggregation of citizens' interests'.

This strategy is evident in populist parties, whose rhetoric is based on a narrow ideology 'that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite,' and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* of the people' (Mudde, 2007: 543). Nevertheless, a lack of political trust may also benefit new challenger parties in general (Vidal, 2017), especially if they manage to present themselves as a credible alternative to the existing parties and they exploit the latent conflict between 'new and old politics'. In this sense, 'new parties can only mobilize voters who have been left behind by the existing parties: those old party voters who have been disappointed in their previous vote choice and citizens who have been thoroughly disillusioned' (Tavits, 2008: 120).

The effect of political distrust on encouraging voting for new parties is not a new claim (Tavits, 2008; Zelle, 1995). It also seems to be certain that a decline in political trust might serve as an impetus for voters to direct their vote to populist parties on the extreme right or to anti-system parties if they are part of the party supply (Bélanger and Nadeau, 2005; Hetherington, 1999). However, despite these important contributions, it is unclear what type of political trust (institutions in general, in the government or in political actors) is responsible of this shift and to what extent the shift only results in the defection from mainstream parties while benefiting all existing parties equally or, instead, benefitting all new political parties or new parties of a particular type.

In this sense, we consider that many new anti-establishment parties may be considered to be 'niche parties of political representation', addressing demands of democratic regeneration and political renewal that are unsatisfied by the traditional mainstream parties. As has been pointed out in preceding studies (see Meguid, 2005), niche parties are different from mainstream parties in three ways: they do not fall into the traditional class-division and address only a very limited set of issues (which do not align with

existing cleavages); they address policy areas neglected by other political parties, and they tend to be more concrete than mainstream parties with regard to the issues on which they focus prioritising the support for a concrete part of the electorate instead of capturing the median voter (Adams *et al.*, 2006; Ezrow *et al.*, 2011; Meyer and Miller, 2015; Wagner, 2012). Under these circumstances, distrust in political actors might provide the opportunity for the emergence of 'niche parties of political representation' which might address citizens' distrust by emphasizing the unresponsiveness of the political elite and existing political parties. As it is argued by a sector of academics working on protest voting (Kang, 2004; Kselman and Niou, 2011), voting for new challenger parties is a way to express one's distrust of the established political elite. Therefore,

H$_2$: High levels of distrust in the actors of political representation (political parties and politicians) are a significant factor in explaining support for new anti-establishment parties.

3.2.3 *The interaction between political trust and alienation*

As has been argued, one of the factors that produce distrust in the main actors of political representation is the perception that they are not responding to citizens' demands, or they are failing in satisfying their needs (Morgan, 2011). This implies that a large sector of the electorate does not feel properly represented by any party, which in turn increases voters' alienation from the traditional options (Lago and Martinez, 2011). Under these conditions, the openness of the supply side (provoked by the increasing alienation) and the demand for new challenger parties which should fill the representation gap reinforce each other, accelerating change in the party system (Bélanger and Nadeau, 2005; Dassoneville and Hooghe, 2016; Zelle, 1995). In other words, alienation and political distrust go in the same direction and their interaction explains the support for new AEP, which claim to break away the established party system and offer a completely different solution to the management of the political situation (Mudde, 2007; Vidal, 2017).

However, this association could also be the other way around: high levels of political trust might foster protest voting in favour of new AEP when the supply side is open. In other words, a favourable political strategic opportunity might result in voting for new parties as trust in parties and politicians increase. Casting a protest vote requires a component of

trust in the new suppliers (Kang, 2004) and citizens will do it if they think that the political elite of that party will perform according to their expectations, it will act in the best interest of the citizens- either because they care or because they do not want to be punished in the next elections-, and the party shows a behaviour that is consistent with its past actions and decisions (Kasperson *et al.*, 1992). In this sense, people's distrust in the established party system may be perceived as a symptom of the failure of the traditional party supply in addressing citizens' demands (Plane and Gershtenson, 2004).

This means that increasing political trust might actually increase the probability of voting for these new parties to express discontent. New challenger contenders are first and foremost political organizations that compete with the existing actors within the established party system by bringing back in the political arena new issues or providing new solutions to address unresolved problems. This implies that also new parties need to be trustworthy and represent valid alternatives to the other competitors, if they want to be voted by unsatisfied voters. Following this logic, support for a new party to signal a generalized malaise towards the existing actors requires at least some minimum degree of affection towards the new option (Kang, 2004). In other words, 'citizens cast protest votes when they receive higher "quality" from a party other than the one they usually prefer' (Kselman and Niou. 2011: 397).

H₃: The effects of alienation interact positively with the trust in the main actors of political representation (parties and politicians) to explain support for new AEP.

3.3 **The new niche parties of 'political representation' in Spain**

In Southern Europe, the 'neoliberal convergence' of mainstream parties to cope with the economic downturn in the aftermath of the Great Recession and the increasing demands for democratic regeneration have completely reshaped the dimension of the political space (Hutter *et al.*, 2018). The twofold crisis became visible with the abrupt increase in the levels of political distrust (Torcal, 2017) and the generalized perception that the main parties that traditionally governed are 'essentially the same' (Bosch and Durán, 2017). The combination of two processes may be behind the rise of new parties in this area. This applies especially in Spain when explaining the rise of Podemos and C's. While in the

2011 elections Spaniards acted in the way predicted by the economic voting theory (severely punishing the socialists in favour of the conservative PP), both parties were severely punished in the 2015 elections. Even more interestingly, the loss of support by the two main parties did not benefit the existing third parties -the radical left-wing IU and the moderate centre party UPyD- (Bosch and Durán, 2017; Vidal, 2017).

Both Podemos and C's focused their electoral campaign on the need for democratic regeneration and breaking away the traditional two-party system that characterized Spain since the 1980s (Ramiro and Gomez, 2017; Rodríguez-Teruel and Barrio, 2016), but they adopted a somewhat different strategy. On the one hand, *Podemos* (a radical left-wing party which had been founded just a few months before the 2014 European elections) led a fierce populist-based critique against all the existing parties ('la casta'), portraying them as working against the real interests of the people ('la gente') and calling for a total regeneration of the political system (including the radical left-wing party *IU*), while at the same time presenting more radical proposals to address citizens' discontent (Ramiro and Gomez, 2017). The competition between *IU* and *Podemos* for the 'battle on the left' is particularly interesting to analyse, especially because, as displayed in Table 2, the two parties share both the radicalism and the anti-elitism.

Table 2: List, classification, Left/Right position and anti-elite salience of the parties included in the empirical analysis of Chapter 3

Party name	Party full name	Left-right scale	Anti-elite salience	Classification
PP	People's Party	7.3	1.4	Incumbent
PSOE	Spanish Socialist Workers' Party	3.8	3	Main opposition party
UPyD	Union, Progress and Democracy	5.6	5.7	Minor right party
C's	Citizens	5.5	6.3	New AEP Right
Podemos	We Can	1.6	10	New AEP Left
IU	United Left	2	6	Old AEP Left

Source: Own elaborations. The left/right scale and the anti-elite salience have been gathered by the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Polk *et al.*, 2017).

On the other hand, *Ciudadanos* – a small Catalan party founded in 2006 which run for the national and European elections before 2014 with insignificant results- also run in the 2015 parliamentary elections with an agenda 'focused on political renewal,

democratic regeneration and the fight against corruption, which has been a core issue in its electoral platforms since 2010' (Rodríguez-Teruel and Barrio, 2016: 8). However, this party lacks a populist flavour, as can be observed in the 2017 CHES Flash Survey (Polk *et al.*, 2017). Thus, it seems that despite their differences, *Podemos* and *C's* shared a common strategy, based on the distrust of the current political elite and the need for democratic regeneration, as well as the inability of the existing third parties in exploiting the loss of support of the main two parties. The combination of these factors may be behind the success of the two new parties over their closest competitors (*IU* for *Podemos* and *UPyD* for *Ciudadanos*) (Ramiro and Gomez, 2017; Rodríguez-Teruel and Barrio, 2016).

3.4 **Data and methods**

In order to test our hypotheses, we rely on the CIUPANEL dataset (Torcal *et al.*, 2016). This is an original panel study which consists of an online national sample of 4.459 Spaniards. Individuals were selected by fixed gender, age, education, habitat and autonomous community quotas and were followed between 2014 and 2016. The empirical analysis of this study relies only on the last two waves, with 2.264 cases, which corresponds to the 2015 pre-electoral study (carried out during the first two weeks of December), and a post-electoral survey conducted a week after the election (the 20th of December).[7]

3.4.1 The dependent variable: party choice at the 2015 elections

The three hypotheses are tested with regard to party choice at the 2015 national elections. Therefore, vote recall in the post-electoral study is our dependent variable. This is a categorical variable, made up of five categories: vote for the two main parties (*PP* and *PSOE*); vote for *UPyD*; vote for *Ciudadanos*; vote for *IU* and vote for *Podemos*[8].

In this study, we will adopt a novel approach in distinguishing between mainstream and challenger parties, which consists in using the anti-elite dimension that has been included in the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Polk *et al.*, 2017). The survey asked 337 experts

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[7] The other waves of the panel have been excluded from the analysis because of the absence of the relevant variables of interest.

[8] In the CIUPANEL dataset, too few respondents declared having voted for regionalist parties (CiU, ERC, PNV). Therefore, we excluded these parties from the analysis, by focusing only on the main party options at the 2015 parliamentary elections.

to place 268 parties on the most relevant issues. But, even more importantly, for the first time the dataset provides information about the positioning of political parties on the salience of anti-establishment rhetoric (Polk *et al.*, 2017). This aspect is particularly relevant, especially because 'to our knowledge, there are no existing party-level measures of anti-establishment rhetoric salience' (Polk *et al.*, 2017:3). Furthermore, this criterion eases the comparability between parties and among countries. In this research, we classified all the parties with a score higher than 6 (measured on a 0-10-point scale) as "challenger parties", whereas the value of 5 on the left/right position has been used to distinguish between left- and right-wing parties. Further information may be consulted in Table 2.

3.4.2 Independent variables

There are three main explanatory variables for our argument: trust in the main actors of political representation, indifference and alienation. Political trust is calculated by summing trust in politicians and trust in political parties, both measured on scales from 0 to 10. This variable is a very reliable indicator (Cronbach's Alpha: 0.9) of Spaniards' trust in the main political actors. Because of the low number of cases at the highest values, we decided to group together the values from 7 to 10 to increase our statistical efficiency.

Regarding the two dimensions of the supply-side determinants, we base our operationalization on the traditional proximity model and the concept of 'party differential', where the greater the distance between a voter and a party on the ideological or policy scale, the less the utility obtained from voting for it (Downs, 1957). As previously argued, *alienation* occurs when no party appeals to voters and 'is a function of the distance from the potential voter to the nearest party' (Plane and Gershtenson, 2004: 72). To construct this variable, we calculate the distance between an individual and his or her closest mainstream party (PP or PSOE). This measure represents the distance from the dominant parties of the old party system. In spatial modelling, the squared distance between the voter *i* and the party *j* is the standard procedure to calculate the proximity utility function. Therefore,

$$A_i = \min (V_i - P_j)^2, \tag{1}$$

where V_i is voter i's position on the left-right scale, and P_j is the position of PSOE or PP on the same scale. Unlike the traditional spatial models, in this case we did not revert the sign of the distance. In this way, the greater A_i is, the higher the alienation.

On the other hand, *indifference* occurs when mainstream parties are perceived to be too close together. In spatial terms, a perfectly indifferent scenario may be represented by voters perceiving that parties occupy the same position (Plane andGershtenson 2004). In this case, *indifference* requires comparing the position of competing candidates along the ideological space. Therefore,

$$I_i = |\, (V_i - S)^2 - (V_i - C)^2|, \qquad\qquad (2)$$

where I_i is voter i's indifference towards the main two parties, $(V_i - S)^2$ is the square of the distance between the voter and the socialist party and $(V_i - C)^2$ is the square of the distance from the individual to the conservative. In this way, the smaller I_i is, the smaller the perceived difference among the two parties. If $I_i=0$, there is maximum *indifference*.

It is also worth pointing out that in this paper we rely on voter-specific party placement in order to measure party positions. Despite the potential risk of bias produced by the projection effect, the use of 'voter-specific placement is preferable' (Merrill and Grofman, 1999:176). First, it better reflects the information used by citizens in their voting decision processes. Second, although the existence of a projection effect bias has been confirmed, its impact on voters' placement of parties is very small. Finally, since we are interested in studying the perception that mainstream parties are no longer capable of representing their positions, we consider voters' placements of party positions a better measure of this dimension. Nevertheless, we correct the idiosyncratic party placements by following Merrill and Grofman's (1999) projection adjustment procedure.[9]

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[9] The correlation between the adjusted and the subjective measure is 0.9, confirming that the corrected measure still captures voter-specific placements of parties. Further information may be found in Appendix A3.

3.4.3 Control variables

Added to the models are the most relevant predictors of vote choice. The first is self-reported placement on the left-right scale[10], which is one of the strongest predictors of voting behaviour in Spain and continues to be so despite the rise of the two new contenders (Vidal, 2017). The inclusion of this variable is also essential to capture the traditional economic and social divisions, whose importance has been renewed after the Great Recession and the consequent austerity measures (Hutter *et al.*, 2018).

Moreover, there is a need to address the potential confounding effects of the negative social consequences of the Great Recession. To capture these effects at the individual level, we include an index of personal economic uncertainty. The index (Crombach's Alpha: 0.8) is on a 0-4-point scale and it is created by using four items measuring respondents' concerns with: paying bills, life-quality level, job losses and paying the rent. Additionally, we also want to observe the impact of sociotropic evaluations of the economy on voting behaviour. The impact of this variable should be even more accentuated in the aftermath of the Great Recession, when the severity of the economic downturn provoked the traditional sanctioning mechanism to go beyond the incumbent and extend to all those parties that traditionally govern (Hernández and Kriesi, 2016; Hobolt and Tilley, 2016). Moreover, it is worth taking into account the increasing number of political corruption scandals that have particularly affected the two main parties (Bosch and Durán, 2017). For this reason, we included the perceived level of corruption of the Spanish parties.

Finally, all the models include controls for the main socio-demographic variables, such as gender, age, education level, environment and working status. All the covariates are t-1 (pre-electoral study) with respect to the dependent variables (post-electoral study). The descriptive statistics of the variables are displayed in Table 17 in the Appendix A3. Given the nature of the two dependent variables, we will run a multinomial model (taking as reference category the voting for PSOE and PP) for confirming the three hypotheses.

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[10] The correlation between the self-reported placement on the left/right scale and our measures of alienation and indifference is low (0.3), which leads us to exclude a multicollinearity problem.

3.5 **Results**

Table 3 contains the parameters of the multinomial model. To begin with, we will focus on the two dimensions of the mismatch supply-side explanations for testing H_{1a} and H_{1b}. The results confirm the different impact of the two variables, depending on the type of party. While the lack of perceived differences among *PP* and *PSOE* has a direct impact on the two new parties and the existing minor parties, voters' alienation from the mainstream parties plays a significant role but only in the case of the two radical (left-wing) challenger parties (*Podemos* and *IU*).

The negative sign of indifference is in line with our expectations: the smaller the perceived difference among the socialists and the conservatives, the higher the likelihood of voting for all the other parties. On the other hand, the higher the perceived alienation from the two main parties, the higher the likelihood of voting for *IU* or *Podemos*. Therefore, we can confirm H_{1a} and H_{1b}: alienation and indifference have a significant but different impact on the vote for all minor parties. Indifference is a good predictor for the success of all minor parties (either mainstream and anti-establishment) against the mainstream government options, but alienation is reserved only to radical challenger parties (*IU* and *Podemos*).

Table 3: The determinants of party competition (multinomial logistic regression estimates)

Covariates [t-1]	UPyD	Ciudadanos	IU	Podemos
Percepction of corruption (parties)	0.026	0.070	-0.021	-0.017
	(0.143)	(0.054)	(0.070)	(0.047)
Indifference	-0.129***	-0.073***	-0.031**	-0.029***
	(0.032)	(0.008)	(0.011)	(0.007)
Alienation	-0.018	-0.015	0.050**	0.051***
	(0.051)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.013)
Trust in the main actors of political representation	-0.243	-0.191**	-0.079	-0.284***
	(0.156)	(0.058)	(0.073)	(0.051)
Retrospective evaluation of the economy	-0.087	-0.269**	-0.343**	-0.244**
	(0.256)	(0.093)	(0.129)	(0.085)
Index of economic uncertainty	-0.114	0.092	-0.105	0.03
	(0.186)	(0.067)	(0.090)	(0.062)
Ideology	-0.450	0.055	-0.683***	-0.622***

	(0.204)	(0.052)	(0.109)	(0.064)
Gender (reference female)	-0.990	0.670***	0.307	0.410*
	(0.538)	(0.199)	(0.260)	(0.180)
Age	0.032	-0.023*	-0.037**	-0.029***
	(0.026)	(0.009)	(0.012)	(0.008)
Less than 50,000 inhabitants (reference)				
Between 50,001 and 200,000 inhabitants	0.364	0.194	0.492	-0.139
	(0.776)	(0.237)	(0.303)	(0.223)
More than 200,001 inhabitants	1.100	0.060	0.181	0.025
	(0.584)	(0.210)	(0.296)	(0.193)
Primary education (reference)				
Secondary education	0.871	0.396	-0.574	0.202
	(0.542)	(0.447)	(0.498)	(0.353)
University education	1.284	0.916*	-0.020	0.620
	(0.951)	(0.457)	(0.514)	(0.366)
Worker (reference)				
Student	2.851**	-0.237	0.087	0.187
	(1.156)	(0.469)	(0.557)	(0.427)
Housewife	0.355	-0.004	-0.561	-0.311
	(0.597)	(0.445)	(0.802)	(0.427)
Retired	-0.290	-0.590	-0.792	-0.174
	(0.802)	(0.308)	(0.461)	(0.279)
Unemployed	0.377	0.844**	0.837*	0.657**
	(0.769)	(0.293)	(0.356)	(0.237)
Constant	-14.041	1.165	4.920***	5.054***
	(778.789)	(0.906)	(1.245)	(0.835)
N	1260	1260	1260	1260
Pseudo R2	0.265	0.265	0.265	0.265
LR Chi2	879.11***	879.11***	879.11***	879.11***

[a] Estimation is by maximum likelihood. Standard Errors in parentheses. The levels of significance are ***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.1. Reference category: vote for PSOE and PP.

It is also important to stress that, for the latter, ideology is a significant predictor of the vote, along with the two dimensions of the political opportunity structure. This finding confirms that, even in times of crisis and probably because of the implementation of draconian austerity measures, the traditional left-right divide over the economic issue has still a strong explanatory power in Southern Europe (Hutter *et al.*, 2018).

Table 3 also shows that, in line with previous studies, the economic crisis fuelled support for all minor parties as well. With the exception of UPyD, the better the retrospective evaluation of the economy, the lower the likelihood to vote for the two new anti-establishment parties or the radical left-wing *IU*. However, as can be observed, the indicator of economic uncertainty is not a significant predictor of party competition at the 2015 elections. In a similar way, there are not many differences in terms of the respondent's situation in the labour market (with the important exception of being unemployed, which is significantly related with a higher likelihood to vote for *Podemos*, *Ciudadanos* and *IU)*.

So far, it seems that support for new challenger contenders is driven by the same factors that may explain the desertion from mainstream parties in favour of existing minor parties. Therefore, what can explain support for new AEP? Focusing on the impact of political trust, we can appreciate a clear difference between voting for old third parties and the new ones: low levels of political trust are associated only with the voting for *Ciudadanos* and *Podemos*. The sign of the coefficient is negative, which means that the higher the individual trust, the lower the likelihood of voting for the two new parties. In fact, the probability to vote for *Ciudadanos* goes from 0.13 in the case of minimum trust to 0.05 when the political trust levels are very high. In the case of *Podemos*, the impact of trust is even more accentuated. The probability of voting for the new populist left-wing party ranges from 0.51 in the case of political distrust to 0.09 when people trust in the main actors of political representation. These findings confirm the existence of a direct effect of political trust on the competition between new and old parties, especially in the case of *Ciudadanos* and *Podemos*. These results thus confirm hypothesis H_2 regarding the direct effect of political trust on the voting for the new parties.

However, as argued before, this effect is not only direct, but it might also have an interactive effect with the voters' alienation from the mainstream options (hypothesis H_3). As we can observe in Table 4, the interaction term *alienation*trust* has significant and positive effect on the likelihood of voting for *Podemos*, which means that the impact of *alienation* on the probability of voting for the new party is greater as political trust increases. Conversely, this interaction is not significant for *Ciudadanos*. It is interesting to mention that this interaction is also significant with *IU*, showing the conditional but

positive importance of trust to express discontent by supporting radical challenger parties in general.

Table 4: The determinants of party competition-interaction alienation##trust (multinomial logistic regression estimates)

Covariates [t-1]	UPyD	Ciudadanos	IU	Podemos
Indifference	-0.130***	-0.072***	-0.031**	-0.029***
	(0.032)	(0.008)	(0.011)	(0.007)
Alienation	-0.074	-0.035	0.007	0.014
	(0.079)	(0.026)	(0.023)	(0.019)
Trust in the main actors of political				
representation	-0.333	-0.225***	-0.193*	-0.363***
	(0.181)	(0.066)	(0.089)	(0.062)
Alienation * Trust	0.027	0.010	0.023*	0.019*
	(0.027)	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.008)
Constant	-13.537	1.233	5.204***	5.269***
	(641.565)	(0.910)	(1.262)	(0.849)
N	1260	1260	1260	1260
Pseudo R2	0.267	0.267	0.267	0.267
LR Chi2	888.49***	887.49***	887.49***	887.49***

[a] Estimation is by maximum likelihood. Standard Errors in parentheses. The levels of significance are ***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.1.

Reference category: vote for PSOE and PP. In this table we reported only the coefficients of the main covariates of interest. Full models are available upon request.

To better understand this interaction, we report in Figure 7 the marginal effects of alienation on the voting for *Podemos* depending on the political trust level. In this graph, it is clear that this interaction has a strong impact on voting for the new radical party, especially from the lower to the middle values of political trust. For instance, a hypothetical voter with level of trust equal to 1, will be 8 percent likely to vote for Podemos. However, if political trust shifts from 1 to 6, the same voter will be 19 percent likely to support the new challenger left-wing party. Alienation features here by 7 percent if we start with 5.7 level of alienation. But, even more importantly than the impact of alienation and trust on the likelihood of voting for Podemos, Figure 7 shows that the marginal effects are equal to zero when there is no trust in the main actors of political representation. In other words, minimum levels of trust are required to activate the impact of *alienation* on voting for the new populist party. Unlike the traditional wisdom, these

findings seem to suggest that political trust is a necessary condition for political alienation to activate any protest voting. Finally, as we noticed above, the marginal effect of alienation on voting for the new parties for 'total distrusters' is zero. This might be due, as we argue in the theoretical discussion, to the possibility that absolute distrusters might be immune to the new party supply.

Figure 7: Marginal effects on the voting for Podemos as trust in political actors increases
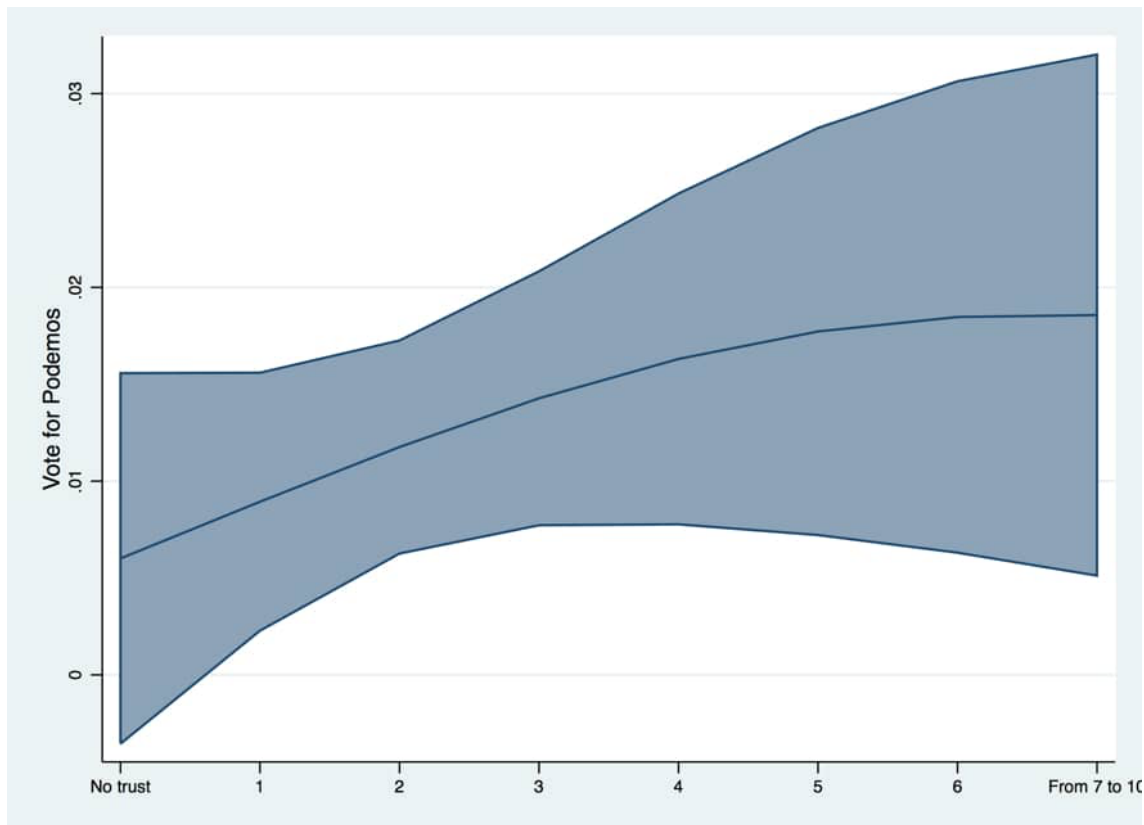
Average marginal effects of alienation on voting for Podemos for different levels of trust in the main actors of political representation, with 95% confidence intervals. Note: the predicted probabilities are computed holding the other covariates at their means. Source: Own elaboration based on Table 4.

3.6   **Robustness tests**

To summarize, distrust in the main actors of political representation (political parties and politicians), alienation and indifference have a different impact on the voting for anti-establishment (both on the right and on the left, as well as new and old AEP) and minor mainstream parties. While indifference between the two mainstream government parties favoured all the other parties in the Spanish party system, alienation seems to play a role only for the two radical parties (the 'old' *United Left* and the 'new' *We Can*). In turn,

distrust in the main actors of political representation is associated only with a higher likelihood to support all kind of anti-establishment parties. But, even more importantly, we demonstrated that political trust has a moderating impact on alienation when explaining the voting for the radical left-wing *United Left* and *We Can*. In other words, the impact of *alienation* on the probability of voting for the two radical challenger contenders in Spain is greater as political trust increases. Conversely, this interaction is not significant in the case of *Citizens,* the new center-right AEP.

That said, the next issue to address is to analyse the extent to which these (apparently) counterintuitive findings generalize to other countries in Europe. In other words, are these findings a specific feature of the 2015 elections in Spain (which, as we claimed, have been especially extraordinary *per se*), or rather do they travel also in other countries and contexts? In order to provide an answer to these questions, in Tables 18-20 in the Appendix A3 we replicated the analyses that have been conducted in Tables 3-4 for Germany, the United Kingdom and Norway. As in the case of Spain, the empirical analyses have been conducted by relying on panel data (in which the covariates have been measured at *t-1* with respect to the question about party choice at the national parliamentary elections), namely the German Longitudinal Election Study for Germany, the British Election Study for the United Kingdom and the Norwegian Citizen Panel for Norway[11]. As for Spain, the two spatial dimensions of failure of the electoral market (alienation and indifference) have been corrected by relying on the Merrill and Grofman's (1999) projection adjustment procedure. In this section, we will comment only the results related with the main covariates in Chapter 3, namely trust in the main actors of political representation (political parties and politicians), alienation and indifference, as well as the interaction between alienation and the political attitude.

Table 18 refers to the 2015 national parliamentary elections in the United Kingdom, Table 19 analyses Norwegians' voting behaviour at the 2017 parliamentary elections, while Table 20 deals with the 2017 federal elections. As can we observe in these tables, indifference between the mainstream government parties (CDU/CSU-SPD in Germany, Labour and Conservatives in Norway and the United Kingdom) are significantly associated with a higher likelihood to support all the other parties: the less the perceived

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[11] We could not analyze the Dutch data, as the LISS Panel Data did not ask the question about voters' placement on the Left-Right scale of the political parties in Netherlands.

distance between the two main parties, the higher the likelihood to cast a vote in favour of either minor mainstream and anti-establishment parties. On the other hand (and in line with the findings observed in the Spanish case), alienation has a significant impact only on the voting for radical anti-establishment parties (both on the right and on the left): the higher the perceived distance between the individuals and the mainstream government parties, the higher the likelihood to support the radical right *AfD* in Germany and the *Progress Party* in Norway, as well as *The Left* in Germany. We should also mention the fact that, as it has been repeatedly claimed by the well-established protest voting framework (see Bergh, 2004), political distrust has a direct impact on the voting for AEP: the less the trust in the main actors of political representation, the higher the probability to support an anti-establishment parties.

So far, the results are not surprising, and the evidence observed for the 2015 parliamentary elections in Spain can be generalized also in other countries and contexts. But what about the positive interaction between alienation and political trust that has been found to be significant in the case of *We Can* and the *United Left*? Is this relationship valid also for other parties and countries? In this case, the evidence is mixed. In the UK, for instance, this relationship is positive and statistically significant (as in the case of *We Can*, at 90%) for the *Scottish National Party* and the *Green Party*, two non-radical anti-establishment parties. Conversely, such relationship is not significant in the case of the *UKIP,* the right-wing anti-establishment party. In turn, the interaction between alienation and trust in the main actors of political representation is positive and significant only in the case of the radical right *Progress Party* in Norway and the *Alternative for Deutschland* in Germany. All in all, the counterintuitive findings observed in Spain for the 2015 parliamentary elections seem to travel also in other countries, and the positive interaction between political trust and alienation is a significant factor to take into consideration when analysing the voting for anti-establishment parties. In particular, the association between the political attitude and the spatial dimension of the failure of the electoral market seems to work not only for brand new anti-establishment parties (as in the case of the *AfD* in Germany), but also for those challengers of the traditional political establishment that have been present in the political arena for decades (as in the case of the *Progress Party* in Norway). Nevertheless, much more evidence is needed in order to make more generalizable these findings and to draw a broader picture about the relationship between

voters' alienation from the mainstream government parties, trust in the main actors of political representation and support for anti-establishment parties.

3.7 Conclusions

This article analysed the successful emergence of two new challenger parties in an institutionalized party system. Its main arguments are tested using the 2015 parliamentary elections in Spain. These elections were marked by a severe crisis in the economy and in political representation crisis, along with an important change to the party system.

It was first argued that support for minor parties in general (either mainstream and challenger) is the consequence of the openness of the supply side that is reflected in the perceived lack of political parties addressing voters' demands and grievances. In this sense, we distinguished between *indifference* (citizens perceiving that there are not any differences between the two traditional government parties) and *alienation* (citizens are distant from the dominant options). The two logics affected party choices differently, depending on the ideological profile of the parties and their position within the party system. Although both could be present at the same time, *alienation* is more important for new radical parties. *Indifference*, instead, is mostly relevant for moderate challenger parties and emerges as a consequence of the convergence of the mainstream parties in more traditional areas of conflict.

However, this is insufficient to explain support for the two new challenger contenders. This support depends on the level of an individual's distrust in political parties and politicians for those parties addressing the unsatisfied demands of democratic regeneration and political renewal, which is emerging as an important new inter-party dimension of party competition on the supply side (Hutter *et al.*, 2018). In this sense, these new political actors are becoming the 'niche parties of political representation'.

This paper also challenged the conventional wisdom according to which political distrust reinforces the impact of alienation on the voting for AEP. On the contrary, high levels of trust in political parties and politicians mitigate the impact of alienation on the voting for new radical challenger contenders (or radical AEP in general, as far as the empirical evidence seems to suggest), whereas such mechanism does not come into play in the case

of indifference or voting for new non-radical challenger parties. Although it may sound counterintuitive, we know that challenger parties have the potentiality to restore faith in the traditional actors of political representation (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012), which in turn might imply that they also benefit from a reservoir of political trust, as long as they are able to transmit voters a reliable message and they present themselves as a better option than all the other parties that have traditionally governed (Kselman and Niou, 2011). In a similar way, it could also be that alienated voters that feel themselves far away from the established party supply are attracted by more radical option that better represent their interests. In this sense, distrust in the established party system may be perceived as a symptom of the failure of the traditional party supply in addressing citizens' demands (Plane and Gershtenson, 2004), which may imply that they trust in radical actors. This argument may explain why the interaction between trust and alienation is significant not only for *Podemos*, but also for *Izquierda Unida*, the other radical actor. Furthermore, we have also demonstrated that such counterintuitive finding seems to work reasonably well also in other contexts and for other kind of anti-establishment parties, such as the *Progress Party* in Norway and the *Alternative for Deutschland* in Germany. Nevertheless, much more evidence (namely more empirical analyses) are needed in order to make more generalizable these findings.

We modestly think that this paper might contribute to a consolidation of the existing literature on the rise of successful new parties, changes in party system and party competition, especially in context on low trust in political parties and politicians. In particular, this study seeks to extend and renew previous findings on changes in party systems by applying the existing literature on supply-demand mismatches to voting for new parties and incorporating the important role of political distrust in the major actors of political representation. The findings are relevant also for new parties. If new parties want to win votes and consolidate themselves in the party system as alternative 'preferred suppliers', they need to generate trust in themselves as actors of representation by acting differently and breaking old existing 'patterns of behaviour' among existing parties. If they fail to do so, voters might choose to stay at home and exit from the political arena. It is therefore a question not only of what new parties offer with regard to emerging issues, but also of how they behave once they obtain representation.

4. A SPIRAL OF DISTRUST? PANEL EVIDENCE ON THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN POLITICAL DISTRUST AND SUPPORT FOR ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT PARTIES IN EUROPE

Abstract

In the literature on voting behaviour, it has been claimed that distrust in the main actors of political representation (political parties and politicians) smooths the path for the electoral success of anti-establishment parties (AEP). Nevertheless, the conditions under which support for these parties is associated with political distrust is still an understudied topic. Analysis of panel survey data gathered in Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom between 2013 and 2017 reveal that those who voted for an AEP at the previous election became more distrustful than supporters of any other party. This finding suggests that challenger anti-establishment parties are not only 'agents of discontent', benefitting from a reservoir of political distrust, but they also contribute with their anti-establishment rhetoric to widening the gap between citizens and their representatives, by fuelling voters' distrust in the traditional actors of representation.

4.1 Introduction

Over the last few decades, growing malaise against the main actors of representation (political parties and politicians) and the 'crisis of parties' have been paralleled with the rising success of anti-establishment parties (AEP) and the declining support for mainstream parties (Bélanger, 2004; Bélanger and Nadeau, 2005; Gidengil, Blais, Nevitte and Nadeau, 2001; Hobolt and Tilley, 2016). The observation of this correlation has led most studies on voting behaviour to argue that political distrust paves the way for the electoral success of those parties that challenge the traditional political establishment.

While the aforementioned studies have certainly helped to explain the increasing popularity of challenger parties, from our understanding what is not conclusive is the role played by these parties in voters' political attitudes and, more precisely, in their confidence in the main actors of political representation. So, to what extent and under which conditions does support for AEP have an impact on voters' distrust in the main actors of political representation? Do this kind of parties contribute to an increase or decrease in people's confidence in political parties and politicians?

There are two very different answers to these questions. The first is that the presence of challenger parties in national party systems widens the gap between citizens and the mainstream political elite, by fuelling political distrust. According to this argument, political attitudes and voting behaviour reinforce each other, leading to a 'spiral of distrust' mechanism (Hooghe and Dassonneville, 2016) and enhancing a 'distrust–anti-elitism–distrust' loop (Rooduijn, van der Brug and Lange, 2016). By adopting a clear and fierce anti-establishment stance and by blaming the traditional actors of political representation for being detached from people's demands and needs, challenger parties contribute to polarisation and hostility in society, which in turn might accelerate the pattern of declining trust in political actors (Aalberg *et al.,* 2016; Jagers and Walgrave, 2007; Hameleers, Bos and de Vreese, 2017). This mechanism has become salient in recent times, when a decline in political trust has been accompanied by a rise in and consolidation of challenger parties aimed at polarising the public discourse when it comes to evaluating the responsiveness of the traditional political actors (Hameleers *et al.,* 2017; Polk *et al.,* 2017; Rooduijn *et al.,* 2016).

The fuelling distrust argument is called into question by the alleviating distrust mechanism, which argues that protest parties actually contribute to reducing political distrust. By serving as vehicles which channel public disenchantment in the main actors of political representation, these parties bring distrust back into the political arena and act as a 'safety valve' for discontented voters (Bélanger, 2004; Fisher, 1974; Miller and Listhaug, 1990). In this sense, challenger parties may be seen as the most authentic form of political representation and a corrective for the contemporary democracies' deficiencies (Mény and Surel, 2002; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012). In particular, their capacity to give voice to groups that do not feel represented by the establishment might help to restore people's faith in the main actors of political representation.

The contribution of these studies to a better understanding of how political agency and the voters' electoral behaviours may impact on people's opinion about their representatives is undeniable. Nevertheless, the evidence is hitherto mixed and the conclusions the authors have drawn from the empirical analyses are inconclusive. Further research is thus needed to shed light on the impact of challenger parties on voters' confidence in their own representatives. Part of the reason for such inconsistent results may be explained by the fact that previous studies have been either focused on one country or they based their findings on cross-sectional evidence. While the former approach makes the findings hard to generalise, the latter impedes drawing causal inferences when analysing the results.

Thus, in this paper we propose to test the fuelling and alleviating distrust mechanisms by relying on panel data, which allows us to study the evolution of political trust over time and for the same individuals, as well as to make stronger inferential claims. Empirical analysis will be presented from Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom – five very different countries that have in common the presence of one (or more) challenger parties in the national party system. These political actors are either brand new parties in the national party system (such as in Spain or Germany) or they were present in the political arena long before the empirical analysis (such as in the Netherlands). The challenger parties analysed in this paper are also different in terms of core ideologies. While some of them clearly belong to the radical right family of parties (Mudde, 2007), others have been traditionally associated with the radical left (Rooduijn *et al.,* 2016). Despite these differences, all these parties have in common a fierce and

clearly defined anti-elite discourse. The results hint at the spiral of distrust argument: those who have cast their vote in favour of a challenger party at the previous election became significantly more distrustful than supporters of any other party.

4.2 **Theoretical arguments**

4.2.1 Expectations about the relationship between voting for anti-establishment parties and political distrust

In the literature on public opinion and voting behaviour, the impact of political distrust on the support for anti-establishment parties has been analysed based on protest voting theory (for a recent review, see Alvarez, Kiewiet and Nuñez, 2018). According to this theoretical framework, protest voters are rational individuals who vote *'with the boot'* in favour of AEP as a way to express their discontent with the performance of mainstream parties, as well as a mechanism to frighten the traditional political elite. All in all, protest voting can thus be conceived of 'as the act of voting for a political party or candidate in order to express political distrust' (Bergh, 2004: 376). As a logical consequence of that, the decision to support a challenger party is solely based on distrust in the main actors of political representation, which in turn implies that ideological or policy-driven preferences are expected to be irrelevant (Passarelli and Tuorto, 2018). In this regard, 'the party is not chosen for its program or its policy potential, but for the pain it causes the established parties' (Mudde, 2007: 227). The protest voting theory is well-established in comparative politics, and a wealth of studies has confirmed that distrustful people are much more likely to support a challenger party instead of casting their vote in favour of a mainstream political option (Bélanger and Nadeau, 2005; Gidengil *et al.*, 2001; Hobolt and Tilley, 2016; Passarelli and Tuorto, 2018).

Nevertheless, far too little research has been devoted to the impact of supporting a challenger party with a clear anti-establishment and illiberal stance on political distrust (van der Brug, 2003; Hooghe and Dassoneville, 2016; Rooduijn *et al.,* 2016), especially when this attitude is directed towards the traditional actors of political representation. But, even more importantly, the few studies that have been conducted in this direction seem to be somewhat inconclusive, and the mixed evidence points to contradictory results. Therefore, to what extent does voting for a challenger party impact on people's distrust in the main actors of representation? Does this support contribute to enlarging the

gap between citizens and their representatives by increasing political distrust, or do challenger parties' supporters regain their faith in the traditional actors of representation? In the literature, we can find arguments in favour of both mechanisms.

4.2.2 The fuelling distrust mechanism

The first expectation regarding the impact of supporting a challenger party on people's trust in the main actors of political representation is that protest voting leads to a further increase in the levels of political distrust. In this sense, the fuelling distrust theory argues that having voted for an anti-establishment party at the previous election fuels voters' distrust. This argument has been empirically confirmed by recent panel studies, which found a strong and significative correlation between voting for challenger parties and the increase in levels of political distrust (van der Brug, 2003; Hooghe and Dassoneville, 2016; Rooduijn *et al.,* 2016). In other words, voting behaviour and political attitude reinforce each other, making the latter both the cause and consequence of the success of these parties and leading to a 'spiral of distrust' mechanism (Hooghe and Dassonneville, 2016).

The fuelling distrust mechanism is activated by voters' exposure to the illiberal and anti-establishment messages of challenger parties. As has been claimed, 'if a voter supports a party that expresses the message that the elite is incompetent or even corrupt, s/he might be inclined to incorporate this idea in his or her way of thinking about politics' (Rooduijn *et al.,* 2016: 34). These messages are especially accentuated and evident in radical (both on the right and the left) populist parties, whose core principle revolves around the irreconcilable and antagonistic juxtaposition between the 'pure people' and the 'corrupt elite' (see Albertazzi and McDonnell, 2008; Mény and Surel, 2002; Mudde, 2007; Rooduijn *et al.,* 2016).

Nevertheless, a branch of the literature suggests that other features of political parties enhance the salience of anti-elite rhetoric, and not all challenger anti-establishment parties are necessarily populist or situated at the extreme of the ideological spectrum (Hanley and Sikk, 2016; Hobolt and Tilley, 2016; Hobolt and de Vries, 2015; Učeň, 2007). In particular, recently created political parties can present themselves as clean and untainted actors in comparison with the established political elite, by relying on their 'newness as

a project' as a mechanism to promote change in the established political system and to appeal to a broad and undefined group of voters discontented with the traditional political establishment (Sikk, 2012). More precisely, 'brand new parties function as mobilizers in those contexts in which there is a pool of voters who are receptive to these attempts at mobilization. That is, new parties mobilize voters who have been left behind by the existing parties: those old party voters who have been disappointed in their previous vote choice and citizens who have been so thoroughly disillusioned that they do not bother to vote at all' (Tavits, 2008: 120). In a similar way, it is easier for parties in opposition to blame parties in government for the mismanagement of the economic or political situation; this is particularly true for challenger parties (Hobolt and Tilley, 2016) that have not yet participated in government and therefore they are untainted by government responsibilities. Also non-radical and non-populist parties may characterise themselves by a stark and strong anti-establishment rhetoric, as long as they demand political reforms, transparency, and new ways of doing politics, by opposing the idea of 'politics as usual', advocating the purification of the party system from corruption, and building their credibility in contrast with the traditional political elite (Torcal and Serani, 2018).

As can be inferred from the previous discussion, the lowest common denominator of radical populist, centrist non-populist, as well as other non-mainstream anti-establishment political parties is the Manichean antagonism between the in-group voters and the outside-of-group elite, which in turn implies that the traditional political establishment is depicted as the 'true enemy' of society, as well as the only thing responsible for the problems of the citizens (Mény and Surel, 2002). In this sense, anti-establishment parties (regardless of their core ideology) defy the mainstream political consensus, challenge the established party system, and accuse the traditional political elite of being disconnected from the demands and needs of their citizens (Hobolt and Tilley, 2016). Like all political orientations, anti-elitism tries to provide an answer to the most basic questions: 'what went wrong; who is to blame; and what is to be done to reverse the situation'? (Betz and Johnson, 2004: 323). In line with the preceding arguments, the answers to these questions are: 'the government and democracy, which should reflect the will of the whole constituency, have been occupied, distorted and exploited by corrupt elites; the traditional political elites and mainstream parties are to blame for the current undesirable situation in which citizens find themselves; the people must be given back their voice and power through a deep change in the political system' (Albertazzi and McDonnell, 2008: 5).

Furthermore, mainstream parties have no idea of what people find important or what policy reforms they would like to see implemented (Mény and Surel, 2002). These messages are highly appealing in society (Hameleers *et al.,* 2017; Jagers and Walgrave, 2007). Their persuasiveness is activated by two distinct but interconnected mechanisms. On the one hand, these messages respond to ordinary people's hopes and fears while formulating easy solutions to important societal problems and providing clear answers to complex questions (Betz and Johnson, 2004; Mudde, 2007). On the other hand, by directly referring to all voters and proclaiming themselves to speak on their behalf, challenger parties transmit a sense of closeness to citizens' needs, as well as the confidence that, once in power, they will address and solve their problems (Albertazzi and McDonnell, 2008; Mény and Surel, 2002).

In other words, through a persuasive and convincing mechanism of 'emotionalised blame attribution' (Hameleers *et al.,* 2017), challenger parties manage to prime citizens about the untrustworthiness and the incompetence of the traditional political establishment, at the same time as polarising society by exacerbating the divergences between 'us' (challenger parties and their constituency) and 'them' (mainstream political parties and their elite). The latter polarisation has become especially salient since 2008, given the rising conflict between 'old and new politics' (Hutter, Kriesi and Vidal, 2018) which is configuring a new political divide within national political systems in the aftermath of the Great Recession. Therefore:

H$_1$: People who voted for an anti-establishment party became more distrustful of the main actors of political representation (political parties and politicians) than supporters of any other party.

4.2.3 The alleviating distrust mechanism

In the literature on political attitudes and voting behaviour, the fuelling distrust mechanism is challenged by the alleviating distrust argument, according to which the presence of anti-establishment parties in national party systems may restore trust in the main actors of political representation (Bélanger, 2004; Fisher, 1974; Miller and Listhaug, 1990). Although this conclusion has been drawn on the basis of cross-sectional evidence, the rationale behind this association is that challenger parties provide

disaffected voters with an alternative means of representation within the existing partisan structure. As it has been argued, 'by serving as vehicles for party discontent, challenger parties make it possible for those alienated from the party system to participate in it instead of abandoning party politics altogether' (Bélanger, 2004: 1055). These parties are thus essential for the stability of contemporary representative democracies, because of their capacity to channel back citizens' distrust in the main actors of political representation into the political arena, allowing them to express protest in a pacific and democratic way. This argument has been confirmed by Miller and Listhaug (1990). By analysing the evolution of political distrust in Norway, Sweden and the United States, they claimed that 'political parties are used as the vehicle for expressing and alleviating political discontent in Norway. A very different pattern emerges for Sweden and the United States, where parties were not used to channel anti-system sentiment back into the political arena' (Miller and Listhaug, 1990: 366). The paper attributed these differences to the rise of the populist right-wing Progress Party in Norway, which acted as a 'safety valve' by representing in the political arena the interests of those dissatisfied with the existing party supply. The ability of protest parties to reduce political discontent is especially relevant when comparing them with mainstream parties, which are struggling to mobilise citizens to participate in parties and elections and bring people back to politics (Gidengil *et al.,* 2001). Under this framework, anti-party parties may be considered a corrective for democracy because of their potential to give voice to and mobilise and represent excluded sections of society (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012).

AEP may also restore faith in the main actors of political representation in de-consolidating democracies or in countries where they gain access to the highest political institutions. In these cases, charismatic leaders (especially those who govern over a long period of time) establish in their own countries a plebiscitary leader democracy, which is democratic in form but authoritarian in substance (Körösényi, 2019). This kind of political regime is based upon the use of plebiscitary elections as the main mechanism of democratic legitimisation, at the same time as the demonization of 'the others' is a recurrent way to maintain political power. In a plebiscitary leader democracy context, charismatic leaders thus build their legitimacy on public trust and direct mass support rather than formal and institutional processes (Körösényi, 2019). It is thus plausible to assume that a relatively high level of trust in the main actors of political representation is crucial for 'challenger governments' because it allows them to act in a manner that is

independent of institutional constraints and deeply rooted democratic norms. This phenomenon is especially visible in Eastern European countries, where charismatic political leaders have emerged in low-trust environments and yet have successfully increased trust at a moderate level (Körösényi and Patkos, 2017). Levels of institutional trust between government ('us') versus opposition ('them') supporters diverge strongly in countries with reduced democratic performance. This suggests that a viable strategy for political actors may be to build trust in a selective manner, concentrating only on holding together their own supporters and, at the same time, widening and deepening the gap between their own camp and the opposing one(s).

Under these conditions, an important tool for building political trust is anti-elitism which is used by the new charismatic leaders (Albertazzi and McDonnell, 2008). In particular, the linguistic shift adopted by most challenger actors is 'usually accompanied by populism in a substantive (i.e. ideological) sense. Their ideology has strong anti-establishment elements and they often justify their policy with the will of the people vis-a-vis corrupt political elites.' (Körösényi and Patkos, 2017: 616) These actors thus try to increase people's trust by challenging the legitimacy of other social and political authorities (such as European political elites, independent institutions, cultural elites, media outlets and journalists) and destroying their trust capital. Therefore:

H_2: People who voted for an anti-establishment party became less distrustful of the main actors of political representation (political parties and politicians) than supporters of any other party.

4.3   Data and methods

In order to analyse the extent to which support for anti-establishment parties has an impact on people' confidence in the main actors of political representation, we rely on five different panel studies. They are the CIUPANEL dataset for Spain, the LISS panel data for Netherlands, the British Election Study for the United Kingdom, the Norwegian Citizen Panel for Norway and the German Longitudinal Election Study for Germany.

Despite their differences in terms of question wording and sample size, the five surveys are high-quality studies which consist of an online national sample. All the datasets

include the recalled vote choice at the latest parliamentary election[12], along with the main covariates that have been linked with political attitude (Gidengil *et al.,* 2001).

As can be observed in Table 5, the interviews were conducted approximately in the same period (between 2013 and 2017) and therefore cover the same electoral cycle. In the case of Spain and the United Kingdom, the surveys cover a slightly reduced timespan. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that both studies encompass at least 18 months, which can be considered a sufficient amount of time to analyse the impact of party choice on the variation in the levels of political distrust (see Van der Brug, 2003; Rooduijn *et al.,* 2016). The data used in the present empirical chapter are from individuals who participated in both the post-electoral and the furthest survey that was conducted in the country, as long as they include all the variables of interest. Such decision was made in order to maximise the timespan between the two studies and to study the long-term association between voting behaviour and political attitude. All in all, Table 5 shows that the timespan of the empirical analysis is quite heterogeneous, and it ranges between 4 years (as in the case of Germany, Norway and Netherlands) and 18 months (for the Spanish dataset).

Table 5: Source and timing of the waves used in the panel data analysis

Country	Wave $_{t-1}$	Wave $_t$	Source
Germany	24/9 – 5/10 of 2013	25/9– 8/10 of 2017	http://gles.eu/wordpress/english/
Norway	6/11 – 5/12 of 2013	31/10 – 23/11 of 2017	https://www.uib.no/en/citizen/43063/about-panel
Netherlands	3– 31/12 of 2012	5-29/12 of 2016	https://www.lissdata.nl/Home
Spain	17/6 – 7/7 of 2014	10- 19/12 of 2015	https://www.upf.edu/web/survey/ciupanel
United Kingdom	8–26/5 of 2015	5/5 – 7/6 of 2017	https://www.britishelectionstudy.com/data-objects/panel-study-data/

Source: Own elaboration. The timing of the waves was gotten by the codebooks which are available at the respective websites. Further information may be consulted in the Appendix A4.

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[12] In the case of Spain, party choice in the 2014 European Parliament elections was used as the main independent variable. These elections are not the same as national parliamentary elections (see Reif and Schmitt 1980); however, in 2014 both Podemos and Citizens (the two new AEP) ran for the elections in the national arena for the first time.

4.3.1 The dependent variable

Change in trust in the main actors of political representation is the dependent variable of the analysis. Where available, it was computed by summing trust in politicians and trust in political parties (otherwise, it was operationalised by using trust in politicians), both measured on different scales across countries. This variable is a very reliable indicator (Cronbach's Alpha: 0.9) of people's confidence in the main actors of political representation. For the sake of interpretation, the scale was reverted so that higher values mean higher levels of distrust. Following Hooghe and Dassonneville's (2016) analysis, the change in the levels of political distrust between the latest and the closest waves was calculated. Higher values mean that people became more distrustful. The previous level of political distrust, 'which takes into account ceiling effects when investigating the evolution of trust over time' (Hooghe and Dassoneville, 2016: 18) were also included.

Before proceeding with the discussion of the variables included in the study, it is worth investigating whether political trust increased or decreased between the farthest and the closest survey, as well as the extent to which such variation took place in the observed timespan. For these purposes, Table 6 shows the main descriptive statistics of distrust in the main actors of political representation. To begin with, it is worth mentioning that, as can be observed in Table 6, political distrust increased in all the observed countries. This finding is in line with the aggregate and cross-sectional evidence (Torcal, 2014; Zmerli and van der Meer 2017; see also Figure 10 in the Appendix A4), which also highlights that Spain experienced one of the sharpest increases. Nevertheless, it is also very interesting to observe that Germany and Norway follow a similar trend. Focusing now on the between individuals and within individual variations, it should be observed that both descriptive statistics are not entirely insignificant. Although most variation occurs between individuals, the within individual variation is far from being negligible, which means that many of the interviewed people changed their opinions about their representatives. As discussed before, such change implies an increased scepticism. On average, this variation ranges from between 50% and 75% of the total variation, which is a percentage that is worth analysing.

Table 6: Mean, within and between-individuals variance of distrust in the main actors of political representation

Country	Mean $_{t-1}$	Mean $_{t}$	Between σ	Within σ	N
Germany	3.015	3.259	0.947	0.435	9,144
Norway	2.441	2.734	0.892	0.839	1,853
Netherlands	5.357	5.528	1.878	0.818	3,789
Spain	7.838	8.108	1.745	0.908	1,768
United Kingdom	4.626	4.763	1.425	0.650	13,995

Source: Own elaboration. Data on distrust in the main actors of political representation are obtained by the five-panel data used for the empirical analysis. They are the CIUPANEL dataset; the LISS panel data; the British Election Study internet panel; the Norwegian Citizen Panel and the German Longitudinal Election Study.

4.3.2 The independent variables

As discussed in the theoretical section, the fuelling and alleviating distrust mechanisms have been tested using party choice in the latest national parliamentary election (except for Spain, which refers to voting in the 2014 European Parliament elections) as the key independent variable. In order to harmonise the different datasets and make the results comparable, the original party choice variables were recoded into the following categories: vote for the incumbent; vote for the mainstream opposition party; vote for mainstream minor parties and vote for anti-establishment parties, as well as non-voting and voting for 'other parties'. As in Chapter 2, we distinguished between right and left-wing parties. Given the presence of one (or more) minor and anti-establishment party in each national party system, we also distinguished between minor and AEP left-right party I, II (and so forth), according to their vote share at the elections under examination. Support for the incumbent was taken as the reference category. Information about the composition of national cabinets and opposition parties was taken from the Parlgov [13] dataset (Döring and Manow, 2019).

As in the previous chapters, we relied upon the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey data in order to distinguish between mainstream and anti-establishment parties. The survey was administered in 2014 and it asked 337 political scientists – specialising in political parties, national party systems, and European integration – to position 268 political parties in 31

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[13] http://www.parlgov.org/

countries on the most relevant issues and policy areas, such as party position along the left–right scale and European integration. But, even more importantly, for the first time the dataset provided information about the positioning of political parties on the salience of anti-elite or anti-establishment rhetoric (Polk *et al.,* 2017). This aspect is crucial to take into consideration, especially because, according to Polk and colleagues, 'to our knowledge, there are no existing party-level measures of anti-establishment and anti-elite rhetoric salience' (Polk *et al.,* 2017: 3). For the purposes of this study, all the parties with a score higher than 5 on the anti-elite salience dimension (measured on a 0–10-point scale) were classified as 'anti-establishment parties'. Further information about this variable and the classification of parties may be found in Table 7.

Table 7: Classification of the parties included in the empirical analysis of Chapter 4

Country	Party	Party name	L / R	Anti-elite	Category
Germany	CDU / CSU	Christian Democratic Union / Christian Social Union	5.9	0.8	Incumbent
	SPD	Social Democratic Party of Germany	3.7	1.3	Main opposition party
	FDP	Free Democratic Party	6.5	0.9	Minor right party I
	Grunen	The Greens	3.6	2	Minor left party I
	AfD	Alternative for Germany	8.9	7.7	AEP Right I
	Linke	The Left	1.2	6.4	AEP Left I
Netherlands	VVD	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy	7.8	1.7	Incumbent
	PvdA	Labour Party	3.6	1.2	Main opposition party
	CDA	Christian Democratic Appeal	6.7	1.4	Minor right party I
	D66	Democrats 66	5.5	1.4	Minor right party II
	CU	Christian Union	5.4	2.1	Minor right party III
	PVV	Party for Freedom	9.2	9.4	AEP Right I
	SP	Socialist Party	1	6.5	AEP Left I
Norway	AP	Labour Party	3.5	2	Incumbent
	H	Conservative Party	7.2	2	Main opposition party
	KrF	Christian Democratic Party	5.7	3.6	Minor right party I
	V	Liberal Party	6.5	3.6	Minor right party II
	SP	Centre Party	4.5	4.6	Minor left party I
	FrP	Progress Party	8.2	6.6	AEP Right I
	SV	Socialist Left Party	1.7	6.3	AEP Left I
	MDG	Green Party	2.5	7	AEP Left II
Spain	PP	People's Party	7.3	1.4	Incumbent
	PSOE	Spanish Socialist Workers' Party	3.8	3	Main opposition party
	UPyD	Union Progress and Democracy	5.6	5.7	Minor right party I
	C's	Citizens	5.5	6.3	AEP Right I
	Podemos	We Can	1.6	10	AEP Left I
	IU	United Left	2	6	AEP Left II

United Kingdom	CONS	Conservative Party	7	2.1	Incumbent
	LAB	Labour Party	3.5	4	Main opposition party
	LD	Liberal Democrats	4.8	3.1	Minor left party I
	UKIP	United Kingdom Independence Party	9.1	9.2	AEP Right I
	SNP	Scottish National Party	3	7.3	AEP Left I
	GREEN	Green Party	1.8	7.6	AEP Left II

Source: Own elaboration. Data on the ideological position on the Left / Right scale and the salience of anti-elitism are obtained by the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Polk *et al.* 2017). Data on the national governments are obtained by Parlgov (http://www.parlgov.org/data/table/view_cabinet/)

4.3.3 Control variables

Added to the model are also the most relevant alternative explanations for the change in levels of political distrust. In particular, sociotropic and egotropic evaluations of the economy were added as control variables. In the literature, a wealth of studies have convincingly demonstrated that the economy plays a relevant role when explaining political trust (for a recent review, see Zmerli and van der Meer, 2017), Therefore, it is necessary to take this into account when analysing the impact of support for challenger parties on distrust in the main actors of political representation. The sociotropic dimension of the economy has been operationalised by a retrospective evaluation of the national economic situation. The original variables were recoded, so that higher values mean a more negative evaluation of the economic situation. Regarding the egotropic evaluation, an index of personal economic uncertainty was included in the models. The index was created by using several items concerning respondents' current concerns with paying bills, life quality levels, job losses, and payment of rents or mortgages. Finally, all the empirical models include the left–right self-placement, political interest, as well as the main socio-demographic variables (gender, age, educational level, marital, and working status), which have been found to be good predictors of change in political attitude (see Torcal, 2014). The question wording and coding of the variables are displayed in Appendix A4, and the descriptive statistics are shown in Table 21 in the same Appendix 4A. Given the continuous nature of the dependent variable, we also ran an OLS model. In order to avoid problems of endogeneity, all the covariates are *t-1* with respect to the dependent variable.

4.4 Results

Table 8 displays the coefficients of the models explaining the change in the levels of political distrust in Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom. To begin with, it can be observed that it was indeed necessary to control for the previous level of distrust, because it is highly related to its change between the two waves (Hooghe and Dassoneville, 2016).

Focusing now on the impact of the key independent variable (party choice in the latest parliamentary elections), it should be noted that in almost all countries there are no significant differences between having supported the incumbent and having voted for the mainstream opposition party with regard to change in levels of political distrust. Both categories are traditionally considered as 'mainstream actors' par excellence, and their supporters have not changed their attitudes towards the main actors of political representation. The only interesting exceptions are Germany and Norway, where supporters of the mainstream opposition party became more trustful compared with the supporters of the main government party.

Table 8: Explaining change in the distrust in the main actors of political representation (OLS regression estimates)

Independent variables [t-1]	Germany	Netherlands	Norway	Spain	UK
Political interest	0.025*	-0.121*	-0.040	0.075	0.001
	(0.012)	(0.052)	(0.024)	(0.050)	(0.007)
Political distrust[1]	-0.422***	-0.400***	-0.432***	-0.473***	-0.385***
	(0.013)	(0.018)	(0.014)	(0.021)	(0.010)
Retrospective economic evaluation[2]	0.125***	0.080***	0.055*	0.122**	0.111***
	(0.015)	(0.020)	(0.022)	(0.038)	(0.015)
Indicator of economic uncertainty	0.038**	0.047**		-0.026	0.052***
	(0.014)	(0.016)		(0.050)	(0.014)
Left/Right Self Placement	0.007	-0.013	0.016	-0.007	0.013
	(0.006)	(0.017)	(0.011)	(0.020)	(0.007)
Party choice[3]					
Vote for incumbent (ref.)					
Vote for the main opposition party	-0.171***	0.131	-0.162*	0.264	0.079

	(0.031)	(0.100)	(0.079)	(0.200)	(0.043)
Vote for AEP right party I	0.346***	0.362**	0.133*	0.545*	0.472***
	(0.040)	(0.128)	(0.060)	(0.216)	(0.059)
Vote for AEP left party I	0.181***	0.204	0.352**	0.568**	0.153*
	(0.036)	(0.122)	(0.108)	(0.207)	(0.062)
Vote for AEP left party II			0.223**	0.860***	0.104*
			(0.075)	(0.172)	(0.051)
Vote for minor right party I	0.070	-0.289*	0.127	0.142	
	(0.045)	(0.113)	(0.089)	(0.245)	
Vote for minor right party II		-0.184	0.030		
		(0.125)	(0.072)		
Vote for minor right party III		0.041			
		(0.180)			
Vote for minor left party I	-0.034		0.108		-0.062
	(0.043)		(0.090)		(0.052)
Vote for other parties	0.122*	0.152	0.126*	0.499**	0.071
	(0.053)	(0.115)	(0.062)	(0.187)	(0.093)
No vote	0.175	0.066	0.143	0.536***	0.014
	(0.106)	(0.117)	(0.097)	(0.160)	(0.071)
Gender (reference: female)	-0.002	0.100	0.013	0.022	0.075**
	(0.023)	(0.062)	(0.035)	(0.082)	(0.026)
Age[4]	0.020***	0.021	-0.116	0.012	0.003
	(0.006)	(0.015)	(0.072)	(0.020)	(0.007)
Squared age[4]	-0.000***	-0.000	-0.079	-0.000	-0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.083)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Primary education (reference)					
Secondary education	-0.015	0.014	-0.052	0.183	-0.050
	(0.029)	(0.119)	(0.064)	(0.250)	(0.042)
University education	-0.072*	-0.093	-0.099	0.207	-0.146***
	(0.033)	(0.152)	(0.063)	(0.257)	(0.044)
Worker (reference)					
Student	0.004	-0.299	-0.031	0.109	-0.053
	(0.066)	(0.267)	(0.091)	(0.205)	(0.104)
Retired	-0.040	-0.166	-0.142	-0.011	0.064
	(0.056)	(0.155)	(0.133)	(0.103)	(0.045)
Unemployed	0.038	0.104	-0.023	-0.034	0.029
	(0.034)	(0.091)	(0.052)	(0.141)	(0.040)
Other	0.066	-0.084	0.052	0.206	0.028
	(0.049)	(0.101)	(0.075)	(0.188)	(0.098)
Married (reference)					

Separated	-0.018	0.310	0.108	0.221	0.015
	(0.068)	(0.449)	(0.063)	(0.239)	(0.089)
Divorced	0.000	0.089	0.156	-0.053	0.109*
	(0.033)	(0.097)	(0.103)	(0.181)	(0.046)
Widow	0.004	-0.234	0.118	0.514*	0.006
	(0.059)	(0.132)	(0.118)	(0.241)	(0.069)
Never married	0.006	-0.032	-0.039	0.162	-0.069
	(0.028)	(0.086)	(0.060)	(0.113)	(0.037)
Constant	0.546***	1.224**	2.054***	2.033***	1.272***
	(0.159)	(0.465)	(0.170)	(0.607)	(0.194)
Number of observations	5,116	2,542	1,696	1,768	8,250
R^2	0.188	0.201	0.398	0.239	0.199

[a] Estimation is by maximum likelihood. Standard Errors in parentheses. The levels of significance are ***$p<0.01$; **$p<0.05$; *$p<0.1$

[1] In UK, Norway and Germany this variable refers only to politicians. In Netherlands and Spain, it is an additive index formed by trust in politicians and political parties.

[2] In Norway and Netherlands, the question is about the evaluation of the current economic situation in the country.

[3] In Spain, the variable refers to the vote at the European Parliamentary election (held on May 2014).

[4] In Norway, the age has been asked in 3 categories: 18-29 (the reference category of the analysis); 30-59 years; 60 years and above.

In a similar way, Table 8 shows that those who supported a mainstream minor party (both on the left and the right) and voters of any other minor party did not significantly change their attitudes either. With few exceptions in Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and Spain (in these cases the relationship is not extremely strong), the fact of having voted for any of the other mainstream minor parties or any other minor party did not have a strong impact on change in levels of distrust in the main actors of political representation. The same holds true for those who did not show up on election day. With the exception of Spain (where abstainers became significantly more distrustful than supporters of the incumbent), in no country did non-voters alter their trust in the main actors of political representation.

In general, the situation is very different in the case of supporters of challenger anti-establishment parties. As can be observed in Table 8 and Figure 8, in all countries, those people who voted for a challenger party in the previous election became more distrustful than supporters of the incumbent. In all cases, the coefficient is positive (which means

that voters' distrust increased over time) and statistically significant. This relationship holds true not only for the long-term populist radical right (such as the PVV in the Netherlands or the Progress Party in Norway) and extreme left parties (e.g., the Socialist Left Party in Norway and The Left in Germany), but also for brand new parties. The radical left-wing We Can and the centre-right Citizens in Spain and the extreme right AfD in Germany are a good example of the latter. This finding is especially relevant. In particular, it empirically confirms that anti-elitism is not solely a prerogative of populist radical (right-wing) parties, as has been repeatedly claimed in the dominant literature on political parties and voting behaviour (see Albertazzi and McDonnell, 2008; Mény and Surel, 2007; Mudde, 2007). Conversely, anti-establishment messages may be found also in new non-populist centrist parties (such as Citizens in Spain) whose main strong point is the newness of their political project, in sharp contrast with the old traditional party supply which is corrupted by political power (Hanley and Sikk, 2016; Tavits, 2008; Torcal and Serani, 2018). The same also holds true for some ecological-oriented parties (such as the Green Party in the United Kingdom), which cannot be considered to be 'challenger parties' anymore (Grant and Tilley, 2019; March and Mudde 2005), yet some of them still hold an anti-establishment stance (as reported in the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey). And, even more importantly, the anti-elitism of non-populist parties has the same effect on people's attitude as the impact observed for the populist radical parties when explaining the variation in the levels of political distrust.

Figure 8: The impact of party choice on the change in the political distrust levels
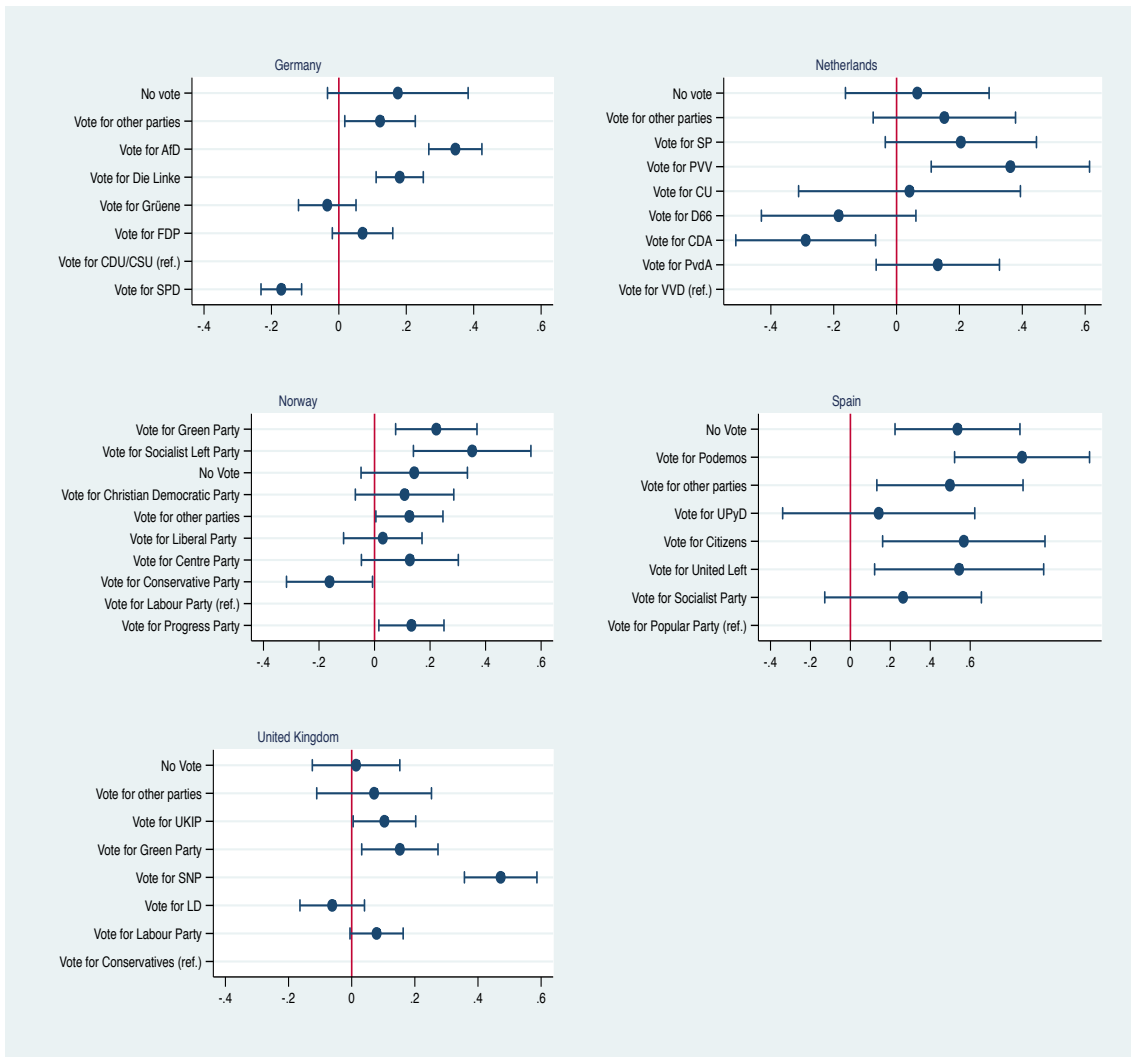
Average marginal effects of party choice on the change in the distrust in the main actors of political representation. Source: Own elaboration based on the models in Table 8. Note: Bars represent 95 percent confidence interval. The average marginal effects are computed holding the independent variables at their means.

In addition to Table 8 and Figure 8, the impact of the previous party choice on the change in the levels of political distrust may be better appreciated in Table 9, which displays the results of a t-test. Such statistical technique has been conducted for the purpose of observing whether the average levels of political distrust (the higher the value, the higher the distrust in the mean actors of political representation) measured at the time of the election are statistically different from the political attitude measured at the following wave. For the sake of interpretation and clarity of the results, this operation was limited for the supporters of mainstream and anti-establishment parties.

As it has been confirmed in Table 9, in most cases the supporters of anti-establishment parties (both on the right and on the left) experienced an over-time increase in the levels of political distrust. And, even more importantly, these differences are significantly different between each other, suggesting that they can be explained by the fact of having voted for an anti-establishment party with a strong anti-elite orientation. For instance, of the supporters of Podemos, they averaged 6,7 level of distrust heading just after the election, and these same citizens in the panel registered 7,2 level of distrust 18 months later. Similar results may be observed in the case of Germany. Supporters of the right-wing AfD displayed 7 level of distrust at the time of the election, while the same supporters displayed 8,1 level of distrust 4 years later. The results of the other countries are not dissimilar from the ones observed above.

This situation stands in sharp contrast with the average levels of distrust measured for the supporters of the main mainstream parties (either in government or in opposition). Unlike the case of supporters of AEP, in almost all the cases (with extremely few exceptions) mainstream party supporters did not experience a significant over-time change in their average level of political distrust. For instance, of the supporters of the CDU/CSU in Germany, they averaged 4,5 level of distrust just after the election, and 4 years later the same citizens showed an average level of 4,7. This marginal difference is not statistically significant, which means that their opinion about the main actors of political representation did not change for the fact of having voted for the incumbent. The same holds true for all the other countries included in this analysis.

Table 9: T-test of the average levels of political distrust in wave t-1 and wave t for the supporters of different parties

Country	Category	Distrust *t-1*	Distrust *t*	Significance
Germany	Incumbent	4,5	4,7	No significant
	Main opposition party	4,7	4	***
	AEP Right I	7	8,1	***
	AEP Left I	6,8	7,5	***
Netherlands	Incumbent	4	4,1	No significant
	Main opposition party	3,8	4	No significant
	AEP Right I	7,1	7,8	**
	AEP Left I	6,9	7	No significant
Norway	Incumbent	3	2,8	No significant
	Main opposition party	3,5	3,1	*
	AEP Right I	7,1	7,5	*
	AEP Left I	7,3	7,8	**
Spain	Incumbent	3	2,9	No significant
	Main opposition party	3,1	2,8	No significant

	AEP Right I	6,6	6,9	*
	AEP Left I	6,7	7,2	**
United Kingdom	Incumbent	2,8	2,7	No significant
	Main opposition party	3	2,9	No significant
	AEP Right I	7	7,8	***
	AEP Left I	7,1	7,5	*

T- test of the average levels of political distrust measured in wave *t-1* and wave *t* in each country for the supporters of different type of parties. The higher the value, the higher the distrust in the main actors of political representation (political parties and politicians). Source: Own elaboration based on the descriptive statistics of the five panel studies under analysis. The levels of significance are ***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.1.

As reported in Table 7, the classification of the parties is as follows:
<u>Incumbent</u>: CDU/CSU in Germany; VVD in Netherlands; AP in Norway; PP in Spain and Cons in the UK.
<u>Main opposition parties</u>: SDP in Germany; PvdA in Netherlands; H in Norway; PSOE in Spain and LAB in the UK.
<u>AEP Right I:</u> AfD in Germany; PVV in Netherlands; FrP in Norway; C's in Spain and UKIP in the UK.
<u>AEP Left I:</u> Linke in Germany; SP in Netherlands; SV in Norway; Podemos in Spain and SNP in the UK.

In line with previous studies (Hooghe and Dassoneville, 2016; Rooduijn *et al.,* 2016), these findings may be explained by the fact that supporters of challenger parties have been exposed to their anti-elitism, making them more distrustful than those who cast their vote for a mainstream party. Putting this in other words, the presence of challenger parties in established party systems contributes to fuelling (and not alleviating) political distrust. These results allow us to confirm the first hypothesis and reject the second hypothesis about the relationship between voting behaviour and political distrust.

Focusing now on the role of the economy, Table 8 shows that sociotropic evaluation of the economy has a significant impact on political attitude. In line with previous studies (Zmerli and van der Meer, 2017), the more negative the evaluation of the economy, the sharper the drop in political trust. The relationship between trust and the economy can also be observed in the case of evaluation of one's own personal economic situation. Similarly, the higher the perception of personal economic uncertainty, the more accentuated is the increase in political distrust. Regarding the impact of ideology and political interest, we can conclude that there is no significant relationship. In a similar way, there is not any difference (or the differences are marginal) in terms of gender, age, educational level, marital, or working status.

4.5 **Conclusions**

This article sets out to disentangle the relationship between distrust in the main actors of political representation (political parties and politicians) and support for anti-establishment parties. Unlike most previous studies (Bergh, 2004; Gidengil *et al.,* 2001; Passarelli and Tuorto, 2018), this paper analysed the impact of having voted for an AEP on change in political distrust.

Two competing hypotheses were tested. On the one hand, the fuelling distrust mechanism argues that anti-establishment parties fuel political distrust by priming their supporters about the untrustworthiness and incompetence of the traditional political elite, and by polarising the electorate between 'us' (AEP and their supporters, who are 'the good people') and 'them' (the corrupt political elite). On the other hand, the alleviating distrust argument claims that this kind of parties manage to reduce political distrust, by acting as vehicles for party discontent and permitting distrustful people to express their sentiments in a pacific and democratic way. Likewise, in de-consolidating democracies or in countries where anti-establishment parties govern, these actors restore faith in the political elite by stressing the differences between their performance and that of traditional parties. These hypotheses were tested by relying on panel data, which are the most suited option to study to what extent voting behaviour has an impact on people's attitudes and beliefs about their representatives. The surveys were conducted in Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom – five very different countries that have in common the presence of one (or more) AEP within the national party system.

The empirical evidence is in line with previous studies and hints at a fuelling distrust mechanism (see Hooghe and Dassoneville, 2016; Rooduijn *et al.,* 2016). Despite their divergences in terms of ideological placement and policy programmes, all the challenger parties included in the analysis share a strong anti-elitism and a fierce critique of the main actors of political representation, which can be used by their supporters as heuristics when evaluating their representatives. More precisely, the findings about the fuelling distrust mechanism make important contributions to the literature on political attitudes and voting behaviour, especially taking into account the relative scarcity of systematic studies conducted on this topic and the inconclusiveness of the empirical results. In this sense,

the present research has confirmed that political agency and party supply (and, in particular, the anti-elite rhetoric of anti-establishment parties) play a role when explaining people's attitudes towards the traditional actors of political representation. Even more importantly, this study has demonstrated that 'emotionalised blame attribution' is not only a mechanism activated by populist parties (Hameleers *et al.,* 2017), but it can be extended also to non-populist and non-radical challenger parties.

This investigation also has a broader political and societal relevance. Over the last few years, several anti-establishment parties along the whole ideological spectrum managed to achieve a prominent position in national party systems. In some countries (such as Greece, Austria, Hungary, or Italy), they reached national government; in others (such as Spain and Germany), they obtained a significant vote share in the first elections they ran in. Most studies have demonstrated that these parties are agents of discontent which benefit from a pre-existing reservoir of political distrust (see Alvarez *et al.,* 2018; Passarelli and Tuorto, 2018). Nevertheless, this paper went beyond preceding studies by showing that those who have contributed to the success of challenger parties became more distrustful of the main actors of political representation compared with supporters of any other party (as well as non-voters). This evidence raises the politically salient question of whether challenger parties are just benefitting from the political representation crisis, or if they are also contributing to fuelling people's distrust towards their representatives. If that is the case, the relationship between voting behaviour and political attitudes might be more complex than as presented in the literature so far. Providing an answer to this question may also help mainstream parties to restore faith in their performance, especially regarding their honesty when acting as representatives.

Nevertheless, it is worth stressing that this study is not exempt from limitations. First, the analysis is limited to a relatively short period of time. As in the case of the United Kingdom and Spain, two years may not be a sufficient period to study long-term changes in political attitude. In this sense, while we should take the results observed in the two countries with a grain of salt and be more cautious when drawing general conclusions, a more extended timespan may more convincingly prove the impact of party choice on levels of political distrust. Nevertheless, similar results have been found in Germany, Norway and Netherlands, which cover a much more extended timespan (four years) and

therefore they are more suited to draw stronger and more plausible conclusions (see Hooghe and Dassoneville, 2016; Rooduijn *et al.*, 2016).

Second, the analysis covers an extraordinary period (in the aftermath of the Great Recession, although the economic crisis has had an uneven impact in the five countries). Furthermore, despite the high comparability in terms of question wording and measurement of the most important indicators, the questionnaires are not exactly the same, which made it hard to perform a pool analysis. In this sense, future long-term projects should be devoted to designing a homogenised panel study between the European countries in order to make the findings more generalisable and extend the mechanisms to other contexts and situations. All in all, the cognitive mechanism through which challenger parties' messages are assimilated by their voters and how people react to them by increasing their distrust in the traditional actors of political representation are not yet completely clear. In this sense, qualitative research (or even experimental studies) are strongly encouraged to shed light on the psychological and cognitive mechanisms which are behind this association.

5. **CONCLUSIONS**

The central aim of this dissertation was to explore the relationship between distrust in the main actors of political representation (political parties and politicians) and support for anti-establishment parties (AEP). Although this topic is not new in the academia (see Alvarez *et al.*, 2018 for a review), the recent political crisis which arose in the aftermath of the Great Recession and the rise of new challenger contenders renewed the debate about the interconnectedness between the political attitude and the electoral fortunes of those parties that oppose to the traditional political establishment (Armingeon and Guthmann, 2014; Hobolt and Tilley, 2016). In this way, it has been possible to identify some line of investigation as well as several challenges that have threatened the accumulation of knowledge.

Before analyzing such association, we first devoted our efforts in defining and selecting AEP. As we discussed in the introduction, in the literature abound the definitions of challenger parties, and several scholars lamented the lack of consensus regarding this concept (Mény and Surel, 2002; Mudde, 2007). Populist parties, challenger parties, antiparty parties or anti-establishment parties are just few examples among the vast terminology that has been used to identify those parties that challenge the established *status quo*. A related problem concerned the criteria that have been used to select such parties, which in turn led to deep contrasts between theoretical and empirical studies. Depending on the focus of the investigation and the research questions, a given party (e.g. *Forza Italia*, the Austrian *FPO* or the Hungarian *Fidesz*) that has been traditionally treated as a challenger party (see Mudde, 2007; van Kessel, 2015) has been excluded from the analysis in another piece of research (see Hobolt and Tilley, 2016), and the other way around. As a result, all the criteria that have been hitherto used to select these parties pose some problem as far as they do not take into consideration all the characteristics of challenger party. In particular, previous studies failed in providing a set of criteria which is easy to operationalize, by hindering the comparability between parties and countries.

Therefore, in the introductory chapter we paid a special attention in presenting the main perspectives on the 'anti-establishment parties' concept, by trying to identify the lowest common denominator of these parties. In this sense, the main scope has been to provide an exhaustive and comprehensive definition of AEP which could subsume more specific sub-concepts. For the purposes of this thesis, we adopted Abedi's (2004) definition.

Unlike other definitions, this one has the advantage of gauging the anti-elite component of all the AEP, as well as providing a comprehensive characterization of their main features. According to Abedi (2004:11), AEP display three basic characteristics. First of all, they defy the established *status quo* in terms of major policy or political system issues (namely immigration for challenger right-wing parties, economic redistribution for their left-wing counterparts or the main pillars of democracy for all the radical parties). Second, they perceive themselves as a challenger to the mainstream parties that make up the traditional political establishment, by positioning themselves at the fringes of the established party system. Finally, they accuse all the establishment parties (either in government or in opposition) of being essentially the same and not addressing the real problems of the citizens. In this sense, AEP perceive themselves as the true champion of the democracy, the only parties that really care about people.

Directly related with the latter, the following issue we addressed in the introduction was to provide a clear criterion to identify AEP. In this work, we tried to adopt a novel approach by relying upon the quantitative criterion provided by the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey. This dataset includes a variable named 'anti-elite salience' which captures the degree of anti-elitism of all the parties included in the survey. To the best of our knowledge, no study has adopted this approach in order to select challenger parties, despite its comparative advantage. In our dissertation, we included all those parties with a score higher than 6 (on a 0-10 points scale) on the anti-elite salience variable.

When it comes to the analytical strategies employed, in the present thesis we adopted in each empirical chapter the estimation strategy that best fitted with the research questions, the scope of the investigation, the hypotheses and the variable being considered. In this sense, it is worth mentioning the usage of panel data in the second and third empirical chapter. Unlike cross-sectional data, panel data are better suited to try to overcome common problems in the literature when studying the relationship between political distrust and support for challenger parties. This aspect is especially relevant when analyzing the impact of the previous voting behavior on the over-time individual change in the levels of political distrust (van der Brug, 2003; Hooghe and Dassoneville, 2016). But, at the same time, we are aware of the advantages of comparative large-N cross-sectional analyses (Hobolt and Tilley, 2016). Therefore, in the first empirical chapter we estimated a multi-level model with cross-sectional data in order to assess the impact of

political distrust and the economy on the voting for challenger parties in Europe after and before the Great Recession.

5.1   *Main findings*

What are the main findings of the three studies proposed in this dissertation? What kind of conclusions we can draw from the present manuscript? Through the thesis, we have focused on three relevant debates. The first two are related with the electoral consequences of distrust in political parties and politicians, that is how people's lack of confidence in the elected representatives affects their decision of voting for a given type of party rather than another. As we discussed in the introductory chapter, the research community has mostly emphasized the impact of political distrust on the voters' decision to support a challenger party, with the protest voting theory -the act of voting for an AEP motivated by political distrust – representing the standard theoretical approach (Bergh, 2004). In this regard, in Chapter 2 we relied upon this well-established argument and we studied under which conditions distrustful people casted their vote for a challenger party at the national elections. To do so, we followed the standard approach in this kind of analysis (Hobolt and Tilley, 2016) by performing a large-N cross-sectional analysis with the European Social Survey pooled data (2004-2016).

As we discussed before, we tried to go beyond the traditional protest voting argument and provide new insights by adding to the empirical model the subjective and objective economic predictors. In this way, we evaluated also the direct and conditional impact of the economy when analyzing the relationship between the political attitude and the voting behavior. By doing that, we tried to establish a connection and to bridge the gap between two strands of the literature that have been hitherto separated: the protest and the economic voting theories. While the former is related with the impact of people' distrust on the voting behavior, the latter theoretical framework argues that the economy is the most important factor which drives voters' decisions (Hérnandez and Kriesi, 2016). Furthermore, we also included in the discussion a recent debate which revolves around the impact of the Great Recession on the European political arenas and public opinion (Armingeon and Guthmann, 2014; Bartels and Bermeo, 2014). All the analysis for this first paper is based on a pooled dataset with all the ESS waves by performing a multilevel cross-sectional analysis.

Chapter 2 provided empirical evidence confirming that people's distrust in the main actors of political representation has a direct impact on their decision to support a challenger party. Such relationship holds true not only for populist radical right- and left-wing parties, but also for non-radical challenger parties. However, the political attitude is not the only factor behind the increasing electoral success of AEP. In this sense, it is worth mentioning the importance of the economy, which has a direct impact on people' decision to vote for a challenger actor. These findings add new evidence about the electoral consequences of the economy, which is not only related with the punishment of the incumbent (as predicted by the economic voting theory), but it also plays a role when analyzing the voting for non-established actors. So far, very few contributions have provided empirical evidence of the importance of sociotropic and egotropic economic conditions on the voting for challenger parties (Bosch and Durán, 2017; Hérnandez and Kriesi, 2016; Hobolt and Tilley, 2016). Hence, our findings speak out to this scarce but rising line of investigation, adding more longitudinal and cross-sectional evidence. But, even more importantly, from the empirical analysis it results that political distrust (measured at the individual level) and the objective conditions of the economy (which have been taken from the aggregate level) have an additive effect and they mutually reinforce when explaining the electoral success of right- and left-wing challenger parties. So, another factor that is of particular relevance for the decision of supporting a challenger party is the interaction between the political attitude and the objective status of the economy. In other words, the impact of political distrust on the voting for AEP is stronger in hard times (when people' discontent with the traditional political establishment is expected to be more accentuated), compared with a period of economic prosperity.

If both distrust in the main actors of representation and the sociotropic/egotropic economic evaluation are important for people's voting behavior, also the perception of the ideological positions adopted by mainstream parties along the left/right scale seems to play a relevant role when explaining the decision of voting for a challenger party. In this respect, the personal decision of deserting a mainstream party in favor of an AEP may be the result of the perception that the traditional party supply is insufficient to satisfy the demands of the society (Abedi, 2002; Adams *et al.*, 2006). Chapter 3 tries to test this by showing results from an original panel data gathered in Spain between 2014 and 2016. More specifically, following previous research (Dassoneville and Hooghe, 2016; Plane and Gershtenson, 2004), we distinguished between indifference and alienation. As we

theoretically discussed and empirically showed in the second empirical chapter, they represent two different situations which have a different impact on the type of challenger party analyzed. While indifference favored non-radical anti-establishment options in response to the fact that a centrist competitor may emerge from the lack of differentiation between traditional parties, alienation is reserved to radical challenger parties that are much closer to alienated voters. Such a relevant evidence has been observed at the 2015 parliamentary elections in Spain, where the successful rise of two very different challenger parties (the moderate anti-establishment Ciudadanos –*Citizens*- and the radical left-wing populist Podemos -*We Can*) provoked a deep change from a stable two-party system to a multiparty system which has hitherto resulted into fragile and unstable coalition governments. Overall, these findings align and also complement existing research on the Spanish context on the successful rise of new challenger parties in institutionalized party systems, especially when analyzing the factors that are behind their electoral success (Bosch and Durán, 2017; Vidal, 2017). In particular, by providing evidence that people' perception of the ideological positions adopted by mainstream parties are an important element to take into account, this research has demonstrated that the electoral success of AEP is not only a matter of trust or economy, but also how people locate themselves with respect to the traditional party supply plays a role. In short, it is reasonable to expect that the electoral fortunes of the two new challenger parties is a multidimensional phenomenon in which different driving factors are important. In addition to that, we have also showed that, as in Chapter 2, low levels of political trust are a significant factor leading people to desert mainstream parties in favor of challenger parties. All in all, this finding provides another proof in favor of the protest voting theory which implies that, despite its criticisms (Birch and Dennison, 2017), it is still an exhaustive explanation of people's support for AEP.

But, even more importantly, we have also shown that the political attitude has a moderating effect when analyzing the impact of voters' alienation from the established party system on the voting behavior. That is, high levels of trust in the main actors of political representation mitigate the impact of alienation on the decision of supporting *Podemos*. While such relationship is present also in the case of the "established" radical left-wing *United Left*, it turns out that the interaction between political trust and alienation is not statistically significant in the case of *Ciudadanos*. This is another important contribution and it may sound counterintuitive, as far as in the literature on voting

behavior the conventional wisdom is to argue that high levels of political distrust and voters' alienation from the established party system reinforce each other by further fostering the electoral success of challenger parties (Kitschelt and McGann, 1995; Mudde, 2007). In this respect, the empirical article challenges this argument, supporting the view that high levels of trust may actually placate the impact of alienation regarding the voting for new challenger parties in established party systems, although such effect depends on the type of party.

Overall, in addition to confirming the relevance of people's perception of the strategic positions adopted by mainstream parties (Dassoneville and Hooghe, 2016; Meguid, 2005), Chapter 3 contends with the dominant literature arguing that political distrust further accelerates the impact of voters' alienation on the voting for challenger parties (Mudde, 2007). On the contrary, high levels of trust in political parties and politicians mitigate the impact of alienation on the voting for new radical challenger contenders (or radical parties in general, as far as the empirical evidence seems to suggest), whereas such mechanism does not come into play in the case of indifference or voting for new non-radical challenger parties. Such surprising finding may be explained by the fact that challenger parties may restore faith in the traditional actors of political representation (Körösényi, 2019; Miller and Lishaug, 1990; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012), which in turn might imply that they also benefit from a reservoir of political trust, as long as they are able to transmit voters a reliable message and they present themselves as a better option than all the other parties that have traditionally governed (Kselman and Niou, 2011). In a similar way, it could also be that alienated voters that feel themselves far away from the established party supply are attracted by more radical option that better represent their interests. In this sense, people's distrust in the established party system may be perceived as a symptom of the failure of the traditional party supply in addressing citizens' demands (Plane and Gershtenson, 2004), which may imply that they trust in radical actors. This argument may explain why the interaction between trust and alienation is significant not only for *Podemos*, but also for *Izquierda Unida*, the other radical actor.

To conclude, while we might argue that both political distrust and the two dimensions of electoral market failure are relevant factors that have an impact on people' decision of voting for a new challenger party, we cannot disregard that high levels of trust mitigate

the impact of alienation in relation with the support for radical parties. While we tested this argument in a very specific context (the 2015 parliamentary elections in Spain), in Tables 18-20 in the Appendix A3 we replicated the empirical analysis for Germany, Norway and the United Kingdom. As we discussed in Section 3.6 of Chapter 3, the counterintuitive findings observed in the Spanish case seem to work reasonably well also for the three countries, which means that the empirical evidence may be extended to other circumstances and party systems.

But what are the consequences of having voted for a challenger party at the previous election on people's distrust in political parties and politicians? Does this kind of behavior have any role in shaping people's attitudes? Does it contribute to reduce or increase political distrust? The relationship between trust and support for challenger parties is central in the literature on public opinion and voting behavior (Mudde, 2007; van Kessel, 2015; Passarelli and Tuorto, 2016), but most studies have been exclusively focused on explaining the impact of trust on the voting behavior. Such dominant paradigm has been recently challenged by some studies, which demonstrated that the voting behavior do have an impact on people' political attitudes (Hooghe and Dassoneville, 2016; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2012; Rooduijn *et al.*, 2016). In this view, two competitive arguments have been made. On the one hand, it has been argued that having voted for a challenger party contributes to widen the gap between citizens and their representatives, by fueling political distrust and by activating a 'spiral of distrust' mechanism (Hooghe and Dassoneville, 2016). On the other hand, other researches claimed that support for challenger parties reduce political distrust, by bringing this attitude back in the electoral arena and by acting as a 'safety valve' for those distrustful people that have an instrument to express in a democratic way their discontent with the established actors (Fisher, 1974; Miller and Listhaug, 1990). However, the evidence is mixed, and the results are inconsistent.

Chapter 4 relied upon these conflicting arguments and checked whether the fact of having voted for a challenger party at the previous election contributes to increase or reduce political distrust. For these purposes, we made use of panel data collected in five different countries (Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom) which have in common the presence of one (or more) challenger party in their party system. In this kind of studies, the usage of panel data has an important advantage over the traditional

cross-sectional datasets, which is the fact of tracking the same individuals in different point in time, allowing to observe the over-time changes in the political attitude (van der Brug, 2003; Rooduijn *et al.*, 2016).

The empirical results hint at the existence of the spiral of distrust mechanism: in most cases, all those voters that have supported a challenger party at the previous election became significantly more distrustful than voters of mainstream parties or any other party. By accusing mainstream parties for being detached from the real interests of the common people, by blaming the traditional political elite of being the only responsible of citizens' problems and by signaling their incompetence when addressing the demands and needs of the society, challenger parties prime their supporters about the untrustworthiness and unreliability of the main actors of political representation (Hameleers *et al.*, 2017; Jagers and Walgrave, 2007). In a similar way, they also contribute to polarize the society by exacerbating the differences between 'us' (challenger parties and their supporters) and 'them' (mainstream parties and their voters) (Albertazzi and McDonnell, 2008; Mudde, 2007), which in turns enlarge the rising cleavage between 'old and new politics' (Hutter *et al.*, 2018).

Overall, the empirical confirmation of the 'spiral of distrust' mechanism contributes to enrich the increasingly salient debate about the impact of challenger parties in established party systems. Are they mere 'agents of discontent' benefitting from a reservoir of political discontent (van Kessel, 2015), or are they playing a relevant role in increasing people' distrust in the main actors of political representation (Hooghe and Dassoneville, 2016)? Chapter 4 seems to suggest that the latter mechanism is taking place in Europe: by means of their anti-establishment rhetoric, AEP are fueling people' distrust in political parties and the elected representatives.

In light of the above, it seems that the spiral of distrust leads to a vicious circle in which distrustful people are much more likely to support an anti-establishment party (compared with a mainstream political actor), which in turn promotes a further increase in the individual levels of political trust, which in turn may intensify the impact of political distrust on the voting for anti-establishment parties. In this scenario, mainstream parties seem to be doomed to failure, as the spiral of distrust never stops and the relationship between the political distrust and the success of AEP dominate the electoral arena. Nevertheless, there is still faith for mainstream parties, and we cannot disregard the

essential role played by the mainstream political actors in national party systems in Europe. In other words, the future of the traditional actors of political representation may not be as dark as it seems. As we observed in Figure 1 in page 3, despite the increasing electoral success of anti-establishment parties in most European countries, their mainstream counterparts are still the most voted parties in Europe, and they hold national cabinets in some of the most relevant countries (for instance, in Germany and France). As we explained in Chapter 3, a possible explanation for a (still) bright future of mainstream parties lies in the fact that, at the end of the day, anti-establishment parties are political entrepreneurs which aim to maximize their benefits (gaining political representation and achieving the government of the country). As such, they are bound to the same rules of the game as the mainstream political actors: if the expectative about their future behavior are too high, the performance of AEP is lower than the expected or they betray their constituency by not giving them what they promised, people will be much less likely to support them in the forthcoming elections. What is more, given their nature of challengers parties, if they behave as the mainstream actors (or, even worse, if they join a coalition government with a mainstream political actors), they are much more likely to pay an extra cost of failing in their performance, as they lose their purity and demonstrate to be essentially the same as the parties they are opposed to (see van Spanje, 2011, for a convincing evidence). In this scenario, the abstention may be a very likely outcome.

Another reason which may instill more confidence in mainstream parties relies upon the nature of the protest voting mechanism: as it has been claimed (van der Brug *et al.,* 2000; Kang, 2004), the protest voting is a way to express people's discontent in the traditional political parties, as well as an instrument to frighten and scarce the established political elite. Under such conditions, the desertion from mainstream parties in favor of anti-establishment actors may be conceived as a temporary act, as a way to signal the preferred party (the mainstream party) his/her discontent with its performance. If in the successive elections the preferred party is able to regain the faith of its/her supporter, he/she may be more prone to support it again; otherwise, he/she will still vote for a challenger contender, or switch to another (minor) mainstream political actor. In other words, through the protest voting, mainstream parties may be stimulated in improving their performance or making more credible electoral promises.

The latter reason is in line with the theoretical argument made by a relevant sector of the literature on political parties, which claims that anti-establishment parties are actually beneficial for the party system, as they me be a corrective for representative democracies and they embody the purest expression of 'representative democracy' (Mèny and Surel, 2002; Miller and Listhaug, 1990; Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2011). As it has been discussed in Chapter 4, anti-establishment parties may thus represent a model for the mainstream parties. Despite their anti-elite attitude, AEP promotes a higher degree of closeness between citizens and their elected representatives, which implies that the people are more involved in the decision process. They also have a higher potentiality in including in the political process those sectors of the society which are ignored by mainstream parties, at the same time as AEP have the capacity of giving excluded people voice in the national matters (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2011). In light of the above, mainstream parties may 'learn' by the anti-establishment actors, by competing with them with respect to the relationship between people and the elected representatives.

To summarize, the spiral of distrust may not represent the future of contemporary representative democracies, as there is still room of manoeuvre for mainstream parties to improve their performance and to regain people's trust in the traditional actors of political representation.

5.2 Limits and lines for future research

Obviously, this research is not exempt from caveat and limitations of the analyses proposed. Perhaps, one of the most relevant issue is related with the selection of the sample of the participants employed in the panel studies analyzed. As it has been discussed in the introduction and the following chapters, panel data have some important advantage over cross-sectional data (Hooghe and Dassoneville, 2016; Rooduijn *et al.*, 2016). However, they may also pose some methodological challenge, especially when they are not constructed using probability-based recruiting techniques (Callegaro *et al.*, 2014). Among them, it is worth mentioning the problem of coverage of the general population because of the fact that some individual still do not use Internet or even do not have any Internet connection. However, as far as the quality of data is concerned, Revilla *et al.* (2015) have assessed the quality of the estimates produced by the Netquest panel in Spain (which mostly base their recruitment strategy on the establishment of quotas)

showing how this tends to approximate that of other international face-to-face studies. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that the LISS panel data (the Dutch dataset that has been used in Chapter 4) drew a random sample from the population registers, including people without an Internet connection[14]. As it has been discussed in the specialized literature, this method constitutes one of the best strategies to deal with the problems related with panel data (Callegaro *et al.*, 2014; Revilla *et al.*, 2015).

Another limit of this dissertation may be related with the theoretical foundations that have been adopted throughout the thesis. In this regard, we should mention three important aspects. The first one concerns the definition of anti-establishment parties. As noted, in the literature there is no consensus about the definition of such party category. Shall we consider as challenger party only populist parties, or should we include into this category other political actors? How can we define 'populism'? If a challenger party gets the majority of the votes and joins (or even leads) a coalition government, shall we still consider it as a 'challenger party', or once in government he becomes part of the 'political establishment' he fought for at the previous campaign? Anti-elitism is only a feature of extreme parties, or also non-extreme parties may adopt an anti-establishment stance and challenge the political establishment? Depending on the goal of the research and the focus that the researcher adopted in the investigation, these issues have been addressed in different ways. As far as this work concerns, we adopted Abedi (2004) definitions of establishment and challenger parties. We modestly think it is the most appropriate to address the issues proposed throughout the dissertation and it has the advantage of covering the most important characteristics of challenger parties, but of course it is neither the only one nor the most common in the literature.

The second aspect is directly related with the former and it concerns the criteria utilized to classify AEP. As it has been discussed in the introduction, the definitional vagueness and the lack of consistency in the empirical research implied that the criteria adopted to select challenger parties are neither uniform nor accepted unanimously. In this regard, we relied upon the anti-elite salience variable, which has been included for the first time in the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey. For the best of our knowledge, no study has hitherto adopted this criterion to select challenger parties, and the survey is the only comparative

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[14] Further details about the methodology can be consulted at https://www.lissdata.nl/about-panel/sample-and-recruitment

study that included this variable (Polk *et al.*, 2017). It is true that this variable refers only to that specific moment when the survey has been conducted and it does not include all the political parties in all the countries (although the party coverage is quite extended, and it includes at least the most relevant actors in national party system). In a similar way, it is also true that this survey is based on the subjective opinion of experts in comparative politics and party systems. Although the high number of experts involved in the survey may reduce the bias produced by their subjectivity, this indicator may not gauge the same dimension as voters' opinion about the degree of anti-elitism of the main political parties, the anti-elitism in party manifestos or in their press conferences or speeches. Nevertheless, it has been demonstrated that the Chapel Hill expert survey produces results similar to other comparative datasets (Polk *et al.*, 2017) and, in the literature, there is no other comparative study which included among its variables the degree of anti-elitism of political parties. No survey (especially in a comparative setup) asked individuals their opinion about party degree of anti-elitism, and the only studies that have adopted a party-manifesto approach are either case studies or they are focused only on populism (see Rooduijn, de Lange and van der Brug, 2012). In other words, the 2014 Chapel Hill survey represents the only comparable measure of anti-elitism. Therefore, further efforts should be devoted in comparative politics to create a widely accepted criterion about the degree of anti-elitism of political parties, and future studies are strongly encouraged to adopt such criterion in their research in order to contribute to the accumulation of knowledge.

Another relevant limitation that may negatively affect the findings and the interpretation of the results is the time coverage of the empirical analyses conducted in this dissertation. While this issue represents a threat to the validity of the conclusion drawn in all the chapters, the timespan represents a serious caveat in the case of Chapter 4 (which addressed the impact of the previous voting behavior on the change in the levels of political distrust). As can be observed in Table 5, the timespan of the empirical analysis is quite heterogeneous, and it ranges between 4 years (as in the case of Germany, Norway and Netherlands) and 18 months (for the Spanish dataset). In other words, in the case of Spain (the United Kingdom may face a similar problem, as the timespan between the two waves is limited to 2 years), the time period is not long enough to known whether the changes in the levels of political distrust are settled or fleeting. A related issue concerns the association between the political attitude and the voting behaviour, as we cannot conclude whether distrust shifted shortly before an election, and then the AEP vote

occurred, and then the post-election measure of the political attitude took place. In light of the above, we should take the findings observed in the case of Spain and the United Kingdom with a grain of salt. Nevertheless, the results of the empirical analyses conducted in the two countries are in line with the ones observed in Germany, Norway and Netherlands. As for Spain and the UK, also in the three other countries the results hint at a spiral of distrust mechanism. Furthermore, in the case of Germany, Norway and Netherlands the time coverage is much more extended (4 years) and it is approximately the same as the timespan covered in other academic studies (see Hooghe and Dassoneville 2016; Rooduijn *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, despite the relatively short amount of time in Spain and the UK, the fact that in all the countries the conclusions point towards the same direction may reassure and strengthen the empirical results found in the two countries with a short-time interval.

Finally, the whole dissertation revolves around the relationship between distrust in the main actors of political representation and support for challenger parties. In light of that, the protest voting theory has been adopted as the main theoretical framework and it represents the starting point of all the three empirical chapters. While the association between the political attitude and the voting behavior is the key point of the present research, we should not disregard that other mechanisms may come into play when explaining both the increasing electoral success of challenger parties and the rising political distrust. In this sense, factors like the economy, individuals' socioeconomic status, ideological or policy considerations or even psychological traits may be as important as (or even more important) the role played by political trust. We sketch some of them out throughout the introduction and the empirical chapters, but they did not constitute the focus of the research and they have been conceived as moderating or indirect factors. Furthermore, we empirically confirmed the validity of the protest voting theory, but it should be mentioned that this theoretical framework has been the object of reviews and criticisms over the last decades, and it has not been unanimously accepted as the most relevant explanation (Alvarez *et al.*, 2018; Birch and Dennison, 2017; van der Brug, Fennema and Tillie, 2000). In a similar way, we only focused on distrust in political parties and politicians, which is a specific kind of trust among the more general political trust. In fact, as it has been extensively documented, political trust is a multidimensional concept made up by different elements, such as national parliament, the courts, the government, local authorities or supranational institutions (see Zmerli and van der Meer,

2017). In a similar way, there are other forms of trust that may play a role when explaining people' voting behavior (Uslaner, 2018). We should be aware of these elements when drawing conclusions from this research.

With this thesis we also open some interesting lines of research. First of all, more investigation is needed in relation to the nature of political trust, and especially its consequences on the political arena and how the political attitude influence people's voting behavior. In this respect, interesting contributions have been proposed in which both experiments and panel data have been used (Hameleers *et al.*, 2017; Hooghe and Dassoneville, 2016; Rooduijn *et al.* 2016). This is a fundamental line to be pursued in the research agenda, and probably one of the least analyzed. In particular, experimental designs are strongly encouraged to shed more light about the cognitive and psychological mechanisms that lead people to support challenger parties and to change their attitude when they are exposed to their messages. The latter issue is especially relevant in the more recent mass-media context, where the proliferation of fake news and the increasing role played by Internet in general and social network in particular are completely reshaping the way in which people are getting informed about the political issues. Recent experimental studies have convincingly proved the validity of the 'spiral of distrust' argument, by showing that anti-elite rhetoric of anti-establishment parties are likely to take root in their supporters, by increasing political distrust (Hameleers *et al.,* 2017; Rooduijn *et al.,* 2017). Nevertheless, these interesting findings are limited to a case study, which makes harder to generalize the findings. Therefore, comparative studies based on an experimental design are strongly encouraged to explain to what extent and under which conditions anti-elite messages have an impact on people's attitudes. In a similar way, future (experimental) studies should investigate much more deeply the role of the new mass-media (namely Internet and the social networks) as echo-chambers for the transmission and development of anti-elite messages.

Furthermore, future studies should also contemplate the impact of political distrust on other forms of political behavior (both conventional and not conventional). As we discussed in the whole dissertation, in the literature there is an abundant and well-documented evidence about the electoral consequences of political distrust (see Alvarez, Kiewet and Núñez, 2018 for a recent review). However, as we know very well, electoral behavior is just the tip of the iceberg of the more comprehensive political behavior (see

Anduiza and Bosch, 2004). There is some piece of research that addresses this issue (see Hooghe and Marien, 2013), but much more efforts are needed in this direction. Therefore, it would be extremely interesting to analyze the impact of political trust on both conventional and unconventional forms of political participation.

Another important question, which is still open, regards alternative explanations to both the factors behind the electoral success of challenger parties and the conditions under which people may change their opinion about political parties and the elected representatives. We have quickly referred to the fact that the political attitude and the voting behavior are multidimensional phenomena and, as such, they cannot be reduced to the relationship between two elements. However, we have not deeply addressed this issue, and the questions of to what extent people may change their political attitudes and under a large sector of the electorate desert mainstream parties in favor of challenger contenders are still open questions. While the association between political trust and voting for anti-establishment parties has been analyzed by adopting different approaches and relying on various types of data, the impact of other factors have not received the same attention in the literature. In light of that, much work needs to be done in this respect, as the future researches on political trust and its consequences may contemplate different mechanisms.

A final topic, which needs further investigation, is the establishment of an operational definition of challenger parties, which will favor the usage of a widely agreed set of criteria to select these parties. As we have seen, this is not as clear as it may seem, and it is a key point to be addressed. Depending on the definition and the criterion adopted, the same party has been included in one study and excluded in another, which entails the lack of consistency in the literature, especially regarding the empirical findings. In this sense, existing comparative datasets on political parties (such as the Comparative Manifesto Project, Parlgov or the Chapel Hill Expert Survey) should incorporate in their surveys a measure of anti-elitism of political parties, as in the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Surveys. In particular, major efforts should be made by the Comparative Manifesto Project team (one of the most used and cited datasets on political parties) to include such dimension in the forthcoming updates of their dataset. Once solved this problem, all the studies will presumably converge towards the same direction.

To conclude, future studies should consider the possibility of using the more refined methodological tools available for analyzing the relationship between distrust in the main

actors of political representation (political parties and politicians) and voting for challenger anti-establishment parties, with the aim of increasing the robustness of the empirical evidence. Without more attention on this aspect it might be hard to advance the research agenda on political attitude and voting behavior. Despite all possible limitations, criticisms and caveats, this thesis might be considered as a first step towards a better comprehension of such a relevant association.

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APPENDIX A2: CHAPTER 2

Table 10: Descriptive statistics of Chapter 2

	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	N
Dependent variable					
Vote for mainstream parties / challenger right	0.135		0	1	144,398
Vote for mainstream parties / challenger left	0.098		0	1	138,684
Covariates					
Distrust in the actors of political representation	6.50	2.29	0	10	282,394
Satisfaction with the economy	4.49	2.50	0	10	280,681
Weighted Economic Performance Index	92.26	4.48	73.33	100.185	94
Attitudes towards redistribution	2.12	1.03	1	5	281,415
Anti-immigrant attitudes	4.90	2.14	0	10	282,146
Educational level	1.98	0.74	1	3	284,758
Gender	0.53		0	1	286,062
Age of respondent (categories)	2.96	0.80	1	4	286,190
Trade union membership	.42		0	1	282,772
Occupation	5.43	2.65	1	9	278,811
Income difficulties	2.03	0.86	1	4	283,819
Area of residence	.37		0	1	285,546
Distance from the election (months)	25.70	14.31	0	67	283,792
Wave	4.95	1.96	2	8	7
Country	13.74	7.63	1	26	26

Appendix A2: Description of the dependent variable and the covariates

Party voted in the latest general election: "Which party did you vote for in the latest general election in [Month/Year]?" The original categories have been recoded according to the list in Table 11 in the Appendix A2.

Distrust in the actors of political representation: Additive scale created from the average of trust in political parties and trust in politicians. "Please tell me on a score of 0-10 how much you personally trust each of the institutions I read out. 0 means you do not trust an institution at all, and 10 means you have

complete trust". (A) Politicians; (B) Political parties. The scale has been reverted. (0) Complete trust; (10) No trust at all.

Attitudes towards redistribution: "Using this card, please say to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. The government should take measures to reduce differences in income levels" (0) Agree strongly; (5) Disagree strongly.

Satisfaction with the state of the economy: "On the whole how satisfied are you with the present state of the economy in [COUNTRY]?" (0) Extremely dissatisfied; (10) Extremely satisfied.

Anti-immigrants attitudes: An additive scale has been created from the average of three different questions on the attitudes towards immigrants: (A) "Would you say it is generally bad or good for [COUNTRY]'s economy that people come to live here from other countries?" (0) Bad for the economy; (10) Good for the economy. (B) "And, would you say that [COUNTRY]'s cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?" (0) Cultural life undermined; (10) Cultural life enriched; (C) "Is [COUNTRY] made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries?" (0) Worse place to live; (10) Better place to live. The scale has been reverted. (0) Tolerant attitudes towards immigrants; (10) Anti-immigrant attitudes.

Economic performance index: Synthetic index gauging the overall state of the country economic conditions. The measure is formed by the main macroeconomic indicators: GDP growth; unemployment rate; inflation rate and deficit/surplus. The formula is as follow:

$$EPI= 100- W_{Inf} (abs) Infl-Infl^* - W_{Unem} (Unem – Unem^*) – W_{Def} (Def-Def^*) + W_{Grow} (Grow-Grow^*),$$

where the term W_i represents a weight for each indicator that is computed by dividing the average of the standard deviations of the four indicators by the standard deviation of each indicator. The terms indicated with an asterisk are the desired levels of inflation, GDP, unemployment and deficit. The higher the index, the better the country economic performance.

Educational level: "What is the highest level of education you have successfully completed?" Recoded into (1) Low education; (2) Medium education; (3) High education.

Gender: (0) Male; (1) Female.

Age: Age of respondent. The continuous variable has been recoded into the following categories: (1) From 18 to 23 years old; (2) From 24 to 30; (3) From 31 to 64; (4) 65 years old and older.

Area of residence: Which phrase on this card best describes the area where you live? (1) A big city; (2) The suburbs or outskirts of a big city; (3) A town or a small city; (4) A country village; (5) A farm or home in the countryside. The original variable has been recoded as follows: (1-3) =0 Urban; (4-5) =1 Rural.

Income difficulties: Which of the descriptions on this card comes closest to how you feel about your household's income nowadays? (1) Living comfortably on present income; (2) Coping on present income; (3) Finding it difficult on present income; (4) Finding it very difficult on present income.

Trade union membership: "Are you or have you ever been a member of a trade union or similar organization? IF YES, is that currently or previously?" (1) Yes, currently; (2) Yes, previously; (3) No. The original variable has been recoded as follows: (3) =0 No; (1-2) = 1 Yes.

Class scheme / Occupation: An adaptation of the classic Goldthorpe class scheme has been created by using the Oesch' scripts for social class[15]. The following questions have been used. (A) "Using this card, which one of these descriptions best describes your situation (in the last 7 days)? Please select only one" (1) In paid work; (2) In education; (3) Unemployed and actively looking for job; (4) Unemployed, wanting a job but not actively looking for a job; (5) Permanently sick or disabled; (6) Retired; (8) Doing housework, looking after children or other persons; (9) Other; (B) In your main job are/were you" (1) An employee; (2) Self-employed; (3) Working for your own family's business; (C) "In your main job, How many people are you responsible for?"; (D) "What is the name or title of your main job? In your main job, what kind of work do you do most of the time?" The categories created are the following: (1) Higher grade service class; (2) Lower-grade service class"; (3) Small business owners; (4) Skilled workers; (5) Unskilled workers; (6) Student; (7) Unemployed; (8) Retired/disabled; (9) Housework/other.

Distance from the election (measured in months): Difference (in months) between the date of end of the interview and the date of the most prior national election (Source: Parlgov).

Wave: Dummy variable for the ESS wave.

Country: Dummy variables for the countries. (1) Austria; (2) Belgium; (3) Bulgaria; (4) Cyprus; (5) Czech Republic; (6) Denmark; (7) Estonia; (8) Finland; (9) France: (10) Germany; (11) Greece; (12) Hungary; (13) Iceland; (14) Ireland; (15) Italy; (16) Lithuania; (17) Netherlands; (18) Norway; (19) Poland; (20) Slovakia; (21) Slovenia; (22) Spain; (23) Sweden; 24 (Switzerland); 26 (United Kingdom).

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[15] Further information may be found at the Oesch' webpage: http://people.unil.ch/danieloesch/scripts/

Table 11: List, classification, Left/Right position and anti-elite salience of the parties included in the empirical analysis of Chapter 2

Country	Party	Name	L/R	Anti-elite	Category
Austria	OVP	Austrian People's Party	6	1.6	Mainstream Right
	NEOS	The New Austria	6	5.9	
	SPO	Austrian Social Democratic Party	3.9	2.3	Mainstream Left
	LIF	Liberal Forum	4.9	3.1	
	GRUNE	Austrian Green Party	3	4.8	
	FPO	Austrian Freedom Party	8.7	8	Anti-establishment Right
	BZO	Alliance for the Future of Austria	7.8	6.8	
	TS	Team Stronach for Austria	7.6	7.9	
	KPO	Austrian Communist Party	0.9	8	Anti-establishment Left
Belgium	CVP	Flemish Christian People's Party	5.9	2	Mainstream Right
	VLD	Open Flemish Liberals and Democrats	7	1.6	
	CD&V	Christian Democratic and Flemish	5.4	2	
	cdH	Humanist Democratic Centre	4.4	2	
	CSP	Christian Social SociParty	6.2	2	
	N-VA	New Flemish Alliance	7.8	5.9	
	MR	Reformist Movement	7	1.6	
	FDF	Francophone Democratic Federalists	5.6	4.6	
	PS	Socialist Party	2.6	2.6	Mainstream Left
	SPA	Socialist Party Different	3	2.6	
	ECOLO	Ecolo	2.20	3	
	Groen	Green	2.2	3	
	VB	Flemish Interest	9.1	9	Anti-establishment Right
	FN	Front National	9.7	8.9	
	LDD	List Dedecker*			
	DLB	Belgian, Rise Up	8.7	8	
	PP	People's Party	7.7	6.5	
	PVDA	Workers' Party of Belgium	0.4	8.3	Anti-establishment Left
Bulgaria	DSB	Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria	7.5	4.5	Mainstream Right
	SDS	Union of Democratic Forces	7.1	4.5	
	BNS	Bulgarian	5.8	3	

	DBG	People's Union Union Bulgaria for Citizens Movement	6.1	4.7	
	ODS	United Democratic Forces	7	3.5	
	BSP	Left Bulgaria	3.6	4	Mainstream Left
	DPS	Movement for Rights and Freedom	4.6	4	
	KzB	Coalition for Bulgaria	2.9	4.3	
	NDSV	National* Movement Simeon the Second			Anti-establishment Right
	ATAKA	Attack	5.3	9.4	
	GERB	Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria	6.5	6	
	RZS	Law, Order And Justice	8.7	7	
	VMRO	Bulgarian National Movement	6	8.8	
	NFSB	National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria	6.8	8.3	
	BBT	Bulgaria Without Censorship	6	8.8	
	ABV	Alternative for Bulgaria Revival	3.4	6.1	Anti-establishment Left
Cyprus	DIKO	Democratic Party	6	3.5	Mainstream Right
	DISY	Democratic Rally	7.5	3.5	
	EVROKO	European Party	8.6	4.5	
	ED	United Democrats	7.1	4	
	EDEK	Movement for Social Democracy	4.7	4.5	Mainstream Left
	ELAM	National Popular Front	8.7	7.3	Anti-establishment Right
	KINHMA	Solidarity Movement	8.7	7	
	NO	New Horizons	9.3	7.2	
	ADK	Fighting Democratic Movement	8	8	
	AKEL	Progressive Party of Working People	2	6.5	Anti-establishment Left
	KOP	Ecological and	4.2	7.5	

		Environmental Movement			
Czech Republic	ODS	Civic Democratic Party	8	2.1	Mainstream Right
	KDU	Christian Democratic Union	5.9	2.4	
	ODA	Civic Democratic Alliance	7.1	2	
	TOP09	Top 09	7.2	1.9	
	CSSD	Czech Social Democratic Party	3.1	1.5	Mainstream Left
	VV	Public* Affairs			Anti-establishment Right
	ANO	Action of Dissatisfied Citizens	5.7	7.7	
	USVIT	Dawn of Direct Democracy	7.7	9.4	
	SVOBODNI	Party of Free Citizens	8.7	7	
	PB	Right Bloc	9	8	
	DSSS	Workers' Party of Social Justice	8.7	7.9	
	KSCM	Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia	1	6.1	Anti-establishment Left
	SZ	Green Party	3.8	5.8	
Denmark	V	Liberal Party of Denmark	7	2.8	Mainstream Right
	KF	Conservative People's Party	7	2.5	
	CD	Centre Democrats	5.6	2	
	KrF	Christian People's Party	5.7	2.2	
	LA	Liberal Alliance	7.9	3.1	
	RV	Danish Social Liberal Party	5.7	1.1	
	SD	Social Democrats	4.4	2.8	Mainstream Left
	DF	Danish People's Party	6.9	6.9	Anti-establishment Right
	FrP	Progress Party	9	7.4	
	EL	Red Green Alliance	1.2	6.1	Anti-establishment Left
	SF	Socialist People's Party	2.9	6.1	
Estonia	IRL	Pro Patria and Res Publica Union	7.7	1.6	Mainstream Right
	ER	Estonian Reform Party	7.2	1	
	I	Pro Patria Union	7.6	2	

	EKD	Estonian Christian Democrats	7.6	1.4	
	SDE	Social Democratic Party	4.8	3.2	Mainstream Left
	EK	Estonian Center Party	4.2	4.7	
	ErA	People's Union Of Estonia	4.6	3	
	EVE	Estonian Free Party	7.3	8.3	Anti-establishment Right
	ERP	Party Res* Public			
	EER	Estonian Greens	4.7	7.5	Anti-establishment Left
	EVP	Estonian Left Party	1.2	8	
Finland	KOK	National Coalition Party	7.6	0.8	Mainstream Right
	RKP	Swedish People's Party	7.4	1.1	
	VL	Liberal Party of Finland	6	1.3	
	KD	Christian Democrats	6.2	2.2	
	KESK	Finnish Center Party	5.5	3.75	
	SDP	Social Democratic Party of Finland	4	2.6	Mainstream Left
	VIHR	Green League	4.4	4.2	
	PS	True Finns	5.1	9.1	Anti-establishment Right
	VAS	Left Alliance	1.8	6.2	Anti-establishment Left
	SKP	The Communist Workers' Party Of Finland	1	7	
France	IR-DL	Independent Republicans	7.2	3	Mainstream Right
	RPF	Rally for France	7.4	2	
	UPM	Union for Popular Movement	7.6	3	
	UDF	Union for French Democracy	6.1	2	
	NC	New Center	6.2	2.8	
	PRV	Radical Party	6.1	3.5	
	MODEM	Democratic Movement	6	5.3	
	AC	Centrist Alliance	6.5	2.8	
	PS	Socialist Party	3.8	3.2	Mainstream Left
	PRG	Radical Party of the Left	3.8	3.7	
	EELV	Europe Ecology-the Greens	3	5.3	
	FN	National Front	9.6	9.5	Anti-establishment Right
	MPF	Movement for France	9.1	7.3	
	PCF	French Communist Party	1.7	6.6	Anti-establishment Left

	PG	Left Party	1.7	9	
	Ensemble	Together	2.5	7.5	
	LCR	Communist Revolutionary League	1	8	
	LO	Workers' Struggle	0.8	7.1	
	FdG	Left Front	2	7	
Germany	CDU	Christian Democratic Union of Germany	5.9	0.8	Mainstream Right
	CSU	Christian Social Union of Bavaria	7.2	2	
	FDP	Free Democratic Party	6.5	0.9	
	SPD	Social Democratic Party of Germany	3.7	1.3	Mainstream Left
	Grunen	The Greens	3.6	2	
	Rep	The Republicans	9.3	9	Anti-establishment Right
	NPD	National Democratic Party of Germany	10	9.1	
	AfD	Alternative for Germany	8.9	7.7	
	Linke	The Left	1.2	6.4	Anti-establishment Left
Greece	ND	New Democracy	7.2	2.3	Mainstream Right
	PASOK	Panhellenic Socialist Movement	4.7	2.7	Mainstream Left
	Potami	The River	4.8	5.3	
	DIMAR	Democratic Left	3.2	4.3	
	ANEL	Independent Greeks	8.7	9.2	Anti-establishment Right
	LAOS	Popular Orthodox Rally	8.6	9	
	XA	Golden Dawn	9.8	10	
	SYRIZA	Coalition of the Radical Left	2	8.5	Anti-establishment Left
	KKE	Communist Party of Greece	0.6	9.7	
Hungary	FKgP	Independent Small Holders Party	8	4.1	Mainstream Right
	MDF	Hungarian Democratic Forum	6.5	2	
	KDNP	Christian Democratic People's Party	7.4	3	
	MSZP	Hungarian Socialist Party	3.2	3.5	Mainstream Left
	E14	Together 2014	3.6	5.2	
	DK	Democratic Coalition	3.3	4.5	
	Fidesz	Hungarian Civic* Union			Anti-establishment Right
	Jobbik	Movement for a	9.7	9	

	MIEP	Better Hungary Hungarian Justice and Life Party	9	8	
	LMP	Politics Can Be Different	4.3	7.4	Anti-establishment Left
	MMP	Hungarian Workers' Party	0.6	9	
Iceland**	F	Progressive Party	5.1		Mainstream Right
	FF	Liberal Party	6		
	Sj	Independence Party	7.5		
	V	Revival	7.4		
	Sam	Social Democratic Alliance	4.1		Mainstream Left
	A	Social Democratic Party	4.4		
	BF	Bright Future*	6		Anti-establishment Right
	FIF	People's Party	1.2		Anti-establishment Left
Ireland	FF	Soldiers of Destiny	5.8	1.3	Mainstream Right
	FG	Family of the Irish	6.6	1.1	
	PD	Progressive Democrats	7.8	2	
	Lab	Labour	4.1	1.5	Mainstream Left
	GP	Green Party	3.7	5	
	SF	We Ourselves	2.1	8.1	Anti-establishment Left
	SP	Socialist Party	0.8	8.8	
	PBPA	People Before Profit Alliance	0.7	9.2	
	DLP	Democratic Left	1.2	7	
Italy	AN	National Alliance	8.1	4	Mainstream Right
	UDC	Union of the Centre	5.2	1.5	
	DE	European Democracy	6.2	2	
	SC	Civic Choice	5.4	1	
	NCD	New Centre-Right	6.1	2.2	
	CD	Democratic Centre	5	3.3	
	PD	Democratic Party	3.5	4.4	Mainstream Left
	DS	Democratic Left	2.6	2	
	Margherita	Daisy	4	3	
	LN	Northern League	8.8	8.8	Anti-establishment Right
	FI*	Forward Italy	6.7		
	FdI	Brothers of Italy	7.8	6.2	
	MS-FT	Social Movement	9.8	9	
	PdCI	Party of Italian Communists	1	8	Anti-establishment Left
	RC	Communist Refoundation Party	0.3	9.3	

	SEL	Left Ecology Freedom	1.2	6.8	
	RC	Civic Revolution	1.2	8	
	M5S	Five Star Movement	4.6	10	
Lithuania	TS-LKD	Homeland Union	7.6	2	Mainstream Right
	PDP	Civic Democratic Party	6	3	
	TPP	National Resurrection Party	6	1.8	
	LRLS	Liberal Movement	7.3	1.5	
	LicS	Liberal and Centre Union	7.8	2	
	KKSS	Christian Conservative Social Union	6.2	3	
	LSDP	Social Democratic Party of Lithuania	3.2	1.8	Mainstream Left
	NS	New Union	4.3	2	
	TT	Order and Justice	6.6	7.5	Anti-establishment Right
	JL	Young Lithuania	9.8	8	
	LLRA	Electoral Action of Lithuania's Poles	5.4	6.2	
	DK	The Way of Courage	6.8	9.4	
	LVZS	Lithuanian Peasant and Greens Union	3.8	6.2	Anti-establishment Left
	DP	Labour Party	4.4	6.2	
	SPF	Party Frontas	4	6.6	
Netherlands	CDA	Christian Democratic Appeal	6.7	1.4	Mainstream Right
	VVD	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy	7.8	1.7	
	CU	Christian Union	5.4	2.1	
	SGP	Political Reformed Party	8.1	1.1	
	50+	50 Plus	5.2	5.8	
	D66	Democrats 66	5.5	1.4	
	PvdA	Labour Party	3.6	1.2	Mainstream Left
	PvdD	Party for the Animals	2.8	5	
	GL	Green Left	2.3	1.7	
	LPF	List Pim Fortuyn*			Anti-establishment Right
	PVV	Party for Freedom	9.2	9.4	
	LNN	Livable Netherlands	8	8.4	
	SP	Socialist Party	1	6.5	Anti-establishment Left
Norway	V	Liberal Party	6.5	3.6	Mainstream Right
	KrF	Christian Democratic Party	5.7	3.6	
	H	Conservative	7.2	2	

		Party			
	KP	Coastal Party	7.4	3	
	AP	Labour Party	3.5	2	Mainstream Left
	SP	Centre Party	4.5	4.6	
	FrP	Progress Party	8.2	6.6	Anti-establishment Right
	SV	Socialist Left Party	1.7	6.3	Anti-establishment Left
	MDG	Green Party	2.5	7	
	RV	Red electoral Alliance	0.4	8	
Poland	PO	Civic Platform	5.7	1.4	Mainstream Right
	AWS	Solidarity Electoral Action	7.1	3	
	DWU	Democratic, Freedom, Union	5.2	2	
	PSL	Polish People's Party	5.2	2.4	
	N	Modern Poland	6	3	
	SLD	Democratic Left Alliance	2.7	2.8	Mainstream Left
	SDPL	Social Democracy of Poland	3	3	
	RP	Your Movement	2.5	5.4	
	PiS	Law and Justice	7.9	7.4	Anti-establishment Right
	LPR	League of Polish Families	8.9	7	
	KNP	Congress of the New Right	9.5	9.4	
	PR	Poland Together	7.6	6.3	
	SP	United Poland	8.3	7.7	
	SRP	Self-Defense of the Republic of Poland	4	6.5	Anti-establishment Left
Portugal	PP	People's Party	8	0.6	Mainstream Right
	PSD	Social Democratic Party	6.6	0.5	
	PS	Socialist Party	4.5	2	Mainstream Left
	MPT	Earth Party	6.7	8	Anti-establishment Right
	PCTP	Communist Party of the Portuguese Workers	1.2	7	Anti-establishment Left
	PCP	Portuguese Communist Party	2.2	8	
	CDU	Democratic Unitarian Coalition	0.5	7.5	
	BE	Left Bloc	1.3	7.5	
Slovakia	SDKU	Slovak Democratic and Christian Union	6.8	3.4	Mainstream Right
	SMK	Party of the Hungarian Coalition	6.7	4	
	KDH	Christian Democratic Movement	6.9	3.7	
	NOVA	New Majority	7	5.5	
	Siet	Net/Network	7	5.7	

	ANO	Alliance of New Citizens	7.2	3	
	MH	Bridge	6.2	3.5	
	SaS	Freedom and Solidarity	7.2	5.6	
	Smer	Direction (2010-2016)	3.6	3.7	Mainstream Left
	SNS	Slovak National Party	8.3	7	Anti-establishment Right
	OLaNO	Ordinary People and Independent Personalities	6.5	8.5	
	SMER	Direction (2002-2006)*			Anti-establishment Left
	HZDS	Movement for A Democratic Slovakia*			
	KSS	Communist Party of Slovakia	0.5	8	
Slovenia	SDS	Slovenian Democratic Party	8.7	5.6	Mainstream Right
	NSI	New Slovenia	7.8	5.8	
	SLS	Slovenian People's Party	6.4	5	
	SMC	Party of Miro Cerar	5.2	4.7	
	SD	Social Democrats	3.1	4.1	Mainstream Left
	DeSUS	Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia	4.1	4.5	
	PS	Positive Slovenia	3.3	4.6	
	ZaAB	Alliance of Alenka Bratusek	4.1	4.2	
	SNP	Slovene National Party*			Anti-establishment Right
	ZL	United Left	1	6.7	Anti-establishment Left
Spain	PP	People's Party	7.3	1.4	Mainstream Right
	CiU	Convergence and Union	6.1	1.9	
	PNV	Basque Nationalist Party	6.3	1.9	
	UPyD	Union Progress and Democracy	5.6	5.7	
	CDC	Democratic Convergence of Catalonia	7.4	5	
	PSOE	Spanish Socialist Workers' Party	3.8	3	Mainstream Left
	ICV	Initiative for Catalonia Greens	2.1	5	
	C's	Citizens	5.5	6.3	Anti-establishment Right
	IU	United Left	2	6	Anti-establishment Left
	Podemos	We Can	1.6	10	
Sweden	C	Center Party	7.2	2	Mainstream Right
	FP	Liberal People's Party	7	1.9	
	KD	Christian Democrats	7.4	2.1	

	M	Moderate Party	7.4	1.7	
	SAP	Swedish Social Democratic Party	3.7	1.9	Mainstream Left
	MP	The Greens	3.2	3.5	
	SD	Sweden Democrats	7.7	8.9	Anti-establishment Right
	V	Left Party	1.7	6.3	Anti-establishment Left
Switzerland	FDP	The Liberals	6.8	2.8	Mainstream Right
	LPS	Liberal Party Of Switzerland	7.3	3	
	BDP	Conservative Democratic Party	6.2	3	
	CVP	Christian Democratic People's Party	5.5	3	
	GLP	Green Liberal Party	5.2	3.3	
	EVP	Evangelical People's Party	5.2	3.6	
	GPS	Green Party	1.8	3.2	Mainstream Left
	CSP	Christian Social Party	4.1	2.7	
	SP	Social Democratic Swiss Party	2.1	3.2	
	SVP	Swiss People's Party	8.2	8.3	Anti-establishment Right
	NA-SD	National Action Swiss Democrats	9.4	7	
	EDU	Federal Democratic Union	8.5	6.2	
	LdT	Ticino League	7.5	7	
	PdA	Swiss Party of Labour	0.5	8	Anti-establishment Left
	AL	Alternative Left	1.2	7	
UK	CONS	Conservative Party	7	2.1	Mainstream Right
	UUP	Ulster Unionist Party	8.3	3	
	DUP	Democratic Unionist Party	7.4	2.6	
	LAB	Labour Party	3.5	4	Mainstream Left
	LIBDEM	Liberal Democratic Party	4.8	3.1	
	UKIP	United Kingdom Independence Party	9.1	9.2	Anti-establishment Right
	SNP	Scottish National Party	3	7.3	Anti-establishment Left
	PLAID	Party of Wales	3.2	6.5	
	GREEN	Green Party	1.8	7.6	

Source: 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Polk *et al.* 2017)
*Challenger party according to Van Kessel (2015)
** The information about Icelandic parties has not been collected by the CHES dataset. For Iceland, it has been used the party family classification provided by the Parlgov dataset.

Table 12: Coding of the most prior election covered by the European Social Survey

Country	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Austria	2002	2006	2008	2008		2013	2013
Belgium	2003	2003	2007	2010	2010	2014	2014
Bulgaria		2005	2005	2009	2009		
Cyprus		2006	2006	2006	2011		
Czech Republic	2002		2006	2010	2010	2013	2013
Denmark	2001	2005	2007	2007	2011	2011	
Estonia	2003	2003	2007	2007	2011	2011	2015
Finland	2003	2003	2007	2007	2011	2011	2015
France	2002	2002	2007	2007	2012	2012	2012
Germany	2002	2005	2005	2009	2009	2013	2013
Greece	2004		2007	2009			
Hungary	2002	2006	2006	2010	2010	2014	2014
Iceland	2003				2009		2013
Ireland	2002	2002	2007	2011	2011	2011	2016
Italy	2001				2013		2013
Latvia	1993	1995	1998	2002	2006	2010	2011
Lithuania			2008	2008	2012	2012	2016
Netherlands	2003	2003	2006	2010	2012	2012	2012
Norway	2001	2005	2005	2009	2009	2013	2013
Poland	2001	2005	2007	2007	2011	2011	2015
Portugal	2002	2005	2005	2009	2011	2011	2015
Slovakia	2002	2006	2006	2010	2012		
Slovenia	2004	2004	2008	2008	2011	2014	2014
Spain	2004	2004	2008	2008	2011	2011	2016
Sweden	2002	2006	2006	2010	2010	2014	2014
Switzerland	2003	2003	2007	2007	2011	2011	2015
United Kingdom	2001	2005	2005	2010	2010	2015	2015

Source: Own elaboration based on the ESS questionnaires and the Parlgov data. Missing cases mean that the country did not participate at the survey.

Table 13: Explaining the voting for right-wing anti-establishment parties

Covariates	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV
Satisfaction with the economy	-0.023***	-0.023***	-0.023***	-0.023***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Political distrust	0.088***	0.088***	0.088***	0.089***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Anti-immigrant attitudes	0.239***	0.239***	0.239***	0.239***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Attitudes towards redistribution	0.022*	0.022*	0.022*	0.022*
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.010)
Income difficulty	0.036*	0.036*	0.036*	0.036*
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)
From 18 to 24 years old (ref.)				
From 25 to 30 years old	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009
	(0.059)	(0.059)	(0.059)	(0.059)
From 31 to 64 years old	-0.239***	-0.238***	-0.237***	-0.237***
	(0.054)	(0.054)	(0.054)	(0.054)
65 and older	-0.586***	-0.586***	-0.586***	-0.586***
	(0.063)	(0.063)	(0.063)	(0.063)
Gender (ref.male)	-0.271***	-0.271***	-0.271***	-0.271***
	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.020)
Low education (ref.)				
Middle education	-0.024	-0.024	-0.024	-0.024
	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.027)
High education	-0.376***	-0.376***	-0.376***	-0.376***
	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)
Trade union membership	-0.104***	-0.104***	-0.104***	-0.104***
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)

Area of living (urban area ref.)	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)
Higher-grade service class (ref.)				
Lower-grade service class	0.166***	0.166***	0.166***	0.166***
	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.046)
Small business owners	0.329***	0.329***	0.329***	0.329***
	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.052)
Skilled workers	0.504***	0.504***	0.504***	0.504***
	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.045)
Unskilled workers	0.539***	0.539***	0.539***	0.539***
	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.052)
Student	0.091	0.211**	0.211**	0.211**
	(0.074)	(0.070)	(0.070)	(0.070)
Unemployed	0.383***	0.383***	0.384***	0.384***
	(0.061)	(0.061)	(0.061)	(0.061)
Retired/disabled	0.266***	0.266***	0.266***	0.266***
	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.048)
Housework	0.338***	0.338***	0.338***	0.338***
	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.053)
Distance from the election	-0.006**	-0.006**	-0.006**	-0.005*
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
GDP	0.017			
	(0.082)			
Unemployment		0.024		
		(0.073)		
Deficit/Surplus			0.081	
			(0.076)	
Inflation				-0.156
				(0.099)
Constant	-4.044***	-4.129***	-3.872***	-3.649***
	(0.705)	(0.772)	(0.695)	(0.721)
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wave fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of individuals	132,835	132,835	132,835	132,835
Number of elections	94	94	94	94
Variance components				
Elections	0.607**	0.608**	0.586**	0.586**
	(0.194)	(0.194)	(0.195)	(0.193)
Log likelihood	-33,517.60	-39,557.55	-35,577.40	-31,367.73

Estimation is via maximum likelihood. Standard error in parentheses. The levels of significance are *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table 14: Explaining the voting for left-wing anti-establishment parties

Covariates	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV
Satisfaction with the economy	-0.113***	-0.113***	-0.113***	-0.113***
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Political distrust	0.060***	0.060***	0.060***	0.060***
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Anti-immigrant attitudes	-0.086***	-0.086***	-0.086***	-0.086***
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Attitudes towards redistribution	-0.482***	-0.482***	-0.482***	-0.482***
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Income difficulty	0.209***	0.209***	0.209***	0.209***
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)
From 18 to 24 years old (ref.)				
From 25 to 30 years old	-0.204**	-0.204**	-0.204**	-0.204**
	(0.063)	(0.063)	(0.063)	(0.063)
From 31 to 64 years old	-0.433***	-0.433***	-0.433***	-0.433***
	(0.059)	(0.059)	(0.059)	(0.059)
65 and older	-0.859***	-0.859***	-0.859***	-0.859***
	(0.069)	(0.069)	(0.069)	(0.069)
Gender (ref.male)	-0.135***	-0.135***	-0.135***	-0.135***
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)
Low education (ref.)				

Middle education	-0.072*	-0.072*	-0.072*	-0.072*
	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.030)
High education	0.315***	0.318***	0.314***	0.313***
	(0.040)	(0.042)	(0.041)	(0.044)
Trade union membership	0.373***	0.373***	0.373***	0.373***
	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.024)
Area of living (urban area ref.)	-0.174***	-0.175***	-0.175***	-0.175***
	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.023)
Higher-grade service class (ref.)				
Lower-grade service class	-0.013	-0.013	-0.014	-0.013
	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.044)
Small business owners	-0.155**	-0.155**	-0.155**	-0.155**
	(0.058)	(0.058)	(0.058)	(0.058)
Skilled workers	-0.011	-0.011	-0.011	-0.011
	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.045)
Unskilled workers	0.156**	0.156**	0.156**	0.156**
	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.053)
Student	0.211**	0.211**	0.211**	0.211**
	(0.070)	(0.070)	(0.070)	(0.071)
Unemployed	0.363***	0.363***	0.363***	0.363***
	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.056)	(0.056)
Retired/disabled	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.072
	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.048)
Housework	-0.058	-0.058	-0.058	-0.058
	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.053)
Distance from the election	-0.002	-0.001	-0.002	-0.002
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
GDP	0.109			
	(0.057)			
Unemployment		0.088*		
		(0.041)		
Deficit/Surplus			-0.013	
			(0.040)	
Inflation				0.003
				(0.071)
Constant	-4.632***	-4.815***	-4.461***	-4.449***
	(0.485)	(0.495)	(0.483)	(0.516)
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wave fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of individuals	127,472	127,472	127,472	127,472
Number of elections	94	94	94	94
Variance components				
Elections	-0.408*	-0.474*	-0.378	-0.376
	(0.206)	(0.209)	(0.205)	(0.206)
Log likelihood	-36,517.50	-38,557.57	-34,577.43	-31,377.43

Estimation is via maximum likelihood. Standard error in parentheses. The levels of significance are *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table 15: Explaining the voting for anti-establishment parties (interaction distrust##post-2008 dummy)

Covariates	Model I: AEP right	Model II: AEP left
Satisfaction with the economy	-0.025***	-0.112***
	(0.005)	(0.006)
Political distrust	0.056***	0.041***
	(0.097)	(0.010)
Post-2008	0.138*	0.209*
	(0.068)	(0.090)
Political distrust##Post-2008	0.024**	0.045***
	(0.008)	(0.010)
Anti-immigrant attitudes	0.239***	-0.086***
	(0.005)	(0.006)
Attitudes towards redistribution	0.023*	-0.482***
	(0.010)	(0.012)
Income difficulty	0.035*	0.209***
	(0.015)	(0.015)

From 18 to 24 years old (ref.)			
From 25 to 30 years old	-0.074		-0.205**
	(0.045)		(0.063)
From 31 to 64 years old	-0.315***		-0.434***
	(0.041)		(0.059)
65 and older	-0.697***		-0.859***
	(0.048)		(0.069)
Gender (ref.male)	-0.209***		-0.134***
	(0.015)		(0.022)
Low education (ref.)			
Middle education	-0.021		-0.072*
	(0.021)		(0.03)
High education	-0.376***		0.059
	(0.035)		(0.034)
Trade union membership	-0.104***		0.373***
	(0.022)		(0.024)
Area of living (urban area ref.)	0.026		-0.175***
	(0.021)		(0.023)
Higher-grade service class (ref.)			
Lower-grade service class	0.163***		-0.013
	(0.046)		(0.044)
Small business owners	0.329***		-0.154**
	(0.052)		(0.058)
Skilled workers	0.504***		-0.010
	(0.045)		(0.045)
Unskilled workers	0.539***		0.157**
	(0.052)		(0.053)
Student	0.088		0.209**
	(0.074)		(0.070)
Unemployed	0.386***		0.361***
	(0.061)		(0.056)
Retired/disabled	0.270***		0.073
	(0.048)		(0.048)
Housework	0.333***		-0.057
	(0.053)		(0.053)
Distance from the election (months)	-0.001		0.001
	(0.001)		(0.001)
Economic Performance Index	0.021		0.013
	(0.028)		(0.033)
Constant	-4.569		-5.451
	(2.677)		(3.122)
Country fixed effects	Yes		Yes
Number of individuals	132,835		127,472
Number of elections	94		94
Variance components			
Elections	-0.516**		-0.383
	(0.162)		(0.200)
Log likelihood	-34,517.53		-34,489.60

Estimation is via maximum likelihood. Standard error in parentheses. The levels of significance are
*$p<0.05$; **$p<0.01$; ***$p<0.001$

*Table 16: Explaining the voting for anti-establishment parties (controlling for the proportionality of the electoral system)*

	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV
	AEP	AEP	AEP	AEP
	right	right [interaction]	left	left [interaction]
Level 1 variables				
Political distrust	0.084***	0.408***	0.0550***	0.09***

	(0.003)	(0.094)	(0.004)	(0.006)
Satisfaction with the economy	-0.019***	-0.019***	-0.108***	-0.107***
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.007)
Anti-immigrant attitudes	0.250***	0.255***	-0.076***	-0.077***
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Attitudes towards redistribution	0.019*	0.019*	-0.470***	-0.470***
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.013)	(0.013)
Income difficulty	0.034*	0.033*	0.205***	0.204***
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.014)	(0.014)
From 18 to 24 years old (ref.)				
From 25 to 30 years old	0.009	0.008	-0.204***	-0.206***
	(0.059)	(0.059)	(0.063)	(0.063)
From 31 to 64 years old	-0.239***	-0.239***	-0.433***	-0.439***
	(0.054)	(0.054)	(0.059)	(0.059)
65 and older	-0.587***	-0.586***	-0.859***	-0.864***
	(0.063)	(0.063)	(0.069)	(0.069)
Gender (ref.male)	-0.268***	-0.269***	-0.155***	-0.155***
	(0.019)	(0.018)	(0.025)	(0.026)
Low education (ref.)				
Middle education	-0.024	-0.024	-0.072*	-0.071*
	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.03)	(0.03)
High education	-0.376***	-0.375***	0.317***	0.319***
	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.040)	(0.040)
Trade union membership	-0.104***	-0.103***	0.373***	0.370***
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.024)	(0.024)
Area of living (urban area ref.)	0.026	0.025	-0.175***	-0.176***
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.023)	(0.023)
Higher-grade service class (ref.)				
Lower-grade service class	0.165***	0.167***	-0.014	-0.015
	(0.046)	(0.047)	(0.044)	(0.044)
Small business owners	0.32***	0.331***	-0.145**	-0.153**
	(0.05)	(0.054)	(0.054)	(0.055)
Skilled workers	0.504***	0.505***	-0.011	-0.013
	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.045)
Unskilled workers	0.540***	0.540***	-0.034	-0.038
	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.060)	(0.060)
Student	0.091	0.092	0.211**	0.208**
	(0.074)	(0.074)	(0.053)	(0.070)
Unemployed	0.393***	0.395***	0.403***	0.401***
	(0.061)	(0.061)	(0.056)	(0.056)
Retired/disabled	0.256***	0.276***	0.072	0.068
	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.048)	(0.048)
Housework	0.338***	0.338***	-0.087	-0.090
	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.062)	(0.062)
Distance from the election				

(months)	-0.006**	-0.006**	-0.001	-0.002
	(0.050)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Level 2 covariates				
EPI Weighted	0.040	0.070	0.007	0.007
	(0.060)	(0.087)	(0.040)	(0.077)
Proportionality of the	-0.080	-0.170	-0.287	-0.145
electoral system	(0.090)	(0.187)	(0.345)	(0.160)
Cross-level interaction				
Distrust#EPI		-0.003***		-0.016***
		(0.001)		(0.002)
Constant	-6.907	-9.289	-5.277	-4.844***
	(4.818)	(4.868)	(3.146)	(0.484)
Wave fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of individuals	132,835	132,835	127,472	127,472
Number of elections	94	94	94	94
Variance components				
Elections	0.605**	0.604**	-0.376	-0.417*
	(0.194)	(0.194)	(0.205)	(0.206)
Log likelihood	-34,617.88	-34,517.53	-34,789.60	-34,489.60

Estimation is via maximum likelihood. Standard error in parentheses. The levels of significance are *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Figure 9: The impact of political distrust on the voting for anti-establishment parties at the elections held after and before the Great Recession
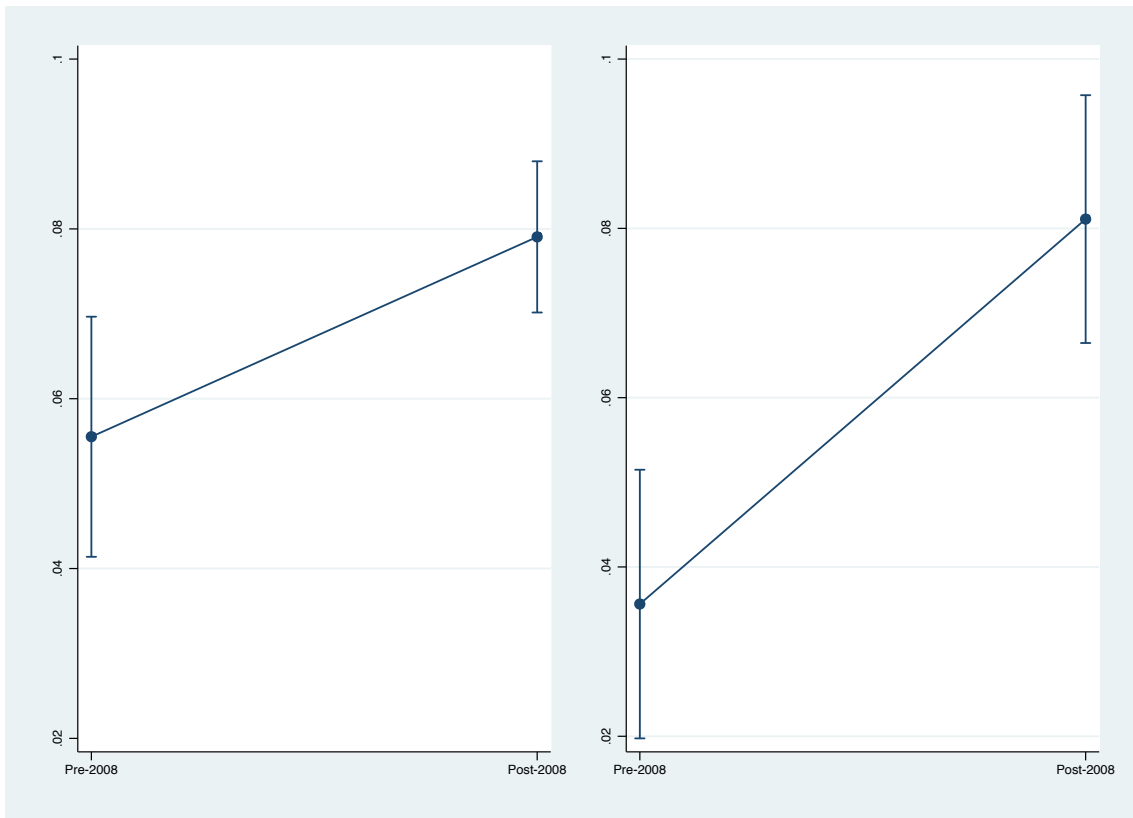
Average marginal effects of political distrust on the voting for anti-establishment right (on the left) and left (on the right) parties after and before the Great Recession. The marginal effects have been computed holding the other covariates at the mean values and according to the coefficients in models I and II (Table 15 in the Appendix A2). Confidence intervals at 95%.

APPENDIX A3: CHAPTER 3

Appendix A3: Operationalization of variables

Party choice at the 2015 parliamentary elections: 1: Vote for mainstream parties (*PP* and *PSOE*); 2: Vote for *UPyD*; 3: Vote for *Ciudadanos*; 4: vote for *IU*; 5: Vote for *Podemos*.

Perception of corruption (political parties): Scale from 0 (Spanish parties are not corrupt at all) to 10 (Spanish parties are extremely corrupt)

Alienation: Minimum of the squared distance on the Left – Right scale between Voter i and Mainstream Party j (PSOE or PP)

Indifference: difference (in absolute values) between the minimum and the maximum squared distance on the Left – Right scale between Voter i and Mainstream Party j (PSOE and PP)

Trust in the actors of political representation: additive scale created from the average of trust in political parties and trust in politicians. Range: from 0 (no trust at all) to 7/10 (complete trust).

Indicator of economic uncertainty: additive scale created from the sum of different indicators (worried about paying the household bills; worried about having to reduce standard of living; worried about having a job; worried about paying off bank loans or mortgage payments). Range: from 0 (not worried about any of these situations) to 4 (worried about all 4 of the situations).

Retrospective economic evaluation: 1 (very bad) to 5 (very good).

Ideology: Self-placement on the left-right scale: 0 (Extreme left) to 10 (Extreme right) scale.

Gender: 0: female; 1: male.

Age: Age of the respondent.

Urban area: 1: fewer than 50,000 inhabitants; 2: from 50,001 to 200,000 inhabitants; 3: more than 200,001 inhabitants.

Education level: 1: Primary education; 2: Secondary education; 3: University education.

Working status: 1: Worker; 2: Student; 3: Housewife; 4: Retired; 5: Unemployed.

Projection-adjustment party positions: In order to neutralize the possible bias produced by the projection effect, we follow Merrill and Grofman's (1999: 180) recommendation:
1) Using the whole sample of respondents, we regress each voter-specific position of the parties using the following equation:

$$P_k = b_0 + b_1 \, s \, (V - \bar{P_k}) + e,$$

where P_k is the voter-specific placement on the Left/Right scale of party k, b_0 is the constant of the linear regression, b_1 is the projection parameter, s is a coefficient that takes value 1 if the respondent voted for the party and -1 if not, V is the respondent's self-placement on the same scale, $\bar{P_k}$ is the mean placement of party k and e is the error term.
2) We then replace the original voter-specific placement of the party k with $P_k - b_1 s(V - \bar{C})$, where b_1 is the coefficient obtained from the linear regression.

Table 17: Descriptive statistics of Chapter 3

Variable	Mean/Proportion	SD	Minimum	Maximum	N
Party choice (Wave 6)	3.06	1.72	1	5	1,333
Perception of corruption - parties (t-1)	7.30	2.14	0	10	2,264
Indifference (t-1)	20.37	17.99	0	141.34	1,982
Alienation (t-1)	5.86	10	0.0001	77.26	1,982
Trust in the actors of political representation (t-1)	2.16	1.94	0	7	2,264
Retrospective economic evaluation (t-1)	2.49	1.14	1	5	2,264
Indicator of economic uncertainty (t-1)	1.98	1.52	0	4	2,264
Ideology (t-1)	4.07	2.49	0	10	2,045
Gender (ref. male) (t-1)	0.51	-	0	1	2,264
Age	47.48	15.24	18	90	2,264
Urban area	1.80	0.86	1	3	2,264
Educational level	2.37	0.59	1	3	2,233
Working status	2.43	1.64	1	5	2,264

Table 18: The determinants of party competition (base model + interaction alienation##trust (multinomial logistic regression estimates) – United Kingdom

Covariates *[t-1]*	LD	UKIP	SNP	GP
Indifference	-0.041***	-0.073***	-0.115***	-0.029***
	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.005)	(0.007)
Alienation	-0.032	0.050**	0.031	0.051***
	(0.031)	(0.017)	(0.04)	(0.013)
Political trust	-0.068	-0.191**	-0.412***	-0.284***
	(0.16)	(0.058)	(0.035)	(0.051)
Constant	-0.381	1.949***	-0.733**	4.233***
	(0.276)	(0.295)	(0.262)	(0.371)
N	16442	16442	16442	16442
Pseudo R2	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.170
LR Chi2	6318.15***	6318.15***	6318.15***	6318.15***
Indifference	-0.041***	-0.073***	-0.115***	-0.029***
	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.005)	(0.007)
Alienation	-0.032	-0.015	0.051	0.051
	(0.031)	(0.017)	(0.05)	(0.06)
Political trust	-0.068	-0.251**	-0.42***	-0.304***
	(0.16)	(0.048)	(0.025)	(0.023)
Alienation##Trust	0.001	0.001	0.003*	0.003*
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Constant	-0.356	2.089***	-0.698**	4.442***
	(0.282)	(0.305)	(0.263)	(0.386)
N	16442	16442	16442	16442
Pseudo R2	0.1703	0.1703	0.1703	0.1703
LR Chi2	6325.07***	6325.07***	6325.07***	6325.07***

Estimation is by maximum likelihood. Standard Errors in parentheses. The levels of significance are ***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.1. Reference category: vote for the Labour and the Conservative party.

This table reports only the coefficients of the most important variables. The full models are available upon request.

Table 19: The determinants of party competition (base model + interaction alienation##trust (multinomial logistic regression estimates) – Norway

Covariates *[t-1]*	KrF	Sp	FrP	SV
Indifference	-0.071***	-0.103***	-0.215***	-0.04***
	(0.002)	(0.01)	(0.015)	(0.007)
Alienation	-0.051	-0.040	0.062***	0.087***
	(0.051)	(0.067)	(0.004)	(0.013)
Political trust	-0.043	-0.201	-0.615***	-0.304***
	(0.56)	(0.358)	(0.025)	(0.031)
Constant	-0.281	1.899***	-0.633**	5.233***
	(0.203)	(0.305)	(0.242)	(0.351)
N	1450	1450	1450	1450
Pseudo R2	0.161	0.161	0.161	0.161
LR Chi2	5328.25***	5328.25***	5328.25***	5328.25***
Indifference	-0.081***	-0.123***	-0.105***	-0.03***
	(0.004)	(0.01)	(0.025)	(0.07)
Alienation	-0.051	-0.040	0.062	0.087
	(0.051)	(0.067)	(0.07)	(0.093)
Political trust	-0.068	-0.201	-0.615***	-0.304***
	(0.16)	(0.358)	(0.025)	(0.031)
Alienation##Trust	-0.004	-0.003	0.006*	-0.003
	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Constant	-0.281	1.899***	-0.633**	5.233***
	(0.203)	(0.305)	(0.242)	(0.351)
N	1450	1450	1450	1450
Pseudo R2	0.161	0.161	0.161	0.161
LR Chi2	5328.25***	5328.25***	5328.25***	5328.25***

Estimation is by maximum likelihood. Standard Errors in parentheses. The levels of significance are ***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.1. Reference category: vote for the Labour and the Conservative party.

This table reports only the coefficients of the most important variables. The full models are available upon request.

Table 20: The determinants of party competition (base model + interaction alienation##trust (multinomial logistic regression estimates) – Germany

Covariates *[t-1]*	FDP	Grune	AfD	Linke
Indifference	-0.171***	-0.152***	-0.205***	-0.06***
	(0.012)	(0.014)	(0.025)	(0.017)
Alienation	0.041	-0.060	0.152***	0.164***
	(0.039)	(0.077)	(0.024)	(0.013)
Political trust	0.068	-0.301	-0.403***	-0.211***
	(0.16)	(0.458)	(0.015)	(0.021)
Constant	0.581***	1.349***	-0.523**	4.233***
	(0.03)	(0.305)	(0.242)	(0.351)
N	5015	5015	5015	5015
Pseudo R2	0.141	0.141	0.141	0.141
LR Chi2	5438.15***	5438.15***	5438.15***	5438.15***
Indifference	-0.169***	-0.15***	-0.202***	-0.06***
	(0.012)	(0.014)	(0.025)	(0.017)
Alienation	0.041	-0.060	0.142***	0.134***
	(0.039)	(0.077)	(0.024)	(0.013)
Political trust	0.068	-0.301	-0.423***	-0.235***
	(0.16)	(0.458)	(0.015)	(0.021)
Alienation##Trust	0.003	0.004	0.009**	0.007
	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.001)	(0.006)
Constant	0.561***	1.329***	-0.503**	4.223***
	(0.03)	(0.305)	(0.242)	(0.351)
N	5015	5015	5015	5015
Pseudo R2	0.141	0.141	0.141	0.141
LR Chi2	5438.15***	5438.15***	5438.15***	5438.15***

Estimation is by maximum likelihood. Standard Errors in parentheses. The levels of significance are ***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.1. Reference category: vote for the SPD and the CDU/CSU.

This table reports only the coefficients of the most important variables. The full models are available upon request.

APPENDIX A4: CHAPTER 4

Appendix A4: question wording and variable coding.

UNITED KINGDOM – British Election Study; combined Waves 1-12 Internet Panel

Change in the political distrust levels (wave 6 - 12 of the British Election Study): Difference between distrust in the actors of political representation measured in the twelfth (5th May – 7th June 2017) and the sixth (8th May – 26th May 2015) wave of the panel. Range from -6 (respondents became less distrustful over time) to +6 (respondents became more distrustful over time).

Party voted in the latest general election: "Which party did you vote for in the General Election on May 7th, 2015?". The original categories have been recoded according to the list in Table A4.3.

Distrust in the actors of political representation: "How much trust do you have in Members of Parliament in general?". The scale has been reverted. (1) A great deal of trust; (7) No trust.

Political interest "How much attention do you generally pay to politics?"
(0) Minimum; (10) Maximum.

Retrospective economic evaluation: "How do you think the general economic situation in this country has changed over the last 12 months?". The order of the response categories has been reverted.
(1) Got a lot better; (2) Got a little better; (3) Stayed the same; (4) Got a little worse; (5) Got a lot worse.

Indicator of economic uncertainty: Additive scale created from the sum of two different indicators (worried about being unemployed and fall below the poverty threshold.
"During the next 12 months, how likely or unlikely is it that...
  a) There will be times when you don't have enough money to cover your day to day living costs
  b) You will be out of a job and looking for work".
Range: from 1 (very unlikely) to 5 (very likely)

Left/Right self-placement: "In politics people sometimes talk of left and right. Where would you place yourself on the following scale?"
(0) Left; (10) Right
Gender: (0) Female; (1) Male.
Age: Age of respondent. Continuous.
Squared Age: Squared age of respondent. Continuous.

Educational level: "What is the highest level of education you have successfully completed?".
 Recoded into (1) Primary education; (2) Secondary education; (3) University.

Working status: "Which of these options best describes what you were doing last week?".
 Recoded into (1) Working; (2) Student; (3) Unemployed; (4) Retired; (5) Other.

Marital status: "Which of these situations best describe your marital status?". Recoded into (1) Married; (2) Separated; (3) Divorced; (4) Widow; (5) Never married.

NORWAY – Norwegian Citizen Panel Wave 1-12, 2013-2018

Change in the political distrust levels (wave 1 - 10 of the Norwegian Citizen Panel): Difference between distrust in the actors of political representation measured in the tenth (31th October – 23rd November 2017) and the first (6th November 2013 – 5th January 2014) wave of the panel. Range from -5 (respondents became less distrustful over time) to +5 (respondents became more distrustful over time).

Party voted in the latest general election: "Which party did you vote for in the General Election on September 9th, 2013?". The original categories have been recoded according to the list in Appendix C.

Distrust in the actors of political representation: "Generally speaking, what degree of confidence do you have in Norwegian politicians?".
(1) A very high degree; (2) A high degree; (3) Some degree; (4) A low degree; (5) None at all.

Political interest "In general, how interested are you in politics?" (1) Not interested at all; (2) Not interested; (3) Somewhat interested; (4) Interested; (5) Very interested.

Economic evaluation: "How do you perceive the current economic situation in Norway? Do you believe it is…"? (1) Very good; (2) Good; (3) Somewhat good; (4) Neither good nor poor; (5) Somewhat poor; (6) Poor; (7) Very poor.

Left/Right self-placement: "In politics people sometimes talk of left and right. Where would you place yourself on the following scale?" (0) Left; (10) Right
Gender: (0) Female; (1) Male.
Age: Age of respondent. Categories.
   (1)   18-29 years; (2) 30-59 years; (3) 60 and above
Educational level: "What is the highest level of education you have successfully completed?".
 Recoded into (1) Primary education; (2) Secondary education; (3) University.

Working status: "Which of these options best describes what you were doing last week?".
 Recoded into (1) Working; (2) Student; (3) Unemployed; (4) Retired; (5) Other.

Marital status: "Which of these situations best describe your marital status?". Recoded into (1) Married; (2) Separated; (3) Divorced; (4) Widow; (5) Never married.

NETHERLANDS – LISS Panel Study waves 1-10

Change in the political distrust levels (wave 6 - 9 of the LISS Panel Study): Difference between distrust in the actors of political representation measured in the ninth (5th December 2016– 31th January 2017) and the sixth (3rd December – 31th December 2012) wave of the panel. Range from -10 (respondents became less distrustful over time) to +10 (respondents became more distrustful over time).

Party voted in the latest general election: "Which party did you vote for in the General Election on September 12th, 2012?". The original categories have been recoded according to the list in Appendix C.

Distrust in the actors of political representation: Additive scale created from the average of trust in political parties and trust in politicians. "Can you indicate, on a scale from 0 to 10, how much confidence you personally have in each of the following institutions?". (A) Politicians; (B) Political parties. The scale has been reverted. (0) Full confidence; (10) No confidence at all.

Political interest "Are you very interested in political topics, fairly interested or not interested?"
 (1) Not interested; (2) Fairly interested; (3) Very interested.

Satisfaction with the country economic situation: "And how satisfied are you with the economic situation of the country?" The original scale has been reverted.
Range: from (0) Very satisfied to (10) Very dissatisfied.

Indicator of economic uncertainty: "Can you indicate, on a scale from 0 to 10, how hard or how easy it is for you to live off your income?". The original scale has been reverted.
Range: from 0 (it is very easy to live off his/her income) to 10 (it is very hard)

Left/Right self-placement: "In politics people sometimes talk of left and right. Where would you place yourself on the following scale?"
(0) Left; (10) Right
Gender: (0) Female; (1) Male.
Age: Age of respondent. Continuous.
Squared Age: Squared age of respondent. Continuous.

Educational level: "What is the highest level of education you have successfully completed?".
 Recoded into (1) Primary education; (2) Secondary education; (3) University.

Working status: "Which of these options best describes what you were doing last week?".
 Recoded into (1) Working; (2) Student; (3) Unemployed; (4) Retired; (5) Other.

Marital status: "Which of these situations best describe your marital status?". Recoded into (1) Married; (2) Separated; (3) Divorced; (4) Widow; (5) Never married.

GERMANY – German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES)

Change in the political distrust levels (wave 6 - 12 of the British Election Study): Difference between distrust in the actors of political representation measured in the ninth (25th September – 8th October 2017) and the sixth (24th September – 5th October 2013) wave of the panel. Range from -5 (respondents became less distrustful over time) to +5 (respondents became more distrustful over time).

Party voted in the latest general election: "Which party did you vote for in the General Election on September 22th, 2013?". The original categories have been recoded according to the list in Appendix C.

Distrust in the actors of political representation: "How much trust do you have in Members of Parliament in general?". The scale has been reverted. (1) A great deal of trust; (5) No trust.

Political interest "In general, how interested are you in politics?"
(1) Not interested at all; (2) Not interested; (3) Somewhat interested; (4) Interested; (5) Very interested.

Retrospective economic evaluation: "How do you think the general economic situation in this country has changed over the last 12 months?". (1) Got a lot better; (2) Got a little better; (3) Stayed the same; (4) Got a little worse; (5) Got a lot worse.

Indicator of economic uncertainty: "And what about your personal situation? How do you think the economic situation of your household has changed over the last 12 months?".
(1) Got a lot better; (2) Got a little better; (3) Stayed the same; (4) Got a little worse; (5) Got a lot worse.

Left/Right self-placement: "In politics people sometimes talk of left and right. Where would you place yourself on the following scale?"
(0) Left; (10) Right
Gender: (0) Female; (1) Male.
Age: Age of respondent. Continuous.
Squared Age: Squared age of respondent. Continuous.

Educational level: "What is the highest level of education you have successfully completed?". Recoded into (1) Primary education; (2) Secondary education; (3) University.

Working status: "Which of these options best describes what you were doing last week?". Recoded into (1) Working; (2) Student; (3) Unemployed; (4) Retired; (5) Other.

Marital status: "Which of these situations best describe your marital status?". Recoded into (1) Married; (2) Separated; (3) Divorced; (4) Widow; (5) Never married.

Change in the political distrust levels (wave 2 - 5 of the CIUPANEL dataset): Difference between distrust in the actors of political representation measured in the fifth (10th – 19th December 2015) and the second (17th June – 7th July 2014) wave of the panel. Range from -10 (respondents became less distrustful over time) to +10 (respondents became more distrustful over time).

Party voted in the European Parliamentary election: "Which party did you vote for in the European Parliamentary election on May 25th, 2014?". The original categories have been recoded according to the list in Table 7.

Distrust in the actors of political representation: Additive scale created from the average of trust in political parties and trust in politicians. "Can you indicate, on a scale from 0 to 10, how much confidence you personally have in each of the following institutions?". (A) Politicians; (B) Political parties. The scale has been reverted. (0) Full confidence; (10) No confidence at all.

Political interest "In general, how interested you in politics are?" (1) Not interested at all; (2) Not interested; (3) Interested; (4) Very interested.

Retrospective economic evaluation: "How do you think the general economic situation in this country has changed over the last 12 months?". (1) Got a lot better; (2) Got a little better; (3) Stayed the same; (4) Got a little worse; (5) Got a lot worse.

Indicator of economic uncertainty: Additive scale created from the sum of different indicators (worried about paying the household bills; worried about having to reduce standard of living; worried about having a job; worried about paying off bank loans or mortgage payments). Range: from 0 (not worried about any of these situations) to 4 (worried about all 4 of the situations).

Left/Right self-placement: "In politics people sometimes talk of left and right. Where would you place yourself on the following scale?" (0) Left; (10) Right

Gender: (0) Female; (1) Male.

Age: Age of respondent. Continuous.

Squared Age: Squared age of respondent. Continuous.

Educational level: "What is the highest level of education you have successfully completed?".
Recoded into (1) Primary education; (2) Secondary education; (3) University.

Working status: "Which of these options best describes what you were doing last week?".
Recoded into (1) Working; (2) Student; (3) Unemployed; (4) Retired; (5) Other.

Marital status: "Which of these situations best describe your marital status?". Recoded into (1) Married;

(2) Separated; (3) Divorced; (4) Widow; (5) Never married.

Table 21: Descriptive statistics of Chapter 4

UNITED KINGDOM

	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	N
Dependent variable					
Change in political distrust (wave t / t-1)	0.067	1.298	-6	6	13,995
Covariates [t-1]					
Distrust in the actors of political representation	4.66	1.56	1	7	14,255
Vote choice at the latest General Election	2.77	1.85	1	7	14,426
Retrospective economic evaluation	3.25	0.99	1	5	12,865
Political interest	6.85	2.34	0	10	14,465
Left-Right self-placement	4.99	2.46	0	10	12,233
Indicator of economic uncertainty	2.29	1.09	1	5	12,845
Gender	0.49	0.5	0	1	14,568
Age of respondent (continuous)	52.54	14.60	18	90	14,568
Squared age of respondent (continuous)	2973.88	1455.48	324	8100	14,568
Occupation	2.33	1.42	1	5	14,568
Educational level	2.27	0.69	1	3	12,342
Marital status	2.11	1.63	1	5	14,568

NORWAY

	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	N
Dependent variable					
Change in political distrust (wave t / t-1)	0.34	0.87	-4	3	1,853
Covariates [t-1]					
Distrust in the actors of political representation	2.38	0.91	1	5	1,853
Vote choice at the latest General Election	3.49	2.39	1	8	1,837
Satisfaction with the economy	1.73	0.82	1	7	1,852
Political interest	3.708	0.76	1	5	1,851
Left-Right self-placement	5.21	2.35	0	10	1,804
Gender	0.53	0.49	0	1	1,853
Age of respondent (categorical)	2.20	0.63	1	3	1,853
Occupation	2	1.44	1	5	1,832
Educational level	2.51	0.65	1	3	1,776
Marital status	1.69	1.37	1	5	1,824

NETHERLANDS

	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	N
Dependent variable					
Change in political distrust (wave t / t-1)	0.12	1.62	-8	8	3,735
Covariates [t-1]					
Distrust in the actors of political representation	5.56	2.09	0	10	3,735
Vote choice at the latest General Election	3.86	2.49	1	8	3,545
Satisfaction with the economy	5.03	1.91	0	10	3,635
Political interest	1.97	0.59	1	3	3,735

	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	N
Left-Right self-placement	5.22	2.16	0	10	3,351
Indicator of economic uncertainty	3.47	1.94	0	10	2,979
Gender	0.49	0.49	0	1	3,735
Age of respondent (continuous)	52.18	15.69	18	90	3,735
Squared age of respondent (continuous)	2,969.5	1,587.13	324	8,100	3,735
Occupation	2.41	1.59	1	5	3,733
Educational level	2.02	0.4	1	3	3,728
Marital status	2.26	1.71	1	5	3,735

GERMANY

	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	N
Dependent variable					
Change in political distrust (wave t / t-1)	0.24	0.83	-4	4	9,144
Covariates [t-1]					
Distrust in the actors of political representation	3.01	1.01	1	5	9,144
Vote choice at the latest General Election	3.27	2.04	1	8	5,614
Retrospective economic evaluation	2.57	0.84	1	5	8,983
Political interest	2.53	1.01	1	5	9,002
Left-Right self-placement	4.46	2.15	0	10	8,255
Indicator of economic uncertainty	2.67	0.91	1	5	8,994
Gender	0.50	0.50	0	1	9,144
Age of respondent (continuous)	50.67	14.03	18	89	9,144
Squared age of respondent (continuous)	2,764.53	1,395.18	324	7,921	9,144
Occupation	2.11	1.47	1	5	8,926
Educational level	2.09	0.72	1	3	8,962
Marital status	2.66	1.77	1	5	8,980

SPAIN

|	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	N
Dependent variable					
Change in political distrust (wave t / t-1)	0.27	1.79	-10	10	1768
Covariates [t-1]					
Distrust in the actors of political representation	8.10	1.95	0	10	1,768
Vote choice at the latest EP election	5.49	2.38	1	8	1,768
Retrospective economic evaluation	4.09	1.12	1	5	1,768
Political interest	2.39	0.83	1	4	1,768
Left-Right self-placement	4.00	2.29	0	10	1,768
Indicator of economic uncertainty	2.60	0.85	1	4	1,768
Gender	0.53	0.5	0	1	1,768
Age of respondent (continuous)	47.58	14.97	18	88	1,768
Squared age of respondent (continuous)	2,488.83	1,433.82	324	7,744	1,768
Occupation	2.33	1.36	1	5	1,768
Educational level	2.29	0.50	1	3	1,768
Marital status	2.15	1.71	1	5	1,768

Figure 10: Evolution of trust in political parties in Europe (2008-2017)
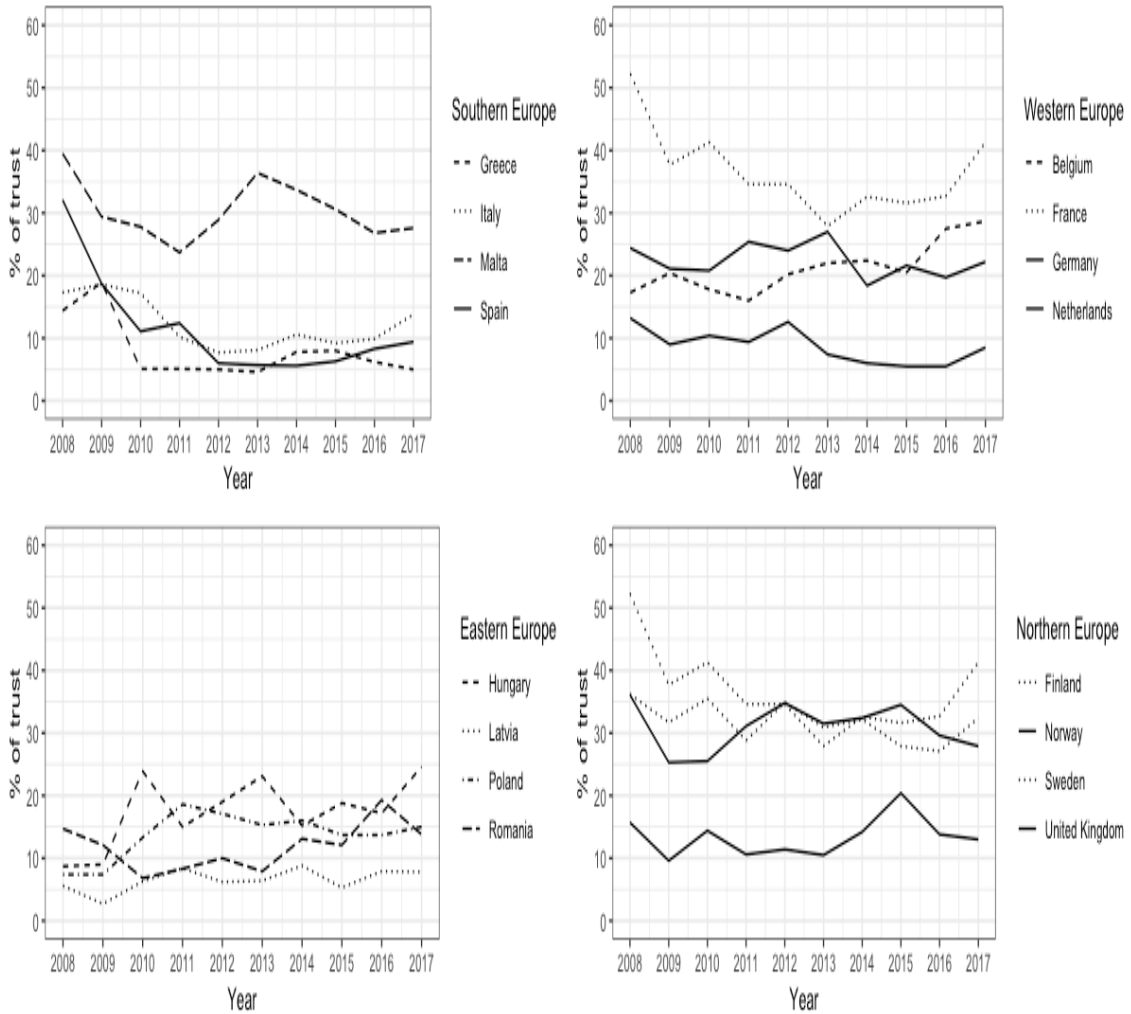
Source: Own elaboration. Data on trust in political parties are obtained by the Standard Eurobarometer surveys (www.ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/). The lines represent the percentage of people who declared to trust in political parties. The question is 'I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it. Political parties.' Solid lines are the five countries included in the panel data analysis: Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Spain and United Kingdom.