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The Framing of Protest in the Iberian Peninsula, 2000-2020. Legitimacy, Politicisation, and Security

Clàudia Susana Rodrigues de Araújo

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UNIVERSITAT_{DE}
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Doctoral Thesis

**The Framing of Protest in the Iberian Peninsula, 2000-2020.
Legitimacy, Politicisation, and Security.**

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I dedicate this to my family and friends. My father, whom I miss so much, would be beaming with pride.

Abstract:

This dissertation investigates the evolution and framing of protest and protest policing in the Iberian Peninsula between 2000 and 2020, uncovering the master-discourse on popular mobilisation in Portugal and Spain at the beginning of the 21st century. Through a comparative analysis, it explores how protest is organised, its political and social contexts, and the response from law enforcement agencies, scrutinising the homogeneity of the Portuguese protest sphere against the more diverse Spanish protest landscape. It further examines public and media reactions to protest and protest policing. Key findings from the study underscore the differing strategies of protest policing, public perceptions, and media framings in both countries. These elements collectively influence the democratic quality and the citizenry's engagement with the state. The dissertation provides insights into the complexities of maintaining democratic health through public mobilisation and police responses, emphasising the critical role of protests in shaping political landscapes and their broader societal implications, suggesting that while protests remain a vital aspect of democratic societies, the response to them can either reinforce or undermine democratic values. The implications of these findings for the quality of democracy in the Iberian Peninsula are discussed to argue that these developments are part of a global trend for the securitisation of protest, increasingly visible in public authorities' and governance institutions' responses to popular mobilisation.

Keywords: protest, protest policing, protest event analysis, frame analysis, securitisation.

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List of acronyms

ACLED – The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data

ANAFRE – Associação Nacional de Freguesias (National Association of Local Councils)

AP – Alianza Popular (Popular Alliance)

BE – Bloco de Esquerda (Left Bloc)

CCOO – Confederación sindical de comisiones obreras (Workers' Commission Trade Union Confederation)

CDA – Critical Discourse Analysis

CDC – Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya

CDR – Comitès de Defensa de la República (Republic Defense Committees)

CDS-PP – Centro Democrático Social - Partido Popular (Social-Democratic Centre - Popular Party [Portugal])

CFA – Critical Frame Analysis

CGTP – Confederação Geral dos Trabalhadores Portugueses (General Confederation of Portuguese Workers)

CSO – Civil Society Organisation

CUP – Candidatura d' Unitat Popular (Popular Unity Candidacy)

DGS – Direção Geral de Segurança (Security General Division)

DOS – Discursive Opportunity Structure

ENAR – European Network Against Racism

ERC – Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (Catalonian Republican Left)

ETA – Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (Basque Homeland and Liberty)

ETUC – European Trade Union Confederation

EU – European Union

FP-25 – Forças Populares 25 Abril (April 25th Popular Forces)

GAC – Grupos Anarquistas Coordinados (Coordinated Anarchist Groups)

GNR – Guarda Nacional Republicana (National Republican Guard)

ICV – Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds (Catalonia Green Initiative)

IU – Izquierda Unida (United Left)

MFA – Movimento das Forças Armadas (Armed Forces Movement)

MP – Member of Parliament

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

NIT – New Information Technologies

PAH – Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca (Platform of People Affected by Mortgage)

PCE – Partido Comunista de España (Communist Party of Spain)

PCP – Partido Comunista Português (Portuguese Communist Party)

PIDE – Polícia Internacional e Vigilância e Defesa do Estado (State Defense and International Police)

PJ – Polícia Judiciária (Judiciary police)

PNV – Partido Nacionalista Vasco (Basque Nationalist Party)

PP – Partido Popular (People’s Party [Spain])

PS – Partido Socialista (Socialist Party)

PSC – Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya (Catalonia Socialists Party)

PSD – Partido Social Democrata (Social Democrat Party)

PSE – Partido Socialista de Euskadi–Euskadiko Ezkerra (Socialist Party of the Basque Country)

PSOE – Partido Socialista Obrero Español (Spanish Socialist and Workers Party)

PSP – Polícia de Segurança Pública (Public Security Police)

PEA – Protest Event Analysis

QSLT – *Que Se Lixe a Troika* (Screw the Troika)

RTE – Radio Y Televisión Española (Spanish Radio and Television)

SNS – Serviço Nacional de Saúde (National Health Service)

UCD – *Unión de Centro Democrático* (Union of the Democratic Centre)

UGT – Unión general de trabajadores (Workers General Union) (Spain)

UGT – *União Geral de Trabalhadores* (Workers General Union) (Portugal)

UPyD – *Unión Progreso y Democracia* (Union, Progress and Democracy)

WMD – Weapons of mass destruction

Introduction

“Revolt is the primary medicine against depression”,

António Coimbra de Matos, 2021.¹

*“The rebel, revolutionary, non-conformist, heretic, or renegade
of an earlier day is often the culture hero of today”.*

Robert Merton, 1976, p. 100.

On November 14th, 2012, the European Union (EU) was shaken by a day of concerted transnational anti-austerity protest, convened by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). Demonstrations took place across Europe, with the largest occurring in most major cities in Spain, in Lisbon, Portugal, across Italy (Rome, Naples, Turin, Brescia, Padua, Bologna, Florence, Pisa) and in the Greek capital. French workers and citizens marched across the country and sectorial strikes shook the EU (including railway workers in Belgium and airport staff across Europe), and in its political centre, Brussels, demonstrations occurred throughout the day. In Northern European countries, not as scarred by the Great Recession, smaller protest events took place, mostly motivated by solidarity with Southern Europe.

This was one of the largest coordinated protest events at EU level, with hundreds of thousands of protesters striking and taking to the streets in many Member States. This was, however, a rare occasion of transnational joint mobilisation in the European political sphere (Hugrée *et al.*, 2020, pp. 40-44), and it gathered the attention of political leaders, business interests, civil society, and the media across the continent².

¹ “A revolta é o grande remédio para a depressão” (my translation).

² See, for example, “Europe’s cities hit by anti-austerity protests” (<https://euobserver.com/political/118203>); “Europe unites in austerity protests against cuts and job losses” (<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2012/nov/14/europe-unite-austerity-protests>); “Europe’s Day of Austerity Rage” (<https://www.thedailybeast.com/europes-day-of-austerity-rage>); “Europe Faces a Multi-National General Strike Against Austerity” (<http://world.time.com/2012/11/13/europe-faces-a-multi-national-general-strike-against-austerity/>); “Anti-austerity protests across Europe turn violent” (<http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/anti-austerity->

Although most of the demonstrations and strikes of the day were peaceful (or low impact – see chapter 3), some were not, both on the part of the protesters [police cars burned in Barcelona; electricity cuts in Madrid; objects thrown at banks and multinational companies in Portugal and Spain; headquarters of the Spanish *Partido Popular* (PP - Popular Party) vandalised, attacks on security forces and roadblocks in Italy and Spain; objects thrown at policemen in Lisbon and the port city of Matosinhos, in Portugal], and on the part of the police, resulting in an important number of injuries (50 in Lisbon, 70 in Madrid) and arrests (140 in Madrid, 60 in Rome), with some media reports, some political parties and politicians and civil society organisations (CSOs) denouncing excessive use of force.

This protest event stands out, not only due to its explicit transnational nature (ETUC has delegations in 39 European countries and convened it in alliance with national trade unions and anti-austerity collectives; the protest targeted both national governments and European institutions) but, most significantly, because it was the object of two completely different narratives:

- The European Trade Union Confederation, progressive social movements, leftist politicians and political parties, and labour unions, as well as a part of the media, addressed it as the ‘European Day of Action and Solidarity’, a denomination with celebratory undertones, cherishing the coming together of Europeans under the common value of solidarity and a common hope for the European project.
- In other media, the same event was named ‘Day of the Rage’, a denomination with a strong negative charge, linked to the semantic fields of violence and animality, associated with the private sphere (therefore out of place in the shared public space), and with gender connotations (as it can be associated with male behaviour).

How to make sense of these contradictory narratives? The existence of these opposing stories gives rise to significant questions: What lies beneath these narratives, and what

[protests-across-europe-turn-violent-1.1265542](http://www.middletonpress.com/news/article/Belgium-Spain-Greece-protest-austerity-measures-11831925.php)); “Belgium, Spain, Greece protest austerity measures on eve of the European Union economic summit” (<http://www.middletonpress.com/news/article/Belgium-Spain-Greece-protest-austerity-measures-11831925.php>).

are their consequences for the political and the civic? Who creates and diffuses them and for what purposes? What is seen as legitimate political action and who is seen as a legitimate participant in the political? Who and what actions are excluded?

These are the fundamental inquiries at the core of this dissertation, whose primary objective is to systematically analyse the various narratives employed by different vested actors in the Portuguese and Spanish public sphere to frame popular mobilisation and discern the resultant political implications thereof. It departs from one preliminary observation, fully exposed in the brief story of November 14th, 2012: protest can be considered a form of empowering political participation and a collective voice to power, but it can similarly be the subject of contrary accounts, which void it of legitimacy and political agency, and, eventually, construct it as a security problem that needs to be eradicated from the shared public sphere.

The second observation that informs this dissertation is the rising trend for the securitisation of protest manifested across the world. Securitisation, simply put, is the discursive construction of an issue or incident as a security problem, requiring special measures (by police forces, the judiciary, or the legislature) to control it. This tendency appears to be increasingly visible in different state authorities' response to popular mobilisation – for example, in the French government's response to the massive *Gilets Jaunes* protest in 2019, or in the US authorities' reactions to the Black Lives Matter movement in the Summer of 2020. The Covid-19 pandemic was an added factor adding to this tendency – limiting public gatherings (including political demonstrations and other forms of popular mobilisation) was one of many reasonable measures to control the spread of the virus, but these supposedly *ad-hoc*, temporary rules were coupled, in many European countries, with laws limiting the right to protest beyond the pandemic, such as the 'Bill to Curb Demonstrations' of July 2020 in Greece, the 'Security for all Danes' Act, proposed in October 2020, the '*Loi de sécurité globale*' [Global Security Law] in France, passed in January 2021, or the 'Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill' in the UK, of March 2021.

Securitisation, then, is a central concept in this work. This theoretical framework, proposed by the Copenhagen Security School, departs from the realisation that the State can constitute both a source of security and of insecurity to citizens (Buzan, 1991, ch. 1).

It posits that a given subject / event / object can be securitised by its identification as an existential threat, through a discursive process that justifies extraordinary security measures to address the collective emergency brought about by that very subject / event / object. This process is dependent on the presence of one (or several) security actor(s) in a position of sufficient power to enunciate the need for securitisation, addressing an audience in a position to accept it. Securitisation, then, is a political choice with the potential of legitimising degrees of anti-democratic control (Buzan *et al.*, 1998, pp. 22-35). Collective action, particularly in the form of protest, can be the object of that choice.

Protest, however, has been an inherent part of democracy since its very inception (in 508 B.C, Athenians took to the streets to protest the rule of the aristocrats, forcing the reform that brought about early democracy in the city-state) and the rights to assembly and demonstration, associated to freedom of expression, opinion, and association, are at the heart of the "*raison d'être*" of modern democratic societies and democratic transnational governance structures. These rights are enshrined in international documents, both legally binding and voluntary, such as the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Covenant of Human, Civil, and Political Rights, and the Council of Europe European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. The European Union, specifically, adopted the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU in 2009, a normative instrument translated into Member States' constitutions, which simultaneously poses security as a right and protects the right to protest (Article 6: right to freedom and security; Article 8: right to the protection of personal data; Article 10: freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; Article 11: freedom of expression and information; Article 12: freedom of assembly and association).

The establishment of these instruments across the EU runs hand-in-hand with the evolution of the concept of security, which, after 9/11, became a central concern of European Institutions – Brandão (2015, p. 73) identifies an expansive securitising trend in the EU, reversing the initial goal of the European construction process, which was the creation and expansion of a security community through desecuritising mechanisms (based on demilitarisation, under the influence of post-war political actors, beliefs, and

values). This expansion occurred, reflectively, at member states level, with the corresponding erosion of established institutional limits (both judicial and non-judicial) to states' capacity to exert repressive violence, as national parliaments, following the Council Framework Decision of 13 June 2002 on combating terrorism, establishing that member states were to adapt their Penal Codes to include the crime of terrorism³, adopted national laws and regulations. Most significantly, this was accompanied by an equivalent process of collective weakening of the mental institutions limiting what is considered as legitimate use of force in western societies (Gordillo, 2013, pp. 63-64).

This securitising tendency progressively expanded from the terrorist threat to other areas, with particular emphasis on the environment, migration, and social cohesion (Brandão, 2015, p. 54). This last focus is particularly significant, as it lies at the centre of a turn in the very meaning of security: no longer describing the condition of being safe and free from risk, it became a value associated with freedom (as clearly stated in article 6 of the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights) and a collective right within a conception of democracy which, simultaneously, sanctions the right to dissent.

On the other hand, security – or its absence – can also trigger collective action, as seen in highly participated demonstrations against terrorism, in protest against violence (including police violence), but also in popular mobilisation around economic insecurity, which has traditionally been a source of dissent in connection to the labour movement and was brought to the central stage during the anti-austerity protest cycle, particularly in Southern Europe (Della Porta, 2015, ch. 1; Della Porta *et al.*, 2016, ch.1, ch. 9; Flesher Fominaya, 2017, pp. 5-7; Carvalho, 2018, pp. 48-52; Fernandes *et al.*, 2020, pp. 66-67; 2021; Romanos and Sádaba, 2022, pp. 98-102). Protest and collective action are also key in keeping democracy in check (Rosanvallon, 2008, pp. 60-63). Popular mobilisation, then, constitutes a fundamental gauge to understand democracy at work – or, in the words of Robert Fishman (2011, p. 236), “*democratic practice*”. If democratisation happens bottom-up, led by activist citizens making claims to justice (Isin, 2009, p. 383), it is imperative that we understand how limits to popular mobilisation can put

³ For details on the implementation of the Directive, and its critical evaluation, see Álvarez Conde y González (2006).

democracy at risk, by reducing the political space for dissent (Flesher Fominaya, 2017, pp. 13-14).

This dissertation, thus, draws from Asens and Pisarello (2013), who suggested that protest targeting the established liberal order tends to be more criminalised, to argue that the financial crisis of 2008 and the following Great Recession further entrenched this trend: as mass, concerted, extensive popular mobilisation, targeting national and international institutions unfolded across the world (with particular intensity in Portugal and Spain), those very institutions responded by exacerbating their propensity for securitising the public sphere, on the basis of arguments linked to the right to security, safe coexistence, and social cohesion.

The main questions that guide this study, then, are as follows:

- Who protests in Portugal and Spain and how / why does protest occur?
- How is protest in Portugal and Spain policed? What type of state security forces actively engage in protest policing and how do they act?
- What are the discourses of vested actors across the Iberian Peninsula on popular mobilisation and protest policing? What narratives emerge as primordial and who creates them, for what purposes?
- What are the consequences of those discourses and narratives for the political community's collective understanding of popular mobilisation?
- Is the securitisation of protest (the framing of popular mobilisation as a security problem) occurring in the Iberian Peninsula and, if so, what are the consequences for the polity?

This study is, then, concerned with the framing of popular mobilisation across the Iberian space and seeks to understand its operationalisation. It will uncover the master frames used to describe protest by different discursive actors and consider their implications for the politicisation / depoliticisation of collective action, its legitimacy / illegitimacy and, ultimately, its securitisation. It adopts an inductive approach (whereby emerging conclusions inform the next steps of the investigation) to discuss the implications of the findings for fundamental rights in Portugal and Spain and for the size and inclusivity of each country's public sphere. It, ultimately, asks if there is an

intensification of securitising discourses applied to the phenomenon of popular mobilisation in the Iberian Peninsula and considers that, should that be the case, this would reduce the public space available for citizens to express dissent, which poses a risk for the quality of democracy.

If protest is identified as a threat to social cohesion, the stability of the institutions, and the nation-state itself, it ceases to be considered legitimate political action. Its delegitimation, depoliticisation, and securitisation can, then, constitute a deterrent to democratic participation and a selective measure of the *demos* who are considered a legitimate part of the state, with implications for the quality of democratic processes and practices. Further, if there is, in fact, a trend for the securitisation of protest, it is important to understand how these developments are contributing to deteriorating democratic quality, a process that is captured by the concept of 'democratic backslide'.

'Democratic backslide', according to Nancy Bermeo (2016, p. 5) "*denotes the state-led debilitation or elimination of any of the political institutions that sustain an existing democracy*", sanctioned by the very institutions pointed out as democratic warranties, and, at times, supported by the very citizens whose democratic rights are at stake. The concern with democratic backsliding – or, put differently, with democratic erosion or with the declining quality of democracy – has become pressing in academia, with a wide range of publications devoted to describing it, explaining it, possibly preventing it (see, for example, Della Porta, 2013a; Mair, 2014; Brown, 2015; Levitsky and Ziblatt, 2018; Runciman, 2018). Common themes throughout these works are the crisis of representation, the decline of trust in political institutions, falling electoral turnout, and dwindling party loyalty, as well as the rise of (mainly right wing) populist movements, nationalist or independentist movements, and resentment towards guardian institutions (see chapter 1).

These works run closely to recent tendencies conveyed by most democracy indexes which report a decline in the quality of democracy worldwide, affecting a rising number of people – for instance, the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) 2021 report confirmed a continuous decline in democratic quality since 2010, bringing the overall level of democracy down to levels last found around 1990, and highlighted that 68% of the world population was, in 2020, living under an autocratic regime or an electoral autocracy.

Similarly, Freedom House (2021) confirms a continuous fifteen years of democratic decline across the world, stressing that the proportion of “Not Free Countries” is the highest it had been since 2006. Both highlight that protest movements have, generally, been more severely repressed, a development not exclusively related to the pandemic, but rather revealing a worrying persistent advancement.

Civil society organisations have expressed analogous concerns: Amnesty International has, on multiple occasions (2012; 2014; 2017; 2019; 2020), alerted to the fact that limits were being imposed on freedom of assembly and expression across the EU, reflected in laws designed to interfere with the free expression of those rights in the shared public sphere, but also in increasingly forceful action by public authorities in policing protest, both justified by the need for security, often coupled with discourse by political leaders criminalising and othering protesters. Also, Civicus, a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) devoted to strengthening civil society worldwide, in its 2021 report, warns of a systemic “*civic space crackdown*” in the past ten years, reflected in the shrinking of the public sphere available for protest and for grassroots organisation. Nonetheless, and despite the pandemic, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) (2021a), found that demonstrations increased worldwide in 2020 by 7% compared to 2019, a year of already significant mobilisation. Further, it stressed that approximately 93% of all demonstrations were peaceful, and only 7% were met with some form of intervention. In Europe, the proportion of peaceful demonstrations stood at 97% (2021b).

The central goal of this investigation is to fill a gap in the literatures on street politics and on the erosion of democracy, as the role played by public discourse on popular mobilisation [including its (de)legitimation, (de)politicisation, and securitisation] has, so far, not been fully addressed. It will seek to understand the linkages between an increasingly negative discourse on popular mobilisation and democratic backslide, through the detailed analysis of two case studies – Spain and Portugal.

It will also consider how practices of protest policing can further contribute to alienating the polity from the political sphere. Although there are many works focused on increased forceful police intervention in protest events (but none on the Iberian Peninsula), and on the militarisation of police tactics (see, for example, Della Porta *et*

al., 2006; Wood, 2014; Camp and Heatherton, 2016; Vitale, 2017), these do not consider police action in the light of the securitisation theory, and its connection to democracy remains under-theorised (on this last point, the work of David Mansley [2014] could be considered an exception, although its focus is collective violence). Strong research-based knowledge on these trends is necessary and urgent since they concern the fundamental rights of political subjects – as put in the International Network of Civil Liberties Organisations 2013 report (p. 55),

“[p]rotesters are often at the sharp end of new police tactics; while measures applied to them may also be applied to the broader population, they come into sharper focus when applied to those who are publicly expressing dissenting views. This makes protecting protesters’ rights by all available legal and political means all the more important.”

This work, then, is also concerned with Human Rights, with justice, and with equity – themes often expressed by activist citizens (Isin, 2009, pp. 372; 383) participating in protest events in the shared public space. The Habermasian concept of public sphere (1989, ch. 8), as the place where people come together to discuss and identify problems that affect them, aiming at influencing political action, is particularly relevant for this study, as is its exploration by Nancy Fraser (1990, pp. 67-68), who considers that there is an official public sphere, in which official discourses are both supported and challenged, meaning that this ‘official’ arena can be expanded to include alternative public spheres, constituted by subaltern counter-publics, who create their own spaces for mobilisation. Eickelman and Salvatore (2004, p. 5), additionally, define the public sphere as the place where rights, duties and – importantly – notions of justice are discussed in order to make them palpable, with a focus on the common good, based on shared notions of solidarity and altruism. These alternative public spheres contribute to widening the social field, destabilising hierarchies within it and producing changes in positions of power.

Concerns with democracy itself are often expressed in protest events, often translated into demands for ‘real democracy’. Nonetheless, one should remain aware that protest can both push for democratic advances and undermine them (as seen, for example, in “*Stop the Count*” demonstrations during the 2020 USA elections or in *Pegida* marches throughout Germany in 2019 and previous years). Bermeo (2016, pp. 16-17), thus,

recommends contemplating the motivations of protesters, an advice followed in this work, which considers protest both as an avenue for deepening democracy and as an arena where pushes for democratic backslide are made visible.

Regardless of its ultimate goals, protest is a way of claiming a place in the public sphere by making use of the human capacity of language to self-represent, to speak up, and to be heard. Discourse, thus, is central to popular mobilisation, and it is equally at the heart of this study. Sociolinguistics has exposed the complex interrelationship between language and society, as well as the embeddedness of language in the social structure and value system of each socio-historical context (Cunha and Cintra, 1984, pp. 2-3). It is through language that individual and collective subjectivities are organised and that collective representations are structured. Because language is dynamic, it can be a territory for social and political change, but it is also a ground for those in power to acquire and hold on to legitimacy, silencing opposing views, and presenting those who express them as the symbolic “*other*”.

This study is particularly interested in the way that the discourse on rights is used both to legitimise and to undermine protest. Levitt and Merry (2009, p. 443) indicate that several ‘*packages*’ of Human Rights circulate simultaneously and are available to be assumed by activists, who adapt them to their own socio-political contexts. The possibility of those ‘*packages*’ being instrumentalised by political leaders to delegitimise, depoliticise and, ultimately, securitise protest and restrict the fruition of democratic rights has, however, not been considered so far, which is one of the innovations of this work. Social movements, NGOs, individual activists, but also political leaders or any vested actors in a position of power operate within a discursive opportunity structure, defined as “*institutionally anchored ways of thinking that provide a gradient of relative political acceptability to specific packages of ideas*” (Ferree, 2003, p. 309). This concept indicates the need for the consideration of the multiple dynamics at play in reacting to protest, deeply imbedded in their context, which also includes institutionalised categories, legal definitions, norms, and (master) frames, that shape how claims are made in the public sphere by different actors.

Analysing these multiple dynamics demands a multisided approach, that is fully exposed in the methodological section of this thesis (chapter 1). This investigation relies on two

methodologies, that will be used complementarily: Protest Event Analysis (PEA) and (an adaptation of) Critical Frame Analysis (CFA). Protest Event Analysis is a type of quantitative content analysis that relies (mainly) on newspaper sources to identify protest events in order *“to systematically assess the amount and features of protests across various geographical areas (from the local level up to the supranational level) and over time (from short periods of time up to several decades)”* (Hutter 2014, p. 335), thus allowing for comparative designs.

The selection of case studies – hinted at here – is fully justified in chapter 2. Portugal and Spain constitute an interesting empirical puzzle to study the relationship between protest and democracy from a discursive perspective, given that they entered their democratic era around the same time after a long period of authoritarianism, and joined the European Union in 1986. In both countries, massive anti-austerity dissent took place between 2010-2013, often targeting not only their national governments but also other countries’ leaderships and transnational supervising institutions. Nonetheless, they exhibit quite different protest and collective action patterns, as well as institutional responses to them (Portos, 2016, pp. 184-188; Carvalho, 2018, pp. 72-79; Portos and Carvalho, 2019, pp. 7-8; Fernandes *et al.*, 2020, pp. 49-57, 69-76; 2021; Romanos and Sádaba, 2022, pp. 92-98, 105-106), and divergent paths to liberal democracy and state consolidation (Bermeo, 1987; Fernandes, 2015, pp. 1077-1091; Fernandes, 2017, pp. 33-37; Fishman, 2011; 2019, ch. 2). Another significance difference must be considered: Portugal does not have the history of (internal and transnational) terrorism that is well documented in Spain, and reactions to popular mobilisation are likely to differ in relation to this reality.

This work will rely on the database gathered by the Disobedient Democracy⁴ project (Disdem, hereafter) (Dolenec, 2016; Dolenec *et al.*, 2019), which contains quantitative information on protest events in Spain and Portugal during the period from 2000 to 2017, collected in all daily editions of two of the most important national newspapers in each country. Further data was collected for Portugal and Spain for the years 2018, 2019, and 2020 using the same methodology. The result is a comprehensive dataset

⁴ Available at www.disdem.com.

including over 7500 protest events, described in a considerate amount of detail. PEA allowed for the identification of general trends in popular mobilisation that are relevant to answer the research questions that underpin this study, and which are fully exposed in chapter 3. Chapter 4 will zoom into protest policing, using the same dataset and methodology.

These will be followed by a deeper dive into eventful protest events selected on the basis of the presence of a reaction to popular mobilisation. An adaptation of Critical Frame Analysis was the chosen methodology to focus on reactions to dissent by vested actors, through a combination of critical discourse analysis, frame analysis, and analysis of the discursive opportunity structure in each country. CFA is a valuable tool to uncover implicit and explicit representations of subjects, and to identify who is given a voice and is included – or no voice and is excluded – from the political realm (Meier, 2008, p. 156). This study will present an analysis of the multiplicity of discourses produced by different actors (i.e., political leaders, financial elites, the media, and civil society) in different positions in the discursive field of mobilisation in Portugal and Spain, focusing on the identification of master frames and their operationalisation across the border (chapters 5 and 6).

Methodology-wise, this study is, thus, innovative in its combination of research methods, and in its adaptation of the tools of Critical Frame Analysis to a new phenomenon (protest) and a new theoretical framework (securitisation). It will, additionally, broaden the theoretical conceptualisation of the Copenhagen Security School, by addressing some of the limitations identified in its theory of securitisation: it will take into account the historical, social, and economic context and power relations in Portugal and Spain and attempt to shed light on the issues relating to democratic deficits at which the securitisation paradigm hints but does not fully theorise (Buzan *et al.*, 1998, p. 29; Hansen, 2000, p. 286-287; Buzan and Hansen, 2009, ch. 8; Balzacq, 2012, 48-50).

This very rich dataset and complex methodological design are fundamental to reaching this study's research goals, contributing to the understanding of the relation between the delegitimation, depoliticisation and securitisation of protest, public sphere

shrinkage, and democratic erosion. This reflection will be deepened in chapter 1, where the theoretical framework and methodology for this investigation are fully exposed.

Chapter 1. Democracy, protest, and securitisation – theoretical framework and methodology

“La disobbedienza (...) è il sale della democrazia⁵.”

Donatella Di Cesare, 2021, p. 94.

Concerns about the state of democracy have become pressing across political and civil society sectors. They have been expressed in multiple publications, position papers, recommendations, and opinion pieces⁶, often mirroring recent results published in democracy indexes – for example, the Varieties of Democracy project has been warning about autocratisation surging since 2019⁷.

Moreover, popular dissatisfaction with democracy is on the rise, having reached the highest recorded level in many large democracies and hanging close to that value in others – including in Spain (Foa *et al.*, 2020a, p. 2). What is more, youth’ satisfaction with democracy is declining, particularly in developed democracies – and in connection to economic exclusion (reflected in high levels of youth unemployment and wealth inequality) (Foa *et al.*, 2020b, p. 2). Specifically in southern Europe, Foa *et al.* (*id.*, pp. 18-19) report what they refer to as “*democratic transition fatigue*”, as young people feel increasingly detached from the memory of former authoritarian regimes.

The current declines are, however, relatively mild from a historical perspective, as the global share of democratic countries remains close to its all-time high (Lührmann and Lindberg, 2020, p. 1095). Nonetheless, democratic erosion is affecting a growing number of people, as it is precisely in the biggest democracies such as India, Brazil, and the USA that more worrying signs are looming. Simultaneously, in these very countries, support for current and ousted leaders pushing for democratic setbacks, as well as for legislation

⁵ «Disobedience (...) is the salt of democracy» (my translation).

⁶ See, for example, *European Democracy Action Plan* by the European Commission (2020); *Louder than words? Connecting the dots of European democracy support* by the European Partnership for Democracy, 2019; *The Global State of Democracy 2019. Addressing the ills, Reviving the Promise* by International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2019.

⁷ Varieties of Democracy yearly reports between 2019 and 2023 are available at <https://www.v-dem.net/publications/democracy-reports/> (accessed on 18-09-2023).

that puts Human Rights in peril, remains high. These developments have been captured by Nancy Bermeo's concept of "*democratic backslide*", referring to State led efforts in weakening political institutions, particularly those that should act as democratic bulwarks, often with the extensive support from the citizenry (2016, pp. 10-13).

It is, thus, no wonder that substantial scholarly work has been devoted to the state of democracy. Peter Mair (2013, pp. 1; 42-44; 96-98, 125-137) has famously proclaimed the death of the age of the political party, which retired from its position as intermediary between its constituencies and the State, and lost the ability to sustain democracy in practice, which he attributes to dwindling voter turnout coupled with political elites' escape from accountability mechanisms. In its place, he decreed the age of non-elected, depoliticised expert governance, embodied, at the highest level, by the European Union, which, Mair argues, is ripe with democratic deficits trickling down to Member States' national politics. In particular, as political parties – including those on the left – bowed to neoliberalism⁸ and, in that process, severed ties with their support bases, economic policymaking was transferred to non-accountable, technocratic institutions, in self-reinforcing parallel developments.

Neoliberal rationality is also credited by Wendy Brown (2015, pp. 107-111) for the imperilment of democracy, as its core values – justice, equality, and even freedom – become secondary to the dictates of international markets. She argues that the *homo politicus* has (or is about to) fully relinquished to the *homo economicus*, since neoliberalism dismantled the identity of the working class and is playing a pivotal role in the demolition of citizenship and popular sovereignty, undermining the rule by the people. David Runciman's 2018 (pp. 154-155) work takes it further, positing a world in which the *demos* have lost interest in (particularly electoral) politics, due to the failure of political elites to meaningfully involve them in the political and the civic sphere.

Further concerns have been expressed regarding the growing polarisation between political parties, making compromises impossible and limiting policymaking avenues,

⁸ Neoliberalism has been defined as a "*theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can be advanced by liberating individual economic freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade*" (Harvey, 2005, p.2).

while simultaneously reviving identity politics and allowing private interests' pecuniary support for their preferred politicians to run unchecked (Hacker and Pierson, 2010, pp. 278-282), and Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt (2018, pp. 11-15) have depicted a worrying conjuncture of erosion of political norms and assault on fundamental democratic institutions, particularly the independence of the judiciary and of the media, led by elected leaders bent on undermining the system from within.

Overall, these works summon different threats to establish a common diagnosis – as electoral turnout and trust in political institutions decline, coupled with falling allegiance to traditional political parties, often counterbalanced by rising loyalty to radical nationalist movements and figures, fuelled by fake news, democracy is increasingly at risk. However, these authors see civil society either as an apathetic body drenched from its collective force by private economic interests, or the target of political elites that either actively seek to depoliticise it and disengage it from political participation, or to co-opt it for their own interest. Political elites it– those actors with a privileged institutional position and / or access to resources who are able to influence politics and public debate (Hartmann, 2007, p. 17) – are, hence, the main concern and the main culprit identified in these analyses, which barely examine 'the people' as a factor either pushing for, or fighting against, democratic erosion.

A more optimistic picture is offered by those authors who consider the possibility of civil society playing a positive political role in what seems, nonetheless, an increasingly hostile panorama for democratic politics. For example, Donatella della Porta (2013, pp. 23-32; 93-102; 174-180; ch. 8), reflecting on the institutional forms and social practices of democracy from the sunset of the Great Recession, and the mass anti-austerity mobilisation of 2010-2013, concurs with the existence of rising discontent with democracy and growing distrust in its institutions, also triggered by neoliberalism, but remains hopeful that democracy can be revived, mainly due to developing opportunities for progressive social movements offered by the internet and web 2.0., the expansion of grassroots participatory democratic experiments, and the growing transnational legitimacy of the discourse of Human Rights. Although, in her view, neoliberalism – personified in the reduction of the welfare state and in the rising influence of corporate interests in political decision-making, but also in increasingly militarised and coercive

protest policing – is still pivotal in challenging the legitimacy of democratic institutions, della Porta considers that social movements are essential in countering those trends, and, by consequence, in making democracy possible, as they continue to serve as places of “*socialisation to democratic values*” (p. 187).

She expands this argument in her 2020 work – presenting the Great Recession as a ‘critical juncture’⁹ for political transformation (p. 1), she argues that challenges to democracy are accompanied by the opening of opportunities for progressive social movements to effectively deepen it. Della Porta believes these movements have the potential of expanding the “*semantic meaning of politics (...) creating high quality discursive spaces*” (p. 4) fostering inclusive and fairer decision-making processes.

Pierre Rosanvallon (2008, pp. 57; 121-123; 191-193; 246-251) actually disputes the idea of a crisis of democracy, precisely because he considers citizens’ access to mechanisms of political participation besides elections paramount. He holds as particularly valuable three instruments by virtue of which the *demos* can hold political leaders accountable: oversight (the various means enabling citizens, particularly when organised in movements and / or initiatives, to monitor the behaviour of elected rulers), prevention (citizens’ ability to mobilise against and resist policies considered unfair) and judgment (the possibility that citizens – but mainly citizen initiatives – have to call on the judiciary against political decisions or political elites). For him, these constitute enhanced participatory practices that are changing the traditional understanding of democracy – and, in this sense, Rosanvallon argues that democracy, rather than eroding, is simply evolving, and not necessarily in a negative way. Further research confirmed Rosanvallon’s instincts, as civil society organisations do take the democratic functions of ensuring the accountability of elected leaders seriously, mobilising to pressure them, while simultaneously opening public spaces and developing counter-knowledges and communities of practices (della Porta, 2008, pp. 40-42).

Isin (2009, pp. 368-372) considers a wider variety of participatory mechanisms – including voting, volunteering, organising, but also protesting – as democratic practices,

⁹ “[T]he concept of critical juncture refers to situations of uncertainty in which decisions of important actors are causally decisive for the selection of one path of institutional development over other possible paths” (Capoccia, 2016, p. 89).

to argue for the emergence of the “*activist citizen*”, moving across scales (urban, regional, national, transnational) and sites (bodies, courts, streets, media, networks, borders) to publicly make claims to justice. It is engagement in / with these mechanisms that actually produce subjects as citizens, as it is through those that “*citizenship becomes a site of rights (and obligations)*”.

Robert Fishman (2011, p. 236) also uses the notion of democratic practice to refer to actions by multiple actors – formal and informal – to make use of the very rights awarded by democracy to create political life, adding that the quality of these interactions has the potential to create a more inclusive democratic polity. In a subsequent work, he considers democratic practice as a “*culturally constituted phenomenon*” determining the realm of possibilities of action in political life (2019, pp. 7-9) for all actors, including civil society, in specific contexts.

García-Marzá (2020, p. 98) is also hopeful for the role of civil society, positing that “*it is in civil society, with its spontaneity, will and motivation, wherein lies the motor of change and social transformation that the democratic system possesses*”, and Baiocchi *et al.* (2011, p. 142) remain convinced that “*civil society is critical to the quality of democracy because it supports collective action*”, both by facilitating the mobilisation of underrepresented groups and by bringing new issues, with their shared understandings, to the public sphere, consequently contributing to enhancing deliberation instruments that are an essential democratic practice. Nonetheless, they worry that the conditions for the emergence of a vigorous civil society are not always present – particularly in terms of the rigidity of the institutions of democratic regimes and of lack of openings in the political opportunity structure.

Francesca Polletta (1999, p. 1) has specifically highlighted the importance of “*free spaces*” for collective action, as settings removed from the direct control of the elites, including from State surveillance and repression, that allow for voluntary participation and political mobilisation, as well as for alliance-making, often with autonomous institutions that can shield them from interference by State authorities. The public sphere, considered from this point of view, is the space in which people have the freedom and the legitimacy to manifest themselves, including to demonstrate disagreement, divergence, and dissent.

Common to these works, then, is the faith in civil society, relying on lived democratic practices through channels of citizen engagement and mechanisms for political recognition that are considered essential for a healthy democracy. A definition of civil society, then, is in order. According to Edwards (2004, ch. 2; ch. 3; ch. 4), there are three dominant conceptions:

- Civil society as good society: the realm of civility, tolerance, trust, and cooperation between citizens,
- Civil society as the public sphere, in Habermasian terms: the discursive arena where competing views on public affairs are overtly discussed, and
- Civil society as a realm of organisations, conducive to the development of political capacity and cooperative behaviours, essential for social cohesion and the quality of democracy.

This investigation considers civil society from the intersection of these dimensions. It is a realm of organisations consisting of social movements, interest groups, professional organisations, citizens initiatives, etc., requiring civility, tolerance, and cooperation so as to “*give voice to interests and take actions to realise them either directly or through affecting the policies of the State*” (Bernhard *et al.*, 2017, p. 297). As such, civil society can act as an important agent in reducing political, civic, and socioeconomic inequalities, therefore deepening democratic quality (*id.*, pp. 297-299). It is, then, both a sphere of contestation, where diverse social actors constrain and oppose the power of the State, but also, and simultaneously, a space of guardianship, keeping democracy responsive. As each person’s ability to speak, listen, and be heard is at the base of such acts of political and civic participation (Barber, 2003, p. 173), discourse is central in this conception of civil society.

This work applies the same strategy to operationalise the notion of democracy. Democracy can, at its most basic, be described as a mechanism of individual participation in electoral moments (Schumpeter, 1976, p. 276), but, for multiple authors, democracy requires more than electoral participation. For Robert Dahl (1971, pp. 7-8), democracy – or, rather, ‘polyarchy’ – requires more than just elections, as civil liberties are essential in the democratic process. The civil aspect of democracy is also emphasised by David Beetham (1999, p. 570), to whom democracy consists of popular

control over political decision-making requiring one essential *sine qua non* clause: political equality in the conditions to exercise that control.

Democracy, additionally, can be defined in relation to Human Rights and fundamental freedoms: a democracy is a regime in which rights which constitute the necessary conditions for individual and collective practices of citizenship (such as freedom of expression and opinion, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, freedom of movement, freedom from discrimination, as well as the right to access the judiciary) are established and protected,.

This investigation adopts a wider definition of democracy, in which informal political participation beyond electoral politics is key. It relies on Habermas (1989, p. 103) to consider democracy from a discursive standpoint, including deliberative, communicative processes, which, under conditions of equality, plurality, inclusiveness, and transparency, are able to transform individual preferences, leading to consensual decisions oriented toward the enhancement of the public good. A discursive view of democracy implies the acceptance that the definition of democracy is plural and ever-changing, constituting the very processes for its own transformation, often challenged by progressive social movements that seek to make it more equitable and participatory, by creating conditions for free and equal dialogue and deliberation (della Porta, 2020, p. 85; García-Marzá, 2020, p. 97).

This work, accordingly, contemplates civil society as an actor that is able to support, promote, deepen (but also contribute to eroding) democracy, and considers a liberal civil society as a requirement for effective democracy, balancing top-down dynamics of power exerted by the State. Concurrently, the better the conditions for civil society's political participation, the more openness of the State to the citizenry. As Tilly (2004, ch. 6) noticed, social movements have been essential for the development of institutional democracy well beyond its minimalistic definition. In that sense, one key starting point for political activity is the recognition of who counts as a legitimate political actor, coupled with a consensual understanding of when and where politics and 'the political' are appropriate (Mouffe, 2005, pp. 22-23; 73). In this regard, this investigation follows Walby (2009, pp. 179-180) and Mansley (2014, p. 77), who posit that democracy can be assessed both in terms of the quality of its institutions, but also in its substantive outputs

– including in its ability to economic, social, and political equality. Acceptance of protest, then, is one of the tests of democratic culture, as popular mobilisation constitutes a means for citizens to exert political equality.

As that of democracy, the concept of citizenship is also shifting. Historically developed in relation to membership of a Nation-State (itself an ever-evolving notion), it is gradually becoming more multidimensional, interdisciplinary, intersectional, and transnational, capturing dynamics around rights (civil, political, social, Human), obligations, and belongings. Furthermore, a new set of concerns has entered the discourse of citizenship, including, for example, gender (Walby, 1994, p. 379), ethnicity and migratory status (Brubaker, 1990, p. 379), or even income (Pateman, 2004, p. 94), reinforcing the idea that, as underlined by Isin and Turner (2007, p. 14), citizenship is both a legal status that confers an identity on people, and a social status that determines how economic and cultural capital is distributed and recognised.

Participation in protest and in social movements constitutes a citizenship practice, building and relying on legal and social statuses, but it is also a route to access political and civil rights and to reach decision-making institutions. Protest is, likewise, an arena where civic ties are developed between people who, collectively, are able to question and attempt to shape governments' actions and bring issues to the public sphere. As Charles Tilly (2004, p. 125) postulated, *"there is a wide correspondence between democratisation and social movements"*, particularly when these movements are progressive, mobilising for social justice and positive freedom, based on an inclusive vision of a just society (della Porta and Rucht, 2013, p. 3).

This investigation departs from the assumption that democracy is a bottom-up, ongoing process, led by people who *"force open the gates of the city"* (Isin, 2009, p. 383). It is interested in assessing if the conditions for the potential of popular mobilisation to be harnessed to foster deeper, more inclusive democracies are either being reinforced or threatened, departing from the premise that, if the possibilities to express dissent are hindered and if popular mobilisation is depoliticised, delegitimated, and even securitised, then democracy itself is at risk.

It is important, thus, to consider how inequality affects the conditions for participation in democratic acts of citizenship, particularly since it has been demonstrated that income inequality fosters imbalances in the ability to make one's political voice heard (Jacobs and Skocpol, 2007, pp. 1-2; Mansley, 2014, pp. 108-109), as “[s]ome degree of equality is (...) a precondition for the participation of the demos” (della Porta, 2020, p. 93).

Inequality was at the heart of the main protest cycles in the 21st century, particularly in the early 2000s social justice movement and during the global anti-austerity protest cycle. The 2008 financial crisis and subsequent Great Recession was particularly violent in the Southern and Eastern periphery of the European Union, with steep rises in unemployment and job insecurity activating intense popular mobilisation against national governments and transnational guardian institutions, imposing austerity from above. As Huguée *et al.* (2020, p. 11), posited, “the depth of the 2008 financial and economic crisis put the issue of wealth differences between social groups back on the agenda”, and these were certainly made clear in protest events in the Iberian Peninsula (Fernandes *et al.*, 2020, pp. 65-67; *id.*, 2021, pp. 25-26; Romanos and Sádaba, 2022, pp. 98-100).

Inequality also affects the conditions for participating in protest events – considering both individual (basic needs such as transportation or food, the ability to miss a day's work), and organisational costs (i.e., union fees, movements' daily expenses, permit costs, liability insurance). Inequality is reflected, for example, in declining membership in labour unions (Huguée *et al.*, 2020, p. 40) and in the growing absence of the working class among parliamentarians across the EU (*id.*, p. 75), as well as in rising abstention rates precisely among it (Gallego, 2007, p. 21). What is more, neoliberal restructuring has weakened labour organisations' access to political decision-making institutions, and, in some cases, brought about the criminalisation of civil society organisations and of protest / protesters (della Porta, 2020, p. 143; di Cesare, 2021, pp. 91-94).

It is, thus, not surprising that another pronounced theme in twenty-first century protest cycles is the crisis of democracy, questioning its legitimacy and representation ability, enacted through criticisms of low intensity parliamentary liberal democracy and calls for alternative, participatory, high-intensity democratic models. In this sense, one can argue

that, during the Great Recession, southern Europe witnessed an anti-systemic protest cycle, with demands for a different democracy, both at the national and transnational levels (Matos *et al.*, 2021, pp. 59-61; della Porta, 2020, p. 118; Romanos and Sádaba, 2022, p. 92).

Protest can, furthermore, be deeply transformative of individual and collective culture, acting as a significant stabilising force in pluralist societies, permitting the free expression of dissent leading to the accommodation of different perspectives and to social change towards a system that better serves the whole society (North, 1974, pp. 18-19). Further, and as Tilly (2003, pp. 53-60) informs, a combination of both electoral participation and free involvement with social movements – characteristics of high-quality democracies – signifies that violence is less common, particularly when, as Sylvia Walby (2009, p. 199) posits, equal representation is ensured. Reflecting on protest, thus, is a way of assessing the consolidation and quality of democratic regimes (Ekiert and Kubik, 2001, ch. 1; Dolenec *et al.*, 2019, p. 1).

Additionally, engagement in informal politics is often aligned with participation in electoral politics, as protesters tend to vote more, and elections can function as an opportunity for civil society organisations to draw the attention of a larger audience to their claims and to shape policy (Baiochi *et al.*, 2011, p. 142-143; Madestam *et al.*, 2013, p. 165). Informal and formal political participation are, therefore, mutually reinforcing, strengthening the *demos'* civic and political competencies (Tarrow, 2011, pp. 4-7; 96-98; della Porta, 2013a, pp. 38-43; 84), and “*it is in the interim between elections that the relative success of a polity in approximating political equality is determined*” (Fishman, 2019, p. 3). What is more, informal action may grow into new political parties which become challengers in elections (as was the case of *Podemos* in Spain, during the anti-austerity protest cycle).

The extent of participation is dependent on multiple factors, be it personal (individual disposition and resources), organisational (local / national / transnational web of civil society organisations present in a specific location and the rules setting their functioning), cultural (collective memories and traditions of mobilisation, often shaped by democratic transitions), and institutional (type and organisation of governing bodies and actors and balance of power mechanisms) (della Porta *et al.*, 2018, ch. 9). These are

some aspects that combine to create specific, time-bound, contextual political opportunity structures (Tarrow, 2011, pp. 32-33), which influence interactions between civil society actors and their targets, be it, on the side of civil society, in the selection of repertoires of contention or in the selection and framing of the messages being conveyed (Tarrow, 2013), or, on the side of the targets – mostly State actors – in their choice of political responses, expressed in discourse and / or repressive tactics. A study on the mechanisms of depoliticisation, delegitimation, and securitisation of protest, thus, constitutes a timely research topic.

Securitisation is a framework proposed by Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde of the Copenhagen Security School. It refers to the process by which a given subject or event acquires the character of an emergency through its identification as an existential threat, thereby justifying extraordinary public security measures. This process of identification is considered a 'securitising move', which is dependent on the existence of uneven power relations, since it requires one (or several) securitising actor(s) in a position of sufficient authority to enunciate the need for securitisation, addressing an audience in a position to accept it. It is, therefore, through the discursive act of speaking (or enunciating) 'security' that securitisation occurs – and, ultimately, this constitutes a contingent, political act: as the authors state *"it is always a political choice to securitise or to accept a securitisation"* (1998, pp. 23-30).

The event / object / subject which needs to be made safe – *"things that are seen to be existentially threatened and that have a legitimate claim to survival"* (Buzan *et al.*, 1998, p. 36) – constitutes a security referent. Security referents, thereby, do not exist independently: rather, it is through the successful process of securitisation (through efficacious securitising moves) that securitising actors effectively constitute them. Common actors are, according to Buzan *et al.* (1998, pp. 40-41), those in a leadership position in formal politics, state bureaucracies, governments, lobbies, and interest groups, who utter the securitising move with a specific goal in mind: the removal of the issue from the shared public sphere and its transfer to another political plane, where it can be dealt with away from public scrutiny. Securitisation, however, is only achieved when that removal is accepted by the audience for which the speech act was intended.

What is particularly relevant for this work is the distinction made by the Copenhagen Security School between international security and societal security. While the former is interested in the survival of the State in the international plateau (and is not the focus of this work), societal security is concerned with issues often found in popular mobilisation, namely social justice, equality, and rights. In this sense, societal security is not about conventional existential threats, and societal issues require a discursive leap to be framed as a security problem, capable of posing a threat to a political community (Buzan *et al.*, pp 21-23).

The Copenhagen Security school, thus, argues for the expansion of the meaning of security from the purely military to the political, the economic, and the societal – Buzan *et al.* (*id.*, p. 29), for example, considered the possibility of the concept being enlarged to contemplate issues such as the ‘war on crime’, but the securitisation framework has since been used to study different subjects: migration, in particular, has been frequently considered from this theoretical standpoint (see, for example, Huysmans, 2000, and Ceyhan and Tsoukala, 2002), but so have disaster relief (Pyles *et al.*, 2017), public health (D’Arcangelis, 2017), or even gender equality (Hansen, 2000; Florea Hudson, 2009).

This work argues that this framework is particularly useful to reflect on protest, as it assumes that the State can constitute both a source of security and of insecurity to citizens (Buzan, 1991, pp. 24-29), thus expanding what can be considered as a security referent and as a threat. If protest is framed as an issue pertaining to societal security, discursively constructed as a security threat to the way of life, to social cohesion, to the citizenry, and, ultimately, to democracy (invoked as security referents), then it loses its character of normal political action, and its legitimacy – and that of protesters to stand in the shared public sphere – is revoked.

Securitisation’s ultimate goal is to create institutionalised silences that make the discussion of some themes impossible. In effect, securitising processes work on a scale through which events / actors / subjects are publicly framed as either:

- political – or politicised, considered as an integral “*part of public policy, requiring government decision and resource allocations*”,

- apolitical – or non-politicised, as “*the State does not deal with [them and they are] not in any other way made an issue of public debate and decision*”,
- securitised – no longer debated as political issues, but rather dealt with at an accelerated pace, in ways that may violate normal legal and social rules (Buzan *et al.*, 1998, p. 23-24).

The authors (*id.*, p. 29), although stating that securitisation is always a political choice, also theorise the relation between securitisation and politicisation, to conclude that this lies in a space of ambiguity – although, they posit that “*securitisation is a further intensification of politicisation*”, they also argue that, precisely because securitisation removes the securitised subject from the realm of what can be openly discussed, it is simultaneously a form of depoliticisation. This binomial is significant for this investigation, as it will consider the discourse on protest from both a securitisation and politicisation standpoint, to attempt to shed light on the functioning of this relation.

Once a subject matter is successfully securitised – as is the case, for example, of terrorism – it is often shrouded in secrecy: the general public is mostly kept unaware of actions taken within its scope and their legitimacy is not subjected to open political discussion. The term terrorism however, and as Loadenthal (2018, p. 36-38) stresses, has been used to refer to a variety of practices whose identification with terrorism is contested – including political mobilisation challenging “*the government in symbolic, rhetorical, and practical terms*”. In these cases, the label terrorism is used as a discursive ploy to “*defame a particular tactic, strategy, organisation, ideology, or individual*”, attached mostly to leftist political activism with varying degrees of violence (including, significantly, no violence at all).

Lene Hansen (2000, p. 287) identifies additional silenced areas by the securitisation framework, namely the absence of gender, and the exclusion of subaltern actors who are not able to speak their security problems but may be framed as such by those in power. Claire Wilkinson (2007, pp. 12; 21), in addition, stresses that the securitisation framework presupposes the existence of free speech, as well as of a political regime that is able to guarantee citizens’ protection against violence – thereby locating the framework firmly in developed democracies and contesting the usefulness of the concept in non-democratic settings. Another limitation of the securitisation framework

is identified by Thierry Balzacq (2010, pp. 48-50), who posits that it does not fully take into account the context in which the illocutionary acts are uttered, thus failing to consider the very power relations between securitising actors and their audiences, which are, themselves, producers of meaning.

Context is central in this work, hence the choice of a critical methodology that fully accounts for it. Protest events – instances of popular mobilisation in the form of demonstrations, strikes, occupations, civil disobedience, etc. in the shared public sphere – do not occur in a vacuum. It is, therefore, essential to consider multiple contextual factors, including, for example, the place and time of the event, the actors involved, the number of participants, the targets, the State's reaction, the historical circumstances, the cultural aspects, on so forth, before, during, and after the event itself.

Given this work's focus, it will attribute particular importance to actors who are able to shape public opinion on protest, both positively and negatively, and consider how they are rooted in their contexts. This investigation, thus, also expands the securitisation framework, as it considers other actors who may be able to enunciate security – or dismantle the securitising move – apart from the State and its representatives, and expects that, when it comes to protest, securitisation mechanisms may occur simultaneously to desecuritisation mechanisms, invoked by different actors who play the securitisation game in the shared public sphere. And since securitising and desecuritising moves are essentially discursive, it is precisely through the study of language in use by these different agents that securitisation can be uncovered and understood.

By opening the analysis to the presence of both securitising and desecuritising agents, this study will be able to identify any relationships between securitisation and politicisation, thereby exploring the possibility hinted at by Buzan *et al.* (*id.*, p. 29), who admit that the former, as a dynamic, socially constructed process, relying on political choices, has the potential of legitimising degrees of anti-democratic control, thereby limiting the public space available for expressions of dissent, and later overtly admitted by Buzan and Hansen (2009, p. 217), who stated that “[c]onstituting something as a security problem might be a problematic or even dangerous strategy in that it grants privilege to official leaders and legitimises the suspension of civil and liberal rights”.

The securitisation of protest, then, occurs in a wide political context, ever-evolving, with new actors and new relations of power, and it is still not fully understood. One contributing factor to this knowledge gap could be that most work concerned with protest and security addresses the binomial through the lens of protest policing – simply defined here as the control of protest by police forces (della Porta *et al.*, 2006, p. 3). This work considers protest policing as a fundamental departing point, since it creates the visible, immediate line between the protection of the public order and the guarantee of individual and collective rights to informal political participation, and is generally thought of as an indicator of the respect of the State for the citizenry's rights and freedoms (della Porta and Reiter, 1998, 29-30).

A significant part of the scholarly work on protest policing pivots around transnational protest cycles – the social justice movement of the beginning of the twentieth century (Earl, 2003; della Porta *et al.*, 2006; della Porta and Fillieule, 2004; della Porta and Peterson, 2005; Wood, 2014) or the anti-austerity protest cycle (Mansley, 2014; Wood, 2014, 2017). This literature has recently been enriched with multiple works in the wake of the intensification of the Black Lives Matter Movement, mostly in the USA (see, for example, Camp and Heatherton, 2016; Vitale, 2017; Correia and Wall, 2018). It was, however, at the end of the twentieth century that della Porta and Reiter (1997) established a model of protest policing¹⁰, comprising three types of strategies:

- Persuasive: based on negotiation with protesters, the goal being managing the protest event,
- Coercive: forceful intervention, often with the use of militarised tactics and less lethal weapons, whose goal is to terminate the protest event, and
- Information-based: prior to the protest event, in a preventive rationale, and subsequently, for prosecution purposes.

Collectively, this literature demonstrates that protest policing is becoming more militarised, increasingly relying on coercive strategies – such as deployment of riot police, employment of less-lethal weapons, mass arrests, barricading, or recourse to

¹⁰ This model has been tested in subsequent works and deemed still valid – see della Porta *et al.*, 2006 and Wood, 2014.

agent provocateurs – aiming at terminating the episode of protest and, as a second objective, at dissuading future instances of popular mobilisation. This strategy is often coupled with information-based tactics, whose goal is to prevent protest by dissuading / penalising participants. This is a *volte-face*, as the tendency from the late 1970s to the end of the twentieth century was that of negotiated management (della Porta and Fillieule, 2004, pp. 219-220; Wahlström, 2011, p. 21), grounded on seeking dialogue with protest organisers, resulting in infrequent recourse to forceful police intervention and growing tolerance towards creative protest repertoires. It was when confronted with the mass demonstrations of the social justice protest cycle of the early 2000s that this persuasive strategy started to erode and more energetic approaches to protest policing were adopted. Further, and in particular,

“in Europe, protest deterrence through the definition of no-go areas spread (...). Moreover, tolerance of minor violations was undermined by a bipartisan agreement between right wing and centre-left parties to label any form of direct action (such as occupations or roadblocks) or even symbolic actions of civil disobedience (such as paying only half-price for public services or books) as violent (della Porta and Reiter, 2006, p. 185).

What is more, research has uncovered that the police have also worked to make protest invisible and silence dissent, removing them from the political decision-making arenas that are normally their targets, and from the media – a development that, della Porta and Reiter argue, challenges the common *“conception of the right to demonstrate: it concedes the freedom of expression, but tends to negate the accompanying right to be heard”* (2006, p. 186). Further, this strategy has limited the possibilities of meaningful negotiation between protestors and their targets, as it actively seeks to isolate political leaders and dignitaries from contact with demonstrators, thus signalling a public message *“difficult to reconcile with a negotiating strategy”* (*id.*, 179).

In addition, scholarly work has identified a tendency for harsher styles of protest policing against social and political groups that are perceived as more ideologically driven or more radical, posing larger threats to political elites, but also those who are considered poorer in material and social capital – including ethnic or religious minorities, immigrants, left wing activists, or youth (Earl, 2003, pp. 50-52; della Porta and Fillieule,

2004, pp. 222-223; 225-226; della Porta and Peterson, 2005, pp. 233-234), with Lesley Wood (2014, p. 45) arguing that escalated force is the dominant strategy towards *“devalued populations deemed threatening or unpredictable”*. What is more, the police seem to patrol the boundaries of citizenship, often deciding on a case-by-case basis who is granted the right to legitimately demonstrate in the shared public sphere and who is not (Waddington, 1999, p. 41; Muncie, 2020, p. 472), resulting in the actual *“reduction of the rights (of demonstration, movement, privacy) of those citizens that are considered as potential enemies”* (della Porta, 2013a, p. 163) – with consequences, I argue, that will eventually spread to the whole citizenry, signalling the subordination of political rights of some to the security of others.

Finally, empirical research has signalled that protest policing affects the evolution of protest itself, particularly in terms of the choice of repertoires and messages being conveyed by protesters (della Porta and Reiter, 2013, pp. 231-235). It also impacts popular mobilisation in more profound, less immediate ways: Starr *et al.* (2008, pp. 260-263) argue that being described as extremists exhibiting anti-social behaviour and constituted as the object of surveillance by State authorities has gravely impacted peaceful protesters’ willingness to participate in demonstrations and to continue to organise their communities around issues that should be considered as part of the democratic repertoire. They posit that these developments also foreclose perceived political opportunities, by remaking *“public space as a space of imminent police violence”* and criminalising regular street politics activities. Moreover, it impedes activists from creating and passing their own message and, ultimately, it reduces *“the quality and quantity of political discourse”*, replacing the culture of solidarity that characterises social movements with a *“security culture, [whose hallmarks] are exclusion, wariness, withholding information, and avoiding diversity”*. More recently, and concerning the Spanish anti-austerity protest movement, Ruth Simsa (2017) has reached some similar conclusions.

Gillham (2011), who does approach protest policing through the lens of securitisation with a specific focus on the USA, also argues that negotiated management met its end at the 1999 World Trade Organisation demonstrations in Seattle, being replaced by strategic incapacitation, a tendency vastly accelerated after 9/11, with the goal of

“securitising society” (p. 637). He argues that this was made possible by the exploitation of discursive opportunities by multiple political actors (politicians, the police, the judiciary, but also private corporate actors with vested interests in the militarisation of the police forces) framing security concerns’ priority over civil liberties, and posites, furthermore, that the impact of such securitising moves on democratic societies is still not further understood – a gap this work aims to contribute to filling.

This investigation departs from this rich literature to argue that it is necessary to attain a deeper understanding of these dynamics beyond the actions of the police forces. In this respect, Ella Muncie’s 2020 work on anti-fracking protest in the UK is quite insightful, as she uncovers a clear dichotomy between who is considered a good and a bad protester in media, political, and police narratives, relying on what is considered as the boundary between legitimate and illegitimate protest (pp. 470-471) – which is, however, not clear, not only for the police, but also for protesters themselves. For her, then, the current *“‘protest paradigm’ allows for the simultaneous acknowledgement of the right to protest, alongside any view that activity considered to be ‘disruptive’ fully deserves condemnation and criminalisation”* (p. 470). In addition, Muncie demonstrates that, at least in the UK, opposition to fracking is increasingly being framed within a discourse of domestic extremism (p. 474). Her analysis, though, remains limited to one specific motivation, moment, and location of dissent, and is not concerned with the consequences for living democratic practices and polities.

Muncie also argues that the dichotomy good / bad protester is often echoed by journalists, given their reliance on police sources (pp. 470-471), highlighting police’s traditional role as the primary definers in the production of news (Ruiz, 2015, pp. 195-196). Together, then, protest policing and the mediated description of protest contribute to reproducing exclusionary practices of protesters from the shared public sphere, and, ultimately, enable and constrain the wider public’s engagement with the political.

Ella Muncie’s work deepens the findings of previous empirical research by Lasse Lindekilde (2010) which used an approximate methodology to the one proposed here to focus on mobilisation by Danish Muslims around the prophet Mohammed cartoons controversy of 2005-6, and identified a clear line between what is considered legitimate

and illegitimate protest (often described as radical, extremist and un- / anti-democratic), and between legitimate State repression of protest events, argued on the basis of law and order discourses, as well as those on liberal democracy and Human Rights. Lindekilde's protest event timeline, however, was only six months and she relied on a single newspaper source, not being concerned with popular mobilisation itself, but rather with claim-making by different actors around one solitary issue. Nonetheless, and despite their limited focus, these works contribute to illuminate State actors' ability to define social reality, making one particular discourse dominant – that describing protest as radical and extreme, outside the realms of accepted political behaviour.

Della Porta and Diani (2006, p. 199) had already demonstrated the prevalence of the dichotomy good protesters (peaceful, pragmatic, politically savvy, experienced) vs. bad protesters (violent, young, misinformed, inexperienced) in police knowledge, and stated that participants in the new social movements of the 21st century were mainly considered bad protesters – and tactics of protest policing chosen accordingly. There is, then, selectivity in protest policing, which is indicative of the fact that it can be subject to political influence.

Although these contributions provide significant insights, they are mostly focused on single-issue mobilisation in one specific location, and their timeframes are very short. This work's added value is also connected to the vast dataset used, and to its comparative design, through a methodology designed to appreciate limits and possibilities for dissent and democracy in the 21st century. It is, thus, interested in finding out if protest and protest policing are legitimised, or, on the other hand, questioned, by influential actors in the public sphere, but it also argues that there are other moments of legitimisation and delegitimation of protest that occur before, during, and after the protest event, and, thereby, can actually be quite disconnected from the actions of both police forces and protesters. It will then remain aware that most protest in democratic countries – including in Portugal and Spain (Fernandes *et al.*, 2020, pp. 72-73, Romanos and Sádaba, 2022, pp. 104-105; chapters 3 and 4) – is not the object of police intervention, but it will demonstrate that this is not the only mechanism which effectively depoliticises, delegitimises, and securitises protest. This will be explored in

chapters 5 and 6 through a focus on discourses and frames uttered by vested actors, such as politicians, economic elites, the media, and the police themselves.

In order to do so, an accepted notion of 'security' – another contested, evolving concept – is necessary. While security can generally be understood as freedom from risk or danger, its meaning is constantly being expanded: from Jessica Tuchman Mathews declaring, in 1989, that security had shed its war-centric character to include economic, resource, environmental, and demographic issues, to Joshua Brown (2019) stating, thirty years after, that *"security is everything"* – including daily activities that guarantee individual survival and political choices in every realm of governance.

This investigation will work with a more confined definition – that proposed by Barry Buzan and Lene Hansen, two practitioners of the Copenhagen Security School: security *"is about constituting something that needs to be secured: the nation, the State, the individual, the ethnic group, the environment or the planet itself"* (2009, pp. 9-10). In this definition, security is given a *"particular discursive and political force and is a concept that does something – securitise – rather than an objective (or subjective) condition"* (id., p. 214). This definition stresses the dynamic character of the securitisation process, highlighting its discursive nature, and, therefore, establishes that the meaning of security depends on societal, political, economic, and cultural factors, as well as on individual and collective feelings or perceptions.

One specific moment in time can be pointed out as the turning point for the notion of security that is central in this discussion. If Donatella della Porta had already argued, in 1996, that the surveillance of social movements had blurred the distinction between crime and politics, it was as of September 11th, 2001, that these lines were further distorted. The 'war on terror' decreed by US President George W. Bush relied on a constant invocation of discursive tropes around security which sought to warrant public acceptance and compliance with a range of policies and laws that resulted in increased militarisation of civil life and in encroachment on civic and Human Rights, simultaneously legitimised by those very same discursive elements (Buzan and Hansen, 2009, ch. 8; Gordillo, 2013, p. 89).

One example of this discursive shift happened in relation to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, firstly justified by the need to stop the production and eventual use of weapons of massive destruction (WMD). When the coalition forces led by the USA (and which both Portuguese and Spanish governments supported, causing significant public resistance expressed in protest events, particularly in Spain – see chapter 3) failed to find any WMD, the discourse justifying the operation changed: it became a Human Rights and democracy effort, undertaken to protect the Iraqi population against dictatorship. As local opposition grew to the occupation, the discourse shifted again, this time framing local armed groups as ‘terrorists’, ‘Islamic fundamentalists’ or ‘insurgents’, and the occupying forces as ‘reconstruction’ or ‘nation-building’ forces. This constitutes a clear example of discursive constructions being used to legitimise a war of occupation through common values such as universal rights, human development, and democracy, often with gender connotations, and exhibiting colonialist and orientalist echoes, while concurrently delegitimising local actors, via a securitising move that, simultaneously, voided them of political agency (Agathangelou and Ling, 2004, pp. 520-524; Debrix, 2005, pp. 1161-1169; Barkawi and Laffey, 2006, p. 251; Sovacool and Halfon, 2007, pp. 232-241; Buzan and Hansen, 2009, pp. 243-248).

In fact, as José Luis Gordillo (2013, p. 61) posits, similar slogans had been in use to justify previous armed conflicts as fair, just and, ultimately, democratic, and they were resumed in the early years of the 21st century in relation to the occupation of Iraq. The author, further, offers an extensive discussion of the narrative created around the so-called ‘war on terror’ [the first international war called, in his words, against an “*abstract and undetermined object*” (*id.*, p.86)] and the multiple (and ultimately, fictitious) explanations used by American political leaders to justify it and legitimate it, and obtain the vast support of the American public – a condition necessary for a successful securitising move. It may, in fact, be that very “*abstract and undetermined*” nature [that is also inherent to the fluidity of the very definition of terrorism, as multiple resistance struggles resulting in democratic advances were, at times, labelled as terrorism – as the fight against apartheid teaches us] that allowed the successive discursive shifts identified above, and the corresponding securitising moves.

It is then no wonder that Buzan and Hansen (2009, p. 254) call for the critical examination of these discursive structures. In particular, they reiterate that the 'war on terror' discourse further expanded the widening tendency of the meaning of security, as issues such as gender security, environmental security, or societal security have been particularly prolific. In this line, this work embraces the notion that security has taken on a new meaning, becoming a right associated with citizenship, freedom and, ultimately, with democracy itself, while, simultaneously, its semantic value can be used precisely to hinder democratic rights, fundamental freedoms (expression, assembly, association) and feelings of belonging to the *demos*.

In what concerns protest, Lesley Wood states that popular mobilisation has been increasingly managed as a security threat since 9/11, with security concerns trumping the legal system, civil liberties, and Human Rights, and police forces increasing blurring categories such as criminality, terrorism, and dissent in their protest policing decision-making processes (2014, p. 139). She further argues that escalation and militarisation of protest policing is a consequence of neoliberalism, as, with the normalisation of welfare cuts, the police became what she refers to as the "*cleaning up crew*" (2014, p. 6), in charge of guaranteeing a safe environment for capitalist investment. Although she does not consider securitisation dynamics, this statement is relevant, as it poses the hypothesis of economic elites being able to pose as securitising actors. Further, Wood makes it clear that protest policing happens in a wider social and political context, by concluding that, at least in North America, "*the legal, cultural, and political space for dissent has narrowed, facilitated by legislative tools (laws against organised crime, on terrorism, bans on protest) and an increased State capacity for surveillance and border control*" (p. 6).

Another interesting contribution of her work is her study on the use of media channels by police forces – she states that police forces increasingly employ a strategy of intentional media spin (pp. 39-40), which includes efforts to delegitimise protesters and their movements, serving multiple purposes, including discouraging participation in dissent, but also signalling to political and economic leaders the preparedness of police forces, thereby harnessing their support. Since this work is focused on protest events reported in the media, this is a factor it will be alert to.

Loadenthal (2018, p. 37), too, highlights that leftist large scale street mobilisation in the USA – particularly those by social movements connected to anti-globalisation and pro-equity demands around international summits – started being criminalised through a discursive association with terrorism, which he terms the “*terrorisation of dissent*” (p. 50), and which intensified after 9/11. This discursive shift was achieved through the framing of civil disobedience and disruptive protest actions as internal terrorism, thus equating those activities to an existential threat to the State and the citizenry – a clear securitising move that was accompanied by an escalation of protest policing, and which was to cause irreparable damage to the organisations, movements, and individuals. He further identifies a paced replacement of the term ‘demonstrator’ by the term ‘rioter’, used unsparingly whenever there was any destruction of property during protest events – pointing out that this shift is a clear political choice, aimed at othering and isolating leftist social movements and activists, and thereby break any linkages of solidarity between them and the citizenry, which are essential for street politics.

Della Porta and Reiter (2013) are also conscient of the impact of the laws on terrorism passed after 9/11 on the restriction of demonstration rights, as are Flesher Fominaya and Wood (2011, p. 2), who argue that the “*«global war on terror» has fuelled anti-terrorism legislation that has been used to quash dissent and to criminalise activists within countries whose states claim a particular affinity with Human Rights*”. Frédéric Gros (2021, p. 117) shares that concern, positing that the *demos* are increasingly subject to laws whose purpose is not justice, but security, and this is affecting the possibility of expressing dissent in democratic societies.

For Mansley (2014, p. 53; 138-141), too, for whom the style of protest policing is indicative of a government’s political priorities, militarisation of protest policing reinforces the State’s hold on the monopoly of violence. Perhaps paradoxically, he found higher public approval rates of hard policing – although he also states that this approval is volatile and can change rather quickly, as was the case during the Great Recession and corresponding anti-austerity mobilisation. Mansley states that this is not a sign of democratic erosion, but rather a sign of the increased legitimacy of the State, which can be seen as a sign of healthy democracies. He does not consider, however, the possibility raised by Nancy Bermeo (2016) of democratic erosion being brought about by the very

institutions that are supposed to sustain democratic practices, nor the fact that approval of hard policing may be the result of the intensification of an alarmist discourse that criminalises an increasing variety of social practices – or, in other words, of penal populism: increased public calls for higher penalties and prison sentences for those offences that receive more mediatic attention (Gordillo, 2013, p. 62).

Loïc Wacquant (2009, Prologue) also blames neoliberalism for the rise in harsher police intervention, arguing that the State increasingly relies on the police (and other penal institutions) to contain disturbances brought to the order of the day by unemployment, precarity, and welfare cuts. He argues that this is a sign of growing State intervention in social matters, counterbalanced by its absence in economic governance. Hörnqvist (2004, p. 10) also notes that *“refugees, terrorism, anti-government demonstrations [emphasis added], organised crime, poverty, drugs, and Islamic fundamentalism do not really have a great deal to do with one another. It would be difficult to identify what they have in common – if it was not for the concrete policy response”*. This common response relies on the categorisation of all these phenomena as threats, despite the fundamental differences between them – and, in what concerns protest, its centrality to the very notion of democracy. As the author states, *“any element of non-conformity is construed as a threat”* (p. 1) – and protest is, by its very nature, non-conforming. Flesher Fominaya and Wood (2011, p. 4) concur, and urge that work is devoted towards the recognition of protest policing, mediatic tactics, surveillance, migration control, and the widely disseminated narrative on the ‘war on terror’ as part of one and the same repressive strategy.

These dynamics are explored by Giorgio Agamben in his seminal work, *State of Exception* (2005), in which he posits that what is at stake is the disappearance of meaningful political action. Reflecting precisely from the aftermath of 9/11 and the proclamation of the ‘war on terror’, Agamben argues that the state of exception exists in a zone of anomie, neither inside nor outside the juridical order, and posits that its norms and practices are increasingly being adopted and normalised to cope with social disorder and economic crises, through the use of a constant vocabulary of ‘war’ and ‘emergency’ maintained to justify exceptional political measures, progressively emptying the law of

its meaning and purpose, and turning 'exception' into a theory of government. Language, then, is central in the creation and maintenance of the 'state of exception'.

It would seem, then, that we are, as Anthony Giddens (1990) and Ulrich Beck (1992) famously posited, living in a 'risk society', with our worldview constantly organised around evaluations of future harm. In the logic of the risk society, protest's threat assessment is a response to the perceived uncertainty brought about by popular mobilisation, and the enunciation of the need to keep economic and political power holders, as well as the general public, safe from harm (Wood, 2014, ch. 7). Nonetheless, the general public, and, at times, those very economic and political power holders, participate in protest, and one should not lose sight of the fact that the very notion of risk can easily be politicised and instrumentalised to enhance control. One example is given by Huguée *et al.* (2020, pp. 54-56; 78-81), who argue that the term 'middle class', understood as an ever-expanding group of people that encompasses everyone except the elites and the destitute, has been used by political leaders to construct a notion of a risk-free society devoid of class conflict, with the purpose of disengaging the people from the civic and the political sphere.

These dynamics have also been noted by transnational NGOs. For instance, the Transnational Institute (2017) identified a tendency for the shrinking of the public space available for protest and of freedom of movement and association, pushed by State institutions, but also by economic actors and populist far-right organisations. They argue that we are witnessing a banalisation of the adoption of restrictive practices targeting protest – including legislation, censorship, surveillance, but also public stigmatisation and delegitimation of individual activists and their movements – justified through a meta-discourse involving themes such as public health, social cohesion, national security, and the fight against terrorism.

Amnesty International, also in 2017, claimed that there has been a paradigm shift in the concept of security: European governments' role is no longer to guarantee security so that citizens can enjoy their rights, but to restrict rights in order to guarantee security. Their report associates the implementation of anti-terrorism measures with the reduction of public space and the restriction of citizenship rights, through the institutionalisation of states of emergency and the consolidation of power in the

executive branch, as well as practices to restrict freedom of movement and the criminalisation of protest.

Some of these concerns were also expressed by the Council of Europe (2016), which identified a clear tendency toward the restriction of the freedom of association and right to assembly and demonstration in a number of countries (referring in particular the case of Spain), as well as a discursive tendency to securitise the public sphere on the basis of enhanced security needs justifying the imposition of emergency measures, which reduce the available space for dissent.

The Covid-19 pandemic seems to have exacerbated this trend – CIVICUS, in its 2020 report, alerted that, in the EU, civic space restrictions, particularly in terms of the freedom of assembly, that were already in place before the coronavirus outbreak, have worsened, often under the guise of efforts to tackle the virus. The Civil Liberties Union for Europe and Greenpeace (2021) are of the same opinion, stating that governments' responses to the pandemic have led to unnecessary and disproportionate restrictions on civic space and freedoms, hampering activism and democratic participation. The V-Dem Report on "*Pandemic backsliding*" (Kolvani *et al.*, 2021) and International IDEA's "*Global State of Democracy 2021*" share the same concerns.

Nonetheless, people continued to protest – and not just, or more vehemently, against Covid-19 related restrictions. Labour rights, citizenship rights, or the climate emergency, for example, remained claims that gathered people in the shared public sphere – as Civicus (2020) put it, "*[c]ivil society is sending a clear message: even amid a global pandemic that has brought many aspects of life to a halt, people will never cease to fight for fundamental freedoms*".

Discourse and language are central in this rights-pursuing work. As Benford and Snow (2000, p. 56) have demonstrated, it is not only the State and its institutions, but also social movements and the media, that deeply engage in what Stuart Hall (1982, p. 356) referred to as the "*politics of signification*". One must, then, maintain the notion that language can also be an instrument of counter-power – and it is certainly used as such in and around protest events: protesters want to be understood as pushing for justice and fairness, in the face of a *status quo* they present as unfair, creating an "*identity field*"

which defines the protagonists, the antagonists, its audience, and the channels for the diffusion of their message (Della Porta *et al.*, 2006, p. 67). Repertoires of collective action are part of this message-building strategy – they are selected according to specific objectives and audiences, being symbolic, politically, and culturally significant, as they *“represent not only how people make claims but what they know about making claims and the reception by targets of their claims”* (Tarrow, 2013).

Human Rights and democracy are central in the construction of this message, and as a tool to enumerate what is happening to people, as well as a lens into a better, fairer future. Protesters often articulate the international discourse of Human Rights and democracy with the discourse of economic and social development, creating a counter-discourse (Piper, 2015, p. 792) based on tropes such as the right to a decent life, and the right to full economic, social, and political participation. Diverse forms of solidarity thus emerge, produced daily by and in organisations, movements, networks, and groups of activists, in different positions of power, appealing to a variety of collective identities (i.e., humanist, leftist, anti-globalisation, feminist, environmentalist), considering multiple situations of vulnerability, often intersectionally, manifested in the public sphere through protest.

According to Judith Butler (2009, p. 153; 2015, pp. 2; 50), there is a need to secure the semantic stability of words such as Human Rights, democracy, citizenship, violence, and non-violence (and even terrorism), so as to defend and stabilise the legitimate right to use them and fight against their wrongful appropriation. It is precisely because that stability is not assured that one must also remain alert of the limits of the discourse on rights – for example, Natasha Lennard (2019, p. 76) alerts that these limits exist particularly in relation to protest, as, not only is this discourse increasingly appealed to by non-progressive movements, but *“[w]hen we focus too much on our rights to speak and assemble, (...) our fight becomes atomised over the fact of assembly, rather than the reason for protest”*. She further adds that *“[u]nder a rights framework, the state can have its punitive way with any protester if that protester has violated some mythical social contract with “bad” or “violent” behaviour. This is dangerous in the current reality, forged by lawmakers who seek to criminalise all manner of protest activity”* (p. 73-74).

This concern had already been expressed by Hannah Arendt, who, writing as a refugee, understood how Human Rights – or the “*right to have rights*” (1973, p. 298) – were granted and recognised by the State, and, as such, not useful to those people stripped of or denied citizenship. Protest, popular mobilisation, and expressions of dissent in the shared public sphere are, precisely, ways of demanding the right of recognition and of collectively constructing citizenship, framed in a democratic, rights-centred understanding of what it is to be human, or, in the words of Donatella di Cesare (2021, p. 74-75), a way of expanding what it means to be a political citizen in the shared public sphere, challenging the monopoly of the State through the claim of the right to be seen and heard. This work will remain aware of these contributions in its investigation of how these can constitute desecuritisising mechanisms in relation to protest.

These authors, then, share the view that a healthy civil society is essential for a quality democracy. Civil society expresses itself in many forms, including via protest led by progressive social movements which refashion democracy from below and inject new blood into democratic practices. Discourse is one of these practices, but, on the other side of the barricade, language and discourse are also central in the erosion of democracy.

This work has discourse at its heart. It will argue that protest is increasingly depoliticised, delegitimised and even securitised in the Iberian Peninsula – and particularly in Spain. It will consider that this has a strong, negative impact on the quality of democracy, as it limits the potential impact of progressive social movements in keeping democracy active, responsive, and focused on the promotion of equality and Human Rights.

It will posit that these negative depictions of popular mobilisation constitute a hindering condition for the development, activity, and survival of a healthy civil society that is essential for democracy, with consequences that expand over time and space, resulting in citizens’ depoliticisation, disengagement and, ultimately, retreat from the shared public sphere – which, ultimately, ceases to be the space where justice, rights and duties come to be (Eickelman and Salvatore, 2004, p. 5). In the next session, the methodology proposed to achieve these objectives is explained.

Methodology

This investigation adopted a combined methods approach to the compared study of the two case studies: Portugal and Spain. Through triangulation – the use of multiple research methods and types of data to analyse one problem – this work aimed at preserving the main properties of each of the case studies (relying on a careful background analysis of each country’s context to facilitate the causal-process analysis – chapter 2), while, simultaneously, illuminating the differences between them, thereby increasing the research design’s illative capacity (Ayoub *et al.*, 2014, pp. 67-68). It thereby implemented a “most similar” design, as these are broadly analogous cases, selected for their potential to explain distinct outcomes based on particular contextual differences (della Porta, 2013; 2014, p. 23; 296).

Triangulation first relied on Protest Event Analysis (PEA), a quantitative methodology, and then on Critical Frame Analysis (CFA), a qualitative methodology, adapted to this investigation’s research objectives. This was meant to increase the validity of findings and address and overcome limitations posed by each of the methodologies, as well as by the researcher’s own biases. An explanatory sequential research design was employed, where the results of the PEA informed the qualitative probe. It is, therefore, necessary to explain the research layout in detail, starting with an exploration of the application of PEA.

Protest Event Analysis is a systematic method of data collection on protest activities, used to map, analyse, and interpret the occurrence and properties of contentious actions, providing macro-level data on collective mobilisation. It is a type of quantitative content analysis which “*turns words into numbers*” (Franzosi, 2004, in Hutter, 2014, p. 335), permitting cross-national, cross-time, and cross-issue comparative research designs. PEA has the advantages of being unobtrusive, context sensitive, able to cope with large volumes of data, and, most importantly, it can be combined with other methodological designs. It is also closely linked to the political process approach, highlighting how civil society actors are located in the organisational and socio-political context (Ekiert and Kubik 1998, p. 13; Koopmans and Rucht 2002, p. 252; Fillieule and Jiménez, 2003, p. 258; Hutter, 2014, pp. 336-337, Dolenc *et al.*, 2019, p. 156).

Most quantitative data used here came from a protest events dataset collected in the scope of the Disobedient Democracy project (<https://disdem.org/>, Disdem hereafter). The team at Disdem surveyed all printed issues published between 2000 and 2017 of two quality national newspapers of different ideological stances: *Diário de Notícias* and *Público* for Portugal, and *El País* and *El Mundo* for Spain¹¹. Further data were then collected for 2018, 2019, and 2020 for both countries, to complement the time-series¹², following the same coding procedures.

Table 1. Newspapers analysed for PEA and their ideological stances.

Country	Newspaper	Ideological stand
Portugal	<i>Público</i>	Centre-left orientation
	<i>Diário de Notícias</i>	Centre-right orientation
Spain	<i>El País</i>	Centre-left orientation
	<i>El Mundo</i>	Centre-right orientation

The decision on what constituted a unit of analysis – a protest event – was based on the presence of a repertoire of collective action displayed in public (requiring no minimum number of participants, nor a specific type of claim). This definition is, therefore, very close to Tilly’s (1988, p. 8) conception of a “*contentious gathering*”: a collective event, making a claim or expressing a grievance in the shared public sphere. Perusing all issues of each newspaper avoided problems associated with selecting / sampling (Ekiert and Kubik, 1998, pp. 15-16) as all cases were included, regardless of the characteristics of the protest event and of the potential historical or political significance ascribed to it.

Each protest event was coded in a database consisting of forty variables, five of which were technical (name of the event, sources within newspapers), while the rest were descriptive – including location, duration and summary of the event, number and identity of participants, presence and identity of organisers, presence and identity of allies, repertoires, slogans, and other cultural aspects (i.e., songs, objects), claims and demands, direct targets and ultimate objects of mobilisation, incidence and type of police intervention, casualties and damages, presence and result of negotiations

¹¹ The project also collected data for Croatia and Serbia between 2000 and 2017.

¹² *Diário de Notícias* became a weekly printed newspaper as of July 2018.

between protesters and targets / objects, and reactions by targets and other relevant actors. The extension of the data enables the capture of long-term dynamics in considerable detail, and each event was coded with its respective source in a PDF or JPEG format, which permitted the retrieval of the original sources for the subsequent CFA analysis.

This strategy was conceived taking into account one other important caveat of Protest Event Analysis – that of biases. Description bias, referring to how a protest event is portrayed by journalists who work for a certain media outlet with a determined audience, resulting in the preferential cover of the most dramatic demonstrations and the most extreme elements of a social movement (Rohlinger and Vaccaro, 2013), is closely linked to selection bias: it has been argued that the press only covers two to ten percent of protest events, systematically choosing the bigger protests with more spectacular repertoires and around pressing policy issues, mostly taking place in the country's capital or other important cities, and prioritising those events where violence is recorded, or those called by important institutional political actors or civil society representatives (Oliver and Maney, 2000, pp. 466-467; Fillieule and Jiménez, 2003, pp. 261-263; Earl *et al.*, 2004, pp. 68-73; Hutter, 2014, pp. 351-352; Amenta *et al.*, 2017, pp. 5-7). Both case studies presented in this work contradict this, as there is a significant proportion of micro (less than 50 participants) and small protest (less than 100 participants) reported, featuring a majority of traditional repertoires of collective action and a short percentage of violent incidents (chapter 3).

Despite these biases, this investigation shares the belief that newspapers offer several advantages over police records (which are, of course, an obvious journalistic source – Ruiz, 2015, pp. 195-196) for the purposes of PEA, including non-restricted access, reliability, continuity over time, and ease of coding (Hutter, 2014, p. 349), as well as a higher degree of neutrality. As Ekiert and Kubic (2001, p. 13) posit,

“newspapers provide the most complete account of protest events and are virtually the only source of information on many important dimensions of protest activities (...) [, plus] the media in developed western societies are characterised by a robust liberal tradition, institutional stability, independence, and high standards of journalism. Moreover, the

state's involvement in media activities is highly restricted and their freedom guaranteed".

Nonetheless, the role of the media in setting the public agenda cannot be lessened – as the first selective mechanism of which events and social issues are presented as relevant to the citizenry, and as a fundamental channel for relevant actors in the public sphere to expose their views. The media constitutes both an essential arena for claim-making (Della Porta and Diani, 2006, pp. 219-221; Rohlinger and Vaccaro, 2013; Hutter, 2014, pp. 351-352), and a master arena for portraying political action, as well as for shaping bystander publics (Gamson 2004, p. 243), being for the public understanding of a particular protest event, not only during and immediately following its occurrence, but also long after demonstrators have dispersed, as they continue to report on legal proceedings and official inquiries, and feature interviews and opinion pieces that build public knowledge about it (Ruiz, 2015, p. 196). This was taken into account in the Disdem database and subsequent coding, as these additional instances were also included in the coding practices, allowing a specific focus on reactions to protest events uttered after their completion.

Additionally, one must remain aware that “[t]he fact that most citizens’ engagement with public demonstrations is heavily mediated requires us to think carefully about the everyday practices and processes that construct the relationship between what happens on our streets and what happens in our news (Ruiz, 2015, p. 196), particularly given the tendency for activists to be portrayed in a negative light, and their protest activities posited as a threat to public order (Mac Sheoin and Yeates, 2009, pp. 201-202; Rohlinger and Vaccaro, 2013). In the opposite direction, some of the same research (Rohlinger and Vaccaro, 2013) also states that media coverage can increase the legitimacy of the mobilisation, which will, in turn, enlarge participation in future events called by the same organisers around the same or diverse claims.

Other considerations relate to the neoliberal trend for the commercialisation of the news, coupled with depoliticisation of journalistic work (Bakke *et al.*, 2020, pp. 20-21; 37), and one must also be mindful of the existence of nation-specific media systems and political discourse cultures (Fillieule and Jiménez, 2003). Further, this work was also conscient of the presence of specific media frames: the selection of some aspects of an

event / issue to be made more salient, thereby promoting a particular definition of a problem and providing hints for its interpretation, encouraging audiences to think in a particular way (Muncie, 2020, p. 473).

Awareness of these dynamics reinforces the credibility of the results presented ahead. Further, this investigation followed the advice of Koopmans and Statham (1999a, p. 203), who suggest expanding the methodological design to retrieve the qualitative discursive elements of political claims in order to multiply the potential of PEA. They argue that this approach is more valuable to relate protest to both discursive and institutional contexts, further grounding the analysis on primary data, as a means to address some of the criticisms on PEA – namely its lack of appreciation for the value of discourse as a medium for political conflict and symbolic struggles. In this study, (an adaptation of) Critical Frame Analysis serves just that role. This design, hence, addresses the criticisms advanced by Tilly (2008, p. 35), who stated that conventional protest events catalogues do not allow for a careful study of individual events.

Critical Frame Analysis was developed to examine and address discursive power dynamics connected to policy-making, aiming at disclosing different representations that socio-political actors offer about problems and their solutions (Verloo 2005, p. 22). Although it was initially designed to study policy documents (Meier, 2008, p. 156; Verloo and Lombardo, 2007, p. 35; Van der Haar and Verloo, 2016, p. 1), it has been used to tackle multiple socio-political questions and types of texts / documents (on the use of newspaper sources, for example, see Schouteden and Wauters, 2017, pp. 4-7, and Walkera *et al.*, 2020), as it is, at his core, a versatile methodology, combining Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), frame analysis, policy process analysis and analysis of Political Opportunity Structures (POS) (Meier, 2008, pp- 156-158; Dombos *et al.*, 2012, pp. 4-6).

CFA is particularly useful for the purposes of this investigation, as it allows for the analysis of contextual factors (via POS), and it uncovers discursive conflicts and framing processes by actors in different positions of power (via CDA and frame analysis). As Marleen Van der Haar and Mieke Verloo (2016, p. 2) put it, “[t]he «critical» in CFA stands for explicitly paying attention to the voice of actors (...) and to their varying power, [revealing] implicit or explicit representations of who is facing the problem, who or what caused it and who should solve it”, thereby identifying “who has a voice in defining the

problem and the solution, and (...) which actors are included or excluded" (Meier, 2008, p. 156). CFA, then, is a useful methodology to consider the way that power, dominance, and inequality structures are expressed and reproduced in public discourse. Further, it permits the identification of competing frames in public debates (Mah *et al.*, 2014).

As CFA requires the funnelling of the viewpoint in order to proceed with an in-depth analysis, purpose sampling was adopted (Schwandt, 2007, p. 269-270) to single out those protest events that stood as fundamental to answer the research questions that inform this investigation. This was completed in two stages. Firstly, this work relied on two of the variables from the Disdem dataset – reactions by protest targets and reactions by other actors. A preliminary close reading of the corresponding newspaper articles was conducted to identify eventful events – those that would become the focus of the qualitative probe. This was a necessary step, given the size of the data available (5628 newspaper pages featuring reactions to protest events).

‘Eventful events’ is a concept used in social movements studies referring to those protest events that shape social movements’ strategies, structures, and identity. They tend to be highly participated, are the place of networking and alliance building, and, often, use innovative protest repertoires (Della Porta, 2008, pp. 29-30). The qualitative part of this work, however, is not focused on the effect of eventful events on popular mobilisation, but rather on reactions to protest. It thus considered that focusing exclusively on this type of instances of popular mobilisation risked obscuring potentially rich information that would be essential for this investigation’s goals.

The concept was, thus, adapted: here, eventful events are those which (i) prompt a reaction from a vested actor, that (ii) concern the protest event itself (and not the socioeconomic conditions or the political conjuncture). This allowed for the inclusion of all utterances in reaction to protest which describe, pass judgement, or offer any consideration directly related to protest participants and organisers, protest repertoires, protest timing and appropriateness, or any evaluation of the protest goals. It further considers as eventful events any instances of popular mobilisation that (iii) feature a reaction to protest policing.

To further narrow the corpus, this investigation opted to consider as eventful events those which can be considered as part of 'normal' political life – hence excluding extreme-right mobilisation prior to the entrance of the extreme right in national parliaments in each country (more present in Portugal than in Spain, as per chapter 3, but seldom featuring a reaction), or, for the case of Spain, pro-ETA demonstrations. This means that those protest events that are not progressive (i.e., anti-marriage equality or pro-life demonstration) but are, nonetheless, part of regular political contestation, were considered as part of the research material.

Opting for focusing on eventful events as defined above allowed for the analysis of the most mediatic protest events, bound to feature reactions, but also of smaller instances of popular mobilisation, thus providing a more comprehensive picture of the framing of protest in both countries.

A corpus of 583 protest events were considered eventful events. It was on these that the next stage of the work concentrated, through a second round of close reading. At this stage, this work relied on inductive coding, manually annotating data on the sentence level, a process that was triple-checked to ensure coding consistency.

The first step was to conduct a Critical Discourse Analysis on the acts of speech (the discourse) uttered in reaction to these eventful protest events. Critical Discourse Analysis draws inspiration from Pierre Bourdieu (1977, pp. 49-50), who posited that any social practice is bound up with causes and effects which may not be completely apparent, and from Michel Foucault's (1976, p. 11; 1984, p. 128) concern with the analysis of "problematizations" – the appearance of central 'critical events' in the history of social constitutions of subjectivities. By exposing the linkages between discourse, ideology, and power, CDA seeks to uncover those implicit, naturalised, ideological propositions which are pervasive in discourse, contributing to the positioning of people as social subjects (Fairclough, 1995, p. 23).

Norman Fairclough (1995, p. 6) sees discourse as both socially constituted and constitutive of social identities, social relations, and systems of knowledge, necessitating a research focus on concrete data to uncover how it is structured, and how it structures knowledge domains and claims. He asserts that such concrete data are 'discursive

events' – instances of language use inserted in 'discourse practices', which encompass the production, distribution, and consumption of that discursive event (Fairclough, 1995, pp. 134-135).

Discursive events, then, occur in a dynamic relationship with the contexts in which they are located, existing in an 'order of discourse' – the structure of social practices referring to the sum of discourse types and their internal positioning within a given social institution or social domain. Each order of discourse features a 'hegemonic discourse' – its dominant discourse – that is either reproduced or / and challenged, enabling new possibilities, but also posing new constraints (Fairclough, 1995, pp. 77; Lindekilde, 2014, pp. 205-206).

CDA, then, provides the theoretical framework and methodological tools to examine discourse in action, as it aims to

“systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 132-133).

In the CDA paradigm, then, discourse should be analysed considering the distribution of power and the struggles over dominance in defining social reality in a determined field (Lindekilde, 2014, p. 206). Power is understood in terms of asymmetries between participants in discourse events, and their unequal ability to dictate the production, distribution, and consumption of texts in the order of discourse: *“[t]he power to control discourse is seen as the power to sustain particular discursive practices with particular ideological investments in dominance over other alternative (including oppositional) practices”* (Fairclough, 1995, p. 2).

This means that actors operate in discursive fields referencing the wider contexts in which discussions and debates about relevant events and issues take place, including cultural materials (e.g., beliefs, values, ideologies, myths) that different sets of actors who have a stake in how those events and issues are perceived (e.g., political and

economic elites, the judiciary, the police, civil society organisations, the media), utilise to frame and / or narrate them (Snow, 2013). This is what Fairclough (1995, p.3) referred to as 'technologisation of discourse': the "*calculated intervention to shift discursive practices as part of the engineering of social change*" by those very social and political actors who hold power positions within a discursive field / order of discourse (considered as technologies of government in a Foucauldian sense).

It was precisely to uncover processes of 'technologisation of discourse' that Norman Fairclough (1995, pp. 97-102) conceived his three-dimensional framework for CDA, which this work followed, and which includes:

- the analysis of texts – considering the actual characteristics of a text in terms of wording, grammar, composition, and literary tropes (metaphors, comparisons, euphemisms and dysphemisms, etc.), as well as the reasons justifying specific choices,
- the analysis of discourse practices (the production, distribution, and consumption of texts), and
- the analysis of discursive events as instances of sociocultural practice – including the situational context, the institutional context, and the wider societal context (which includes the impact of the text on the order of discourse – whether it reproduces or challenges the set order – and the effect on wider social practices).

Teun Van Dijk (2001, p. 353) further lists some of the rules of Critical Discourse Analysis which were additionally considered here:

- CDA is a multidisciplinary method that crosses the social and literary sciences,
- CDA is not interested in merely describing discursive structures, but effectively seeks to explain them and their contexts, and
- CDA is focused on the ways in which discursive structures create, confirm, legitimise, reproduce, or question power and domination relations in society.

In this investigation, CDA combined microanalysis of the actual instances of discourse on protest and popular mobilisation produced by different actors active in the Spanish and Portuguese public sphere, occupying different positions in the social field (government, the judiciary, security forces, politicians and political parties, social

movements and activists, academia, journalists), and reproduced in the newspapers, with macro analysis of the 'order of discourse': the totality of discursive practices in a particular social domain – or field, in Bourdieu's terminology – and the relationships between them, as well as the wider structures of societal practices that constitute and are constituted by discourse.

This work remained alert to some of CDA's limitations – for example, Ruth Breeze (2011, pp. 500-501) warned that its wide resources (sociology, political science, philosophy, linguistics, etc.) applied to its wide object of study (all utterances produced by human beings by all means are discourse) can create unsolvable methodological riddles, and alerted that researchers' own political motivations can lead to their personal involvement in the research process.

In Critical Frame Analysis, however, Critical Discourse Analysis is supplemented by the examination of frames in which discourse occurs, an approach that addresses the limitations listed above, and increases the explanatory ability of the research design. The distinction between CDA and frame analysis lies in the former's focus on interrelated sets of texts, and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception, while the second looks at how existing topics are framed by different actors, who may bend meanings in certain directions to suit their objectives (Lindekilde, 2014, p. 198-202).

Frame Analysis was first developed for the analysis of mass media reportage of social movements in the 1960s (Mansley, 2014, p. 34). It is the study of frames, considered as semi-structured elements of discourse that are useful to interpret the information people have access to, providing a consistent causal story of a problem, issue, or event, including how it came to be and how it should be solved (Gamson and Modigliani 1989, p. 3; Entman, 1993, pp. 52-53; Dekker, 2017, p. 3). Rein and Schön (1996, p. 89) consider *"frames as strong and generic narratives that guide both analysis and action in practical situations"*. They provide examples of types of strong narratives that act as frames, including *"the narrative of a fragmented whole object that needs to be restored to its original shape"* (often referred to, for example, in debates on social cohesion) or the *"narrative of a disease that requires cure or quarantine"* (as found, for instance, in debates about belonging and legitimacy to act in the shared public sphere).

Frames, then, *“are manifested by the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotypical images, sources of information and sentences that provide thematically reinforced clusters of facts and judgements”* (Entman, 1993, p. 52-53). The role of frames is to emphasise specific pieces of information, increasing their salience (making a piece of information more obvious, meaningful, or memorable to audiences). This is achieved through different stylistic choices, such as repetitions, strategic placement, or association with culturally familiar symbols. Simultaneously, frames are also characterised by what they omit, and *“the omission of potential problems definitions, explanations, evaluations and recommendations may be as critical as the inclusions in guiding the audience”* (Entman, 1993, p. 54).

Frames, thus, have a normative-prescriptive value, as they structure the perception of reality and attach meaning to it, from a range of possible, alternative meanings, *“selecting, organising, interpreting, and making sense of a complex reality to provide guideposts for knowing, analysing, persuading, and acting”* (Rein and Schön, 1993, p. 146).

It is precisely their normative component that distinguishes frames from discourse: frames place responsibility on certain actors and act as a call for action, demanding a certain response that is described as the most effective (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989, p. 8; Rein and Schön, 1996, p. 89; Dekker, 2017, pp. 3-4). They can, then, set an agenda (Muncie, 2020, p. 467), being transformative of the social reality.

The concept of framing suggests that the ways in which information is selected and communicated by different actors in the public sphere aim to influence how an audience processes and interprets that information (van Hulst and Yanow, 2014, p. 9; Muncie, 2020, p. 467), pointing in the direction of the desired action, described as logic, appropriate, and / or correct. This process is described as ‘strategic framing’, referring to choices made by those actors in order to facilitate the pursuit of their goals (Dombos *et al.*, 2012, p. 5). The analysis of frames, then, facilitates an understanding of how particular utterances set agendas and disseminate particular ways of knowing, by uncovering the process of the social construction of a problem as an essential element of agenda-setting (Goodin *et al.*, 2006, p. 26; Mah *et al.*, 2014; Muncie, 2020. P. 467).

Its relevance for this investigation is its potential to uncover how protest can be transformed into an *“actionable problem”* – a problem that requires action (Goodin *et al.*, 2006, p. 26), through the enquiry of the way that relevant actors in the public sphere communicate about popular mobilisation in terms of definition, causes and consequences, legitimacy, the necessity or not for police intervention and its appropriateness, but also of who gets to opine and decide on that, thereby exposing alignments of political power (Newman and Clarke, 2009, pp. 66-68).

As these frames are likely to be dynamic, contested, and dialectical, van Hulst and Yanow advise emphasis is placed beyond frames to focus on the analysis of framing processes, as *“interactive, intersubjective processes through which frames are constructed* (2014, p. 2), manifesting discursive power (id. p. 10). They further posit that framing is carried out through distinctive activities, including naming and storytelling, as agents active in the public sphere will recourse to these strategies to make sense of political controversies, in an effort to rend them more coherent, less ambiguous, and uncertain, seeking to attain resolution of political issues through persuasion of their audiences.

The authors differentiate naming and storytelling by the level of detail that is included in public discourse: while naming simply highlights specific aspects of that issue / event in one single word, often relying on categorisations (e.g., on protest, and building on the dichotomy good / bad protesters, these words could be ‘demonstrators’, to whom a certain degree of legitimacy is attributed, vs. ‘thugs’, who have no legitimacy to dissent), storytelling narrates an event or issue, with the aim of explaining to the audience what happened, is happening and needs to be done, covertly or overtly ascribing blame and praise, suggesting causes of damage or success, and pointing out the way forward. In that sense, framing *“plays a major role in the exertion of political power and the frame in a news text is really the imprint of power – it registers the identity of actors or interests that compete to dominate the text”* (Entman, 1993, p. 54), thus playing a significant role in shaping public opinion.

Here, the option was for the identification of both frames and framing processes. As there is no prescriptive method for identifying frames, it is advisable to use systematic coding procedures, departing from a careful definition of analytical categories, carefully described, along with their usage (Lindekilde, 2014; Muncie, 2020, pp. 469-470). Since

this research is inductive, that was the approach taken in the coding procedures, which are described at the beginning of the CFA chapters (chapters 5 and 6). It also aimed to locate ‘issue frames’ – or master frames –, defined as *“frames that provide a relatively coherent story / reasoning in which issue specific prognostic elements respond to issue specific diagnostic elements”* (Dombos et al., 2012, p. 5).

CDA and frame analysis then, differ in the empirical questions being asked: critical discourse analysis is particularly concerned with the ideological status of discourse, and frame analysis already departs from previous knowledge of the deliberate, ideological position of a relevant actor in the public sphere to ask what their aims, expressed through text, are, showing how ideology works in practice (Lindekilde, 2014). In this investigation, the two approaches were combined – in-depth critical discourse analysis served as the starting point for frame analysis, an approach that increases the explanatory power and validity of the study.

Analysing the context in which discourse and frames / framing occur, in Critical Frame Analysis, is centred around Political Opportunity Structures (hereinafter, POS). The analysis of POS is the study of the external environment in which political action occurs, considering specifically the *“role of political opportunities, as both stable institutions and contingent developments”* (della Porta and Reiter, 2013). POS has been theorised as particularly relevant for civil society actors involved in popular mobilisation, in relation, for example, to the formation of the nation-state, the type and openness of political institutions, electoral competition, the distribution of power among various actors operating within the party or interest groups’ system, or the presence, strength, and strategies of opponents and potential allies (Tilly, 1988, ch. 4; Kriesi, 1989; della Porta, 2013b).

Coercion is also considered a factor shaping the Political Opportunity Structure, although its effects remain disputed. Tilly’ (1988, pp. 106-115) suggestion of an inverse relationship between the opportunities for access to the system and coercion has been challenged, as it has been argued that *“[c]omparative openness to access from below does not necessarily correspond to minor repression: on the contrary, the availability of instruments of direct democracy might delegitimise protest in the eyes of the*

government and the public opinion, producing calls for law and order (della Porta and Diani, 2006, p. 201).

Perhaps precisely because POS has been employed to refer to different characteristics of the political context, and used to justify different outcomes in different locales, there is a lack of consensus on which opportunities are actually relevant at specific times and POS's explanatory power has been said to be overestimated (Amenta and Halfmann, 2011). Some of the criticisms revolve around cultural factors, which have been said to have been neglected in POS theorisations (della Porta and Diani, 2006, pp. 85-87; della Porta, 2009, pp. 83-92), and POS has, inclusively, been critiqued by its early proponents for providing *"too structuralist and deterministic a vision of reality, without taking into account the importance of the social construction of opportunities"* (McAdam et al., 2001, p. 45).

Given that this work is particularly concerned with the discursive aspect of POS, referred to as Discursive Opportunity Structures (DOS, hereafter), it considers this approach addresses some of the problems identified above. DOS stresses the importance of *"predominant discourses of political culture"* (Lindekilde, 2014, p. 209), affecting what can be said and in what fashion on certain issues, but also indicating what discourses and frames may be successful in building public resonance, and which may be considered as challenging (Koopmans and Statham, 1999a, pp. 204-205; Lindekilde, 2014, pp. 211-212; Mccammon, 2013). It then relates to those ideas and values circulating in the broader political field that are widely believed, considered realistic and legitimate, and largely disseminated.

In addition, DOS analysis is particularly valuable when working with data made available in newspapers, as it considers the fact that mass media is the main arena for the public expression of ideas, as well as for opinion formation (della Porta and Diani, 2006, p. 220) – provided that it also includes a probe of the social structures and power relations within which the media operate.

In order to study the contexts where discourse and frames / framing are located, this work includes a brief historical examination of the evolution of the Political Opportunity Structures in Portugal and in Spain influencing protest since the democratic transition

and up to 2020, considering, in addition, country-specific media systems, and focusing specifically on the reporting of protest and dissent (Baumgarten, 2014, pp. 100-101) – or each country's Discursive Opportunity Structure (chapter 2).

This was complemented by a probe of Portuguese and Spanish laws impacting protest (also chapter 2). This is an adaptation of the final step of CFA – policy process analysis – to the purposes of this investigation. The analysis of policy process aims to understand the processes of policy development and implementation, but also to uncover the aims and motives behind them and their impact (Springate-Baginski and Soussan, 2002, p. 3). Since this investigation is not policy-focused, this modification was necessary to successfully address the research questions.

In conclusion, this work proceeded as follows: it first conducted a PEA in order to uncover and analyse general trends in protest in both countries. This was supplemented by a PEA of protest events with protest policing. The next step was the selection of eventful events and the inductive reading of the news pieces. At this stage, thus, the research was designed to be data-led rather than driven by any predefined theoretical or position.

This step was followed by the Critical Discourse Analysis phase, in which the steps laid out by Normal Fairclough (analysis of texts, analysis of discourse practices and analysis of context) were followed. The results of this research phase informed the following stage – the analysis of frames and framings used in relation to protest events, revealed by manual annotation. As explained in chapter 5, three master frames emerged, considered in binomials – legitimacy and illegitimacy, politicisation and depoliticisation, and security and insecurity. This work also identified the frames composing the master frames and focused on shedding light on their operationalisation.

This rich data set allowed for the identification of relationships, contrasts, and disputes within and between frames and discourses, in which the interpretation of the data was anchored. The results are presented in the following chapters.

Chapter 2. Portugal and Spain from the democratic transition to 2020

“There are times when it is necessary to disobey.” Salgueiro Maia, 1974¹³

“I belong by conviction and will to a majority of citizens who want to speak a moderate language of harmony and conciliation.” Adolfo Suárez, 1976¹⁴

The two case studies that are the focus of this dissertation constitute an interesting empirical puzzle for the students of democracy. These may be the two countries that inaugurated the third wave of democratisation (Huntington, 1991, p. 13), exiting a somewhat similar dictatorial regime, but each country’s democratic transition is starkly different, shaping dissimilar legacies and enacting diverse narratives. In this chapter, I survey each country’s democratic transition and consider its legacies for popular mobilisation, including in terms of legislation on the right to protest and practices of protest policing. This is complemented by a historical exploration of each country’s protest sphere between 1980 and 1995, using the data from the European Protest and Coercion Data¹⁵ (Francisco, n.d.) and by an analysis of Varieties of Democracy indicators and indexes from the transition to 2020 that can be related to popular mobilisation.

Portugal and Spain before democracy

Prior to the April 25th, 1974 democratic revolution in Portugal and the Spanish Transition that started in 1975, the countries exhibited quite a few similarities, as pointed out by Robert Fishman (2011, p. 235; 2019, pp. 30-37), which included the adoption of liberal reforms in the 19th century and the collapse of early 20th century democratic republics

¹³ *“Há alturas em que é preciso desobedecer”* (my translation).

¹⁴ *“Pertenezco por convicción y talante a una mayoría de ciudadanos que desea hablar un lenguaje moderado, de concordia y conciliación”* (my translation).

¹⁵ Available at <https://ronfran.ku.edu/data/index.html> (last access 08-05-2023).

(1910-1926 in Portugal and 1931-1939 in Spain), resulting in the establishment of personalistic right wing dictatorships that would prove rather resilient (lasting over four decades in Portugal, from 1933 to 1974, and 36 years in Spain, from the end of the Spanish Civil War in 1939 to 1975).

Salazar's and Franco's rule displayed various likenesses, both featuring an elite that controlled resources and was in charge of policymaking, and a strong coercive state relying on political police, established censorship, and mandatory corporatist institutions, coupled with state-led demobilisation strategies aiming at controlling the population (Linz, 1979; Bermeo, 1987, pp. 13-21; Fishman, 1990, pp. 15; 48-51).

Notwithstanding, distinctions emerged, notably elucidated by the Spanish Civil War. Franco ascended to authority as its triumphant victor, assuming the unequivocal role of military dictator. In contrast, Salazar methodically solidified his influence through constitutional reforms subsequent to his prime ministerial election in 1932. Another war marks another consequential divergence: that between Portugal and independentist forces in its colonies of Angola (from 1961 onwards), Guinea-Bissau (1963), and Mozambique (1964), which would only end after the 1974 Revolution.

Ideologically, too, notwithstanding their close alignment in terms of repression and authoritarianism, the two dictators diverged in their views of fascism – Franco's regime was strongly influenced by it, whereas Salazar leaned towards corporatism and explicitly regarded Portuguese fascists (the "*Camisas Azuis*" or Blue Shirts) as adversaries of the regime (Costa Pinto, 1994, pp. 267-277).

The Portuguese Revolution

Portugal experienced a quintessential social revolution, sparked by the events of April 25th, 1974, led by young, left wing, middle-ranking armed forces officers, organised in the *Movimento das Forças Armadas* (MFA – Armed Forces Movement), which launched a successful coup against the *Estado Novo* (or New State), which was enthusiastically received by Portuguese citizens, who took to the streets to celebrate *en masse*, hindering the possibility of regime response. These events would "*fundamentally*

transform not only politics but also social hierarchies and culture” of the country (Fishman, 2011, p. 235). According to Robert Fishman (id.), social revolutions exhibit two particular characteristics: a (partial) inversion of established hierarchies inside social and political institutions that sustained the previous regimes, coupled with a

“reshaping of cultural repertoires and understandings – as a result of (i) largely spontaneous actions taken in the context of social upheaval, (ii) the agenda formulated by emergent revolutionary powers, and (iii) the sheer intensity and accumulation of new collective experiences fundamentally different from what preceded them.”

These were all present in the Portuguese case – the coup was followed by three provisional governments in which all parties, as well as the military, were present. Further, it was also accompanied, at all levels (local, regional, national), by significant popular mobilisation (highly participated demonstrations, strikes, sit-ins, occupations of factories, agricultural land, housing, and public institutions) and by the creation of a high number of civil society organisations engaged in all sorts of political, economic, social, and cultural issues (Fernandes, 2014; Fernandes and Branco, 2017, p. 411).

Concurrently, the first years of the young Portuguese democracy also witnessed a systematic purging of the old regime’s officials, forced to leave their positions in public administration, and their high ranks within the army and the police forces. The military (mainly the MFA) itself maintained a pivotal role as catalyst of popular mobilisation, orchestrating numerous protest events and providing support to others, and establishing CSOs in collaboration with diverse socio-political entities, including the Communist Party (Bermeo, 1986, pp. 39-40; Almeida, 2002, pp. 58-61; Cerezales, 2003, pp. 119-129; Ramos Pinto, 2013, pp. 18-19).

Collectively, these developments are said to have contributed to the emergence of a culture of tolerance and respect for popular mobilisation within the armed forces, as well as the police, that has exhibited itself in several protest cycles since (Fishman, 2019, pp. 43-46, Fernandes *et al.*, 2018). The right to dissent was also inscribed in the democratic constitution, approved on the (second) anniversary of the Carnations

Revolution – article 21, Right to resistance¹⁶; article 37, Freedom of expression and information; article 38, Freedom of the press; article 45, Right to reunion and demonstration; article 46, Freedom of association (excluding organisations that promote violence or adhere to fascist ideology); and article 57, Right to strike.

A corollary of the Portuguese democratic Revolution was the amplification of the labour union movement, coalescing under the banner of the *Confederação Geral de Trabalhadores Portugueses* (CGTP – General Confederation of Portuguese Workers), which emerged as the sole legally sanctioned workers' confederation by 1975. CGTP boasted substantial membership and demonstrated formidable mobilisation capabilities in the early years of the revolutionary period and beyond. Subsequently, in 1978, a new confederation, the *União Geral de Trabalhadores* (UGT – General Union of Workers), was established, and both entities have since played pivotal roles in the landscape of Portuguese protest (with a prevalence of CGTP) (Fernandes *et al.*, 2020, pp. 59-61; 2021).

Finally, the Revolution engendered the establishment of the Portuguese welfare state, with the services encompassed by its purview codified as rights within the democratic constitution. Specifically, Article 58 delineates the Right to work, Article 65 articulates the Right to housing, Article 64 enshrines the Right to universal healthcare, and Article 73 guarantees the Right to free education. These constitutional rights continue to be often appealed to in protest events (see chapter 5; see also Fernandes *et al.* 2020, pp. 65-67; 2021).

It has been argued that one of the consequences of the Portuguese Revolution was “*the creation of a pluralistic and robust civil society for the first time in Portugal*” (Fernandes, 2018, p. 306), with lasting implications. For instance, Fernandes and Branco (2017, pp. 414-416) underscore the sustained high engagement of Portuguese citizens in the establishment of CSOs spanning the period from 1974 to 2010, revealing a notable surge

¹⁶ Article 21 of the 1976 Constitution: “*Todos têm o direito de resistir a qualquer ordem que ofenda os seus direitos, liberdades e garantias e de repelir pela força qualquer agressão, quando não seja possível recorrer à autoridade pública*” – Everyone has the right to resist to any order that offends their rights, freedoms and guarantees and to repel any aggression by force, when it is not possible to have recourse to public authority (my translation).

in the formation of such entities (e.g., 1750 associations in 1995 and 2300 in 2010). The prevalence of collaborations between the government and these organisations has become customary, especially given their integral role in the delivery of social services. Nevertheless, a judicious interpretation of these collaborative arrangements is imperative, as they may render these organisations reliant on state support for financial sustenance, potentially compromising their autonomy and raising pertinent questions on their inclination and capacity to act as dissenting agents (Araújo, 2021).

Indeed, there are two opposing assessments of the Portuguese civil society – while some authors argue that this is a highly engaged, strong, cohesive, participative actor (Fernandes, 2012, p. 19, 24-25; 2018b, pp. 96-100 ; Fernandes e Branco, 2017, pp. 414-416, 428; Fishman, 2011, pp. 1-2, 7-12; 2019, pp. 91-94), others take the contrasting view, stating that Portuguese civil society has traditionally been weak, as a consequence of a highly centralised and closed democratic system, which favours engagement with established organisations (mainly well-established labour unions, particularly the two confederations mentioned above), hindering smaller and newly formed organisations' access to and role in the shared public sphere (Hamman and Manuel, 1999, pp. 89-90; Accornero and Ramos Pinto, 2015, pp. 495-496; Monteiro and Ferreira, 2016; Prata, 2017, pp. 167-168) – particularly those organisations representing newer social movements, such as feminist and LGBTQIA+ organisations, migrants organisations or those relating to more recent ecological concerns.

As argued elsewhere (Araújo, 2023, p. 39), this investigation adopts a nuanced stance in refusing to either celebrate or depreciate the roles played by Portuguese civil society. On the one hand, it is evident that the country boasts stable and well-established mechanisms facilitating CSOs' access to policymaking across various governmental tiers, but, on the other, it has been demonstrated that these organisations themselves perceive their impact as limited and would like to see their capacities improved (Ponzo, 2010, p. 33; Alonso, 2012, pp. 606-607; Civil Society Europe, 2017; Araújo, 2021). Nonetheless, it is firmly established that the Portuguese Revolution linked social revolution with the construction of new democratic institutions, a characteristic departure from the democratic transition observed in the neighbouring country.

The Spanish transition ("*la Transición*") was oriented to reforming the authoritarian regime by consensus, allowing for "*certain elements of symbolic and legal continuity between the before and the after*" (Fishman, 2019, p. 19). In this respect, it is worth noting that, although the transition itself can be said to have started with Franco's death on November 20th, 1975, arrangements had already been made by the dictator himself for the transference of power to the soon-to-be king Juan Carlos I.

In July 1976, the king was to force the resignation of prime minister Carlos Arias Navarro, who had attempted to continue Franco's policies to growing opposition, including on the streets, with highly participated and repeated popular mobilisation fiercely repressed by state authority forces (Ballester, 2022, p. 46), and appointed his secretary-general, Adolfo Suárez, a former director of the national television and radio broadcaster (RTE – *Radio Y Televisión Española*), as head of the provisional government. Civil society organisations – in particular labour unions – and pro-democracy political groups and parties, which had already been active, in coordination, in the last years of the dictatorship (*Junta Democrática de España* – Spain Democratic Junta), were key in that opposition, having reinvigorated their activity immediately after the dictator's demise, and reorganised in a wider platform, the *Coordinación Democrática* (Democratic Coordination) – or *Platajunta* – which, along with popular mobilisation on the streets (mainly led by labour unions, with the State responding, on multiple occasions, with forceful protest policing), was to pressure for democratic developments, such as amnesty for political prisoners and free elections (Maravall, 1982, pp. 8-11; 147; Fishman, 1990, ch. 7; Tarrow, 1995, pp. 223-336; Threlfall, 2008, pp. 940-942; Fernandes, 2012, pp. 16-18; Ballester, 2022, pp. 45)¹⁷.

Free elections would indeed soon follow (June 15th, 1977), after the introduction of the *Ley para la Reforma Política* (Law for Political Reform), of November 18th, 1976, which eliminated the structures of the Francoist dictatorship. The Pacts of Moncloa (October-

¹⁷ Prior to that, and as in Portugal, resistance to the regime was severely repressed, but regional particularities must be considered, since this was coupled, mostly in the Basque Country, but also in Catalonia, with independentist claims.

November 1977) were the most immediate results of the first free elections – these were a set of measures aiming, firstly, at establishing the democratic transition, but also at taming the markets, and included provisions such as elimination of censorship, independence of the judiciary, and freedom of information, expression, association, and assembly, as well restrictive monetary policies to contain rising inflation, limits to wages, and free dismissal of a maximum of five per 100 employees of a company. Unlike in the Portuguese case, civil society organisations, in particular labour unions, were excluded from the negotiation of the Pacts, severing, to an extent, the links between left parties and organised labour (Gunther *et al.*, 1986, pp. 125-126; Fernandes, 2012, pp. 20-21). Nonetheless, the two main organised labour organisations, the *Confederación sindical de comisiones obreras* (CCOO – or Workers Commission Trade Union Confederation) and the *Unión general de trabajadores* (UGT – Workers General Union) accepted the pacts, following the lead of the Spanish leftist parties, with the first labour union formally declaring its agreement with the Pacts, and the second adopting a policy of “«*facto acceptance*»” (Fishman, 1989, n.d.; Fishman, 1990, pp. 189-190).

The Spanish transitional period is, then, shaped by a crisis scenario in which the threat of political violence continued to loom, coupled with the ever-present risk of backsliding, simultaneous to the menace of an economic collapse. Additionally, the memory of the Spanish Civil War continued to be influential of the political climate. Overall, these factors shaped a transitional period during which peacekeeping, public order, and maintaining stability were of the highest priority (Ballester, 2022, p. 54).

The foundations of the Spanish bipartisan electoral system were laid during the transition. On the right, parties forged during the transitional era, namely the *Unión de Centro Democrático* (UCD – Union of the Democratic Centre) and *Alianza Popular* (AP – Popular Alliance) led at the foundation of *Partido Popular* (PP), in 1989. Conversely, on the left, *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE – Spanish Workers Socialist Party) quickly emerged as the primary electoral contender, attaining heightened prominence, especially subsequent to its electoral triumph in 1982, where it secured an absolute majority, a mandate it sustained through two subsequent elections.

It has been argued that PSOE’s electoral predominance has contributed to breaking the links between the party and civil society organisations – particularly labour unions –

specifically when the party is in power. While in the opposition, however, the PSOE appears to have cultured some alliances with multiple social movements around different demands, a tendency that seems to have grown in the early years of the 21st century, with José Luis Zapatero's leadership, when the party, while in the opposition, joined highly participated protest events against educational reforms and protesting the Prestige oil spill, the Spanish participation in the Iraq war, and the PP's government's reaction to the 2004 Atocha terrorist bombings. These different positionalities are supposedly expressive of a fault line within the party between those who are open to engaging with protesters and those whose focus lies on order and state power (Bosco, 2005, pp. 172, 198-201; Fishman, 2011, pp. 241, 249; Branco, 2017, pp. 321-323).

As for PP, its view on street politics has been characterised as quite exclusionary, either refusing to acknowledge demands expressed in protest events or manifesting clear hostility to street politics, often regarding protest as an unnecessary, if not dangerous, source of instability – a view that, at times, is shared by a part of the PSOE (Fishman, 2011, p. 241). The result seems to be CSOs' retreat from engagement with formal political actors (Fishman, 2019, p. 215-217), as well as the rooted tendency to deal with political matters in a hyper-legalistic way (Sánchez-Cuenca, 2018, pp. 127-138).

During the Transition, a pivotal shift away from a federalist model occurred, giving way to a system of geographical organisation structured around Autonomous Communities, characterised by a discernible level of dependence on the central state, a configuration subsequently formalised in the 1978 Constitution. It is within this constitutional framework that the foundational origins of the constrained fiscal autonomy of the Communities can be rooted. Simultaneously, this development underpins the enduring resistance from predominantly Catalan and Basque political parties and civil society entities, which persistently advocate for a re-evaluation and renegotiation of the powers and status allocated to the regions.

The role of the Spanish armed forces during the Transition was also completely different – as Fernandes (2018, p. 308) indicated, a significant part of the Francoist military had enshrined their role as both “*guardians of the regime*” and “*guarantors of the unity of Spain*”, and this was displayed during those interim years – the military opposed the *Ley para la Reforma Política* and the establishment of the federal state, as well as the

legalisation of labour unions and the Spanish Communist Party. Further, the coup attempt of February 23rd, 1981 (23-F), was led by Lieutenant-Colonel Antonio Tejero of the Guardia Civil. This was the most visible attempt to seize power and revert the democratic transition of a series of attempted coups in which military personnel were involved – these also include the 1978 “*Operación Galaxia*”, in which Antonio Tejero was involved, the avoided coup attempt of 1979, under the leadership of general Torres Rojas, leader of one of the most powerful units of the Spanish Army, stationed in Madrid, or the 27-O, a coup attempt planned for the reflection day of the 1982 parliamentary elections (October 27th), led from prison by a high ranking member of the armed forces, Captain-General Jaime Milans del Bosch, convicted for his involvement in the 23-F (Muñoz Bolaños, 2014; 2021).

What is more, the newly elected democratic government passed an Amnesty Law shortly after the election, considered an essential step in the process of reconciliation, but which, in practice, meant that none of the crimes committed by Francoist officials would be judged in a court of law – in the words of David Ballester (2022, pp. 57-58), “[l]ooking to the future seemed to be the only possible option, promoting a democracy where Francoists and ex-Francoists felt safe, and the words used were not reparation or justice, but rather «reconciliation», «burying grudges along with the dead», «forgetting» and «overcoming the past»”¹⁸.

Implications for the Iberian protest sphere

The Spanish Transition and the Portuguese Revolution are here seen as critical junctures, producing “*historically routed cultural understandings about the substance of democracy, and about the principles that should govern political interactions in such systems*” (Fishman 2019, p. 3), and creating legacies that shape political and social actors

¹⁸ “*Mirar hasta el futuro parecía ser la única opción posible, impulsando una democracia donde los franquistas e exfranquistas se sentieran seguros, y las palabras al uso no fueran reparación o justicia, si no «reconciliación», «enterrar los muertos y los rencores», «olvido» y «superación del pasado»*” – my translation.

approaches to a wide range of political matters – including, for the purposes of this investigation, to protest as an informal avenue of political participation.

Della Porta and Diani (2006, p. 207) posit that within newly established democracies, police forces often perpetuate the cultural ethos of preceding authoritarian regimes, which becomes particularly evident in their approach to political protest perceived as menacing¹⁹. This tendency is accentuated in young democracies contending with deeply entrenched socio-political inequities inherited from protracted periods of authoritarian rule. Paradoxically, it is precisely during that transitional phase that the potential of civil society to exert substantial influence in catalysing profound political, economic, social, and cultural transformations toward democracy and greater societal equity is heightened (Bernhard *et al.*, 2017, pp. 304-305). This, in turn, imparts enduring legacies for the trajectory of popular mobilisation.

According to Fishman (2019, p. 40), one of the legacies of the revolutionary period in Portugal was the “*secure erosion of [the State’s] coercive capacity*” – this, he argues, was very different in the neighbouring country, where the transition was marked by episodes when State officials resorted to police forces to tame oppositional protest events, thus maintaining, if not reinforcing, the State’s coercive ability, while simultaneously normalising forceful protest policing, with implications that last to the present time. One consequence, he posits, is the insulation of formal politics actors from the pressures enacted on the streets (p. 50-51), of which he finds no correspondence in the Portuguese case.

In Spain, the absence of a purge of law enforcement agencies (including of the political police), the military and the judiciary resulted in what David Ballester (2022, p. 14, p. 48-53) qualifies as the “*institutional violence of the Transición*”, particularly between 1976 and 1977, with a significant number of casualties, injuries, and detainees. He argues that practices of protest policing during the dictatorship continued unchecked, with police hierarchy resisting any change and political decision-makers not being able – or willing – to interfere. Most importantly, Ballaster also argues that popular mobilisation during

¹⁹ The Portuguese case would be an exception here, precisely due to the social revolution aspect of the transition.

the transition years, more than just forcefully repressed, was seen by political actors as a nuisance which could potentially hinder the democratic transition, rather than a positive democratic practice contributing to shaping the future regime.

In this work, protest is considered a litmus test for the quality of democracy in Portugal and Spain in the 21st century. It departs from the assumption that the legacies of the transitional periods have shaped the protest arena and is particularly interested in understanding official responses to popular mobilisation, be it in terms of protest policing, be it in reactions to street politics (and to protest policing) by actors of formal politics expressed in the media. One first step is to consider the evolution of laws on protest and on protest policing in both countries since the democratic transition.

As seen above, the rights associated with protest have been enshrined in the Portuguese democratic Constitution, and the laws framing them have not been subjected to significant alteration since – for example, Law-Decree 406 and Law-Decree 603, both from 1974, guaranteeing, respectively, freedom of reunion and freedom of association, remain active pieces of legislation, and the law on the right to strike has only been slightly modified in 1992 by Law 30/92 of October 20th, which introduced some extensions in the guaranteed minimum services during a strike.

Other relevant legislation is the 2008 Internal Security Law (Law 53/2008 of July 2008) – article 1, point 1 defines internal security as the *“activity developed by the State to guarantee public order, security, and tranquillity, to protect people and belongings, to prevent and penalise criminality, and to contribute to the normal functioning of the democratic institutions, the exercise of citizens’ rights and freedoms, and the respect for democratic legality”*²⁰. Article 25 lists the police corps with responsibilities in internal security (see table 2), and article 28 delimitates the actions they can take:

- Identification of suspects in the public sphere,
- Interdiction of circulation and access to public transport,
- Evacuation, and

²⁰ “A segurança interna é a atividade desenvolvida pelo Estado para garantir a ordem, a segurança e a tranquilidade públicas, proteger pessoas e bens, prevenir e reprimir a criminalidade e contribuir para assegurar o normal funcionamento das instituições democráticas, o regular exercício dos direitos, liberdades e garantias fundamentais dos cidadãos e o respeito pela legalidade democrática” (my translation).

- Removal of objects or obstacles laid out in the public sphere that hinder freedom of circulation.

These measures are only supposed to be taken in case of clear necessity, during limited periods of time, and when there are credible reasons to indicate the preparation of criminal activity, or, significantly, serious or violent disturbance of the public order (article 30). In particular, coercive means can only be used by members of the security forces in the following occurrences (article 34):

- To repeal an actual assault, in self-defence, or defence of other people, and
- To overcome resistance of the perceived offenders, only after the exhaustion of any other means of ensuring obedience to security forces' orders.

The Penal Code also includes some provisions that are relevant for protest and protest policing, namely:

- Article 191: whoever enters or remains in a public service or a private enterprise which is not freely accessible to the public without permission shall be punished with imprisonment up to three months or a fine of up to 60 days.
- Article 213: whoever destroys, damages, disfigures, and renders unusable a public monument, an object intended for public use, or of public institutions or services shall be punished with imprisonment up to five years or a fine of up to 600 days.
- Article 302 states that whoever participates in a riot shall be punished with a prison sentence of up to a year or with a fine (three years in case of leadership of the riot, but no sanction if a person leaves the riot following police orders and has not committed any violent acts)²¹.
- Article 304 states that whoever disobeys an order to disperse a public assembly shall be punished with imprisonment up to one year or with a fine up to 120 days (which doubles for organisers).
- Article 328 establishes the consequences for offending the honour of the President of the Republic and states that whoever insults the President shall be punished with a three-year prison sentence or a fine; it further adds that if an

²¹ There were no riots reported in Portugal between 2000 and 2020 – see chapter 3.

insult of defamation is made public, the perpetrator will be punished with a prison sentence from 6 months to three years and a fine of no less than 60 days, and indicates that the President can expressly declare that s/he will not be pursuing criminal proceedings²².

- Article 330 states that whoever publicly incites collective disobedience aiming to violently destroy, alter, or subvert the rule of law shall be punished with a prison sentence of up to two years or with a fine of up to 240 days; the same penalty applies to whoever spreads fake news with intention of inciting collective disobedience or to whoever advocates for political struggle through violent means.
- Article 332 concerns the outrage of national or regional symbols (the Republic, the national flag or anthem, the symbols of Portuguese sovereignty, and those of the autonomous regions – Azores and Madeira) and states that whoever publicly outrages those objects shall be punished with a prison sentence of up to two years or with a fine of 240 days.
- Article 334 concerns the disturbance of the functioning of a constitutional body (any sovereignty body, ministers, autonomous regions governing body and local government): anyone who illegitimately disturbs its regular functioning by causing a commotion or a disorder shall be punished with a prison sentence between six months to three years.
- Article 348 on disobedience states that whoever fails to obey a legitimate order or warrant shall be punished with a prison sentence of up to two years and a fine of up to 240 days.

Finally, law 44/86 of September 30th, 1986, creates the state of emergency regime (which was instated in the last year of the series, due to the Covid-19 pandemic), with a suspension of the rights and freedoms associated with protest (namely freedom of assembly and freedom of circulation – article 14).

²² In 1985, a student was convicted under this article for insulting the President of the Republic, whom he called a Nazi during a protest event at a Lisbon University; the student also raised the Nazi salute (Supreme court deed of 1985-05-28, process number 037786). This was the only case when this article was invoked in Portuguese courts to date.

It is worth noting that some of the first legislative instruments approved during the revolutionary period were meant at restructuring the police forces – the most expressive being the abolition of the political police, followed by an extensive purge. Notwithstanding, the police were not subjected to a general restructure and their organisation and roles (simplified in table 2) remained vastly the same until the current times – except for the creation of municipal police corps in the early 21st century, active in some of the country's cities.

Table 2. Police forces in Portugal²³.

Police force	Role
<i>Polícia Judiciária</i> (PJ – Judiciary Police)	Criminal investigation; internal security
<i>Polícia de Segurança Pública</i> (PSP – Public Safety Police)	Maintenance of public order; internal security
<i>Guarda Nacional Republicana</i> (GNR – Republican National Guard)	Maintenance of public order (bridging between the police forces and the military); internal security
<i>Polícia Municipal</i> (Municipal Police)	Maintenance of public order at the city level
<i>Corpo da Guarda Prisional</i> (Prison Wards Corps)	Surveillance of prisons and penitentiaries

The role of the police forces was enshrined in the post-revolutionary constitution (article 272), which attributes its mission statement – to defend democratic legality and to guarantee internal security and citizenship rights – and states that police action must fit within the limits of the law and that crime prevention can only be effectively achieved within respect for citizens' rights and freedoms.

The task of protest policing is most often attributed to PSP, but GNR and the Municipal Police can also actively participate in protest control. Prison wards will, naturally, be involved in protest policing when dissent takes place inside a penitentiary, and PJ may

²³ In 2000, and considering PJ, PSP and GNR combined, there were 462 police agents for 100000 inhabitants in the country. This number decreased to 451 by 2016, but it still puts the country at the top tier of this indicator in the European Union. Sources: <https://www.pordata.pt/db/portugal/ambiente+de+consulta/tabela> and <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/DDN-20190104-1> (accessed on 03-05-2023).

investigate any illegal activity committed during, in preparation of, or after a protest event.

Spain, in turn, has a decentralised policing system, with both national and local police forces (table 3). The national police include the National Police Corps, or "*Cuerpo de Policía Nacional*", and the Civil Guard Corps, or "*Cuerpo de la Guardia Civil*". The first constitutes the country's primary law enforcement agency at the national level, with the ultimate responsibilities of maintaining public order, preventing, and investigating crime, and enforcing national laws (it features a range of specialised units, such as the Judicial Police and the Scientific Police). The Civil Guard is a militarised police corps that acts in border patrol and traffic control, as well as in those geographical areas where the National Police has no jurisdiction, thus sharing responsibility for maintaining public order.

Table 3. Police forces in Spain²⁴.

Police force	Role
<i>Cuerpo de Policía Nacional</i> (National Police Corps)	Criminal investigation and maintenance of public order
<i>Cuerpo de la Guardia Civil</i> (Civil Guard Corps)	Maintenance of public order
Autonomous Police Forces	Maintenance of public order at the autonomous region level
<i>Policía Municipal</i> (Municipal Police)	Maintenance of public order at the city level
<i>Policía Penitenciaria Española</i> (Spanish Penitentiary Police)	Surveillance of prisons and penitentiaries

Some of Spain's autonomous regions also have their own police corps (that is the case with the *Ertzaintza* in the Basque Country, the *Policía Foral de Navarra* – or *Nafarroako Foruzaingoa*, in Basque – in Navarra, and the *Mossos d'Esquadra* in Catalonia), which are, again, responsible for maintaining public order and enforcing regional laws. Finally, at the local level, most cities and towns in Spain have local police forces, or "*Policía Municipal*," which administer local bylaws and provide support to other police corps when necessary. Finally, prison and penitentiaries have their respective police corps –

²⁴ The same source indicates there were 361 policemen in Spain by 100000 residents in 2016 (minus 90 than in the neighbouring country) - <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/DDN-20190104-1>, accessed on 08-12-2023.

the “*Policía Penitenciaria Española*” (Spanish Penitentiary Police) (Vela Romero, 2022). The task of protest policing, then, is also decentralised, as all police corps have that responsibility depending on the location of the protest.

The role of the police was codified in the 1986 Law on security forces (*Ley organica 2/86 de fuerzas y cuerpos de seguridad*), which also establishes the organisation depicted above and includes the general principles for police actions, including respect for the Constitution and political neutrality and impartiality (article 5).

As with the Portuguese case, the Spanish Constitution also recognises the rights and freedoms eminent to protest:

- Articles 7 and 28, right to unionise (including the right to strike),
- Article 20, freedom of expression,
- Article 21, freedom of (peaceful) assembly – without prior authorisation; unless the assembly takes place in a public space or is a protest event, in which case prior notification by the authorities is needed (and can be denied on grounds of breach to public order), and
- Article 22, freedom of association.

However, the text prohibits demonstrations at the national and regional parliaments (article 77, point 1: “*The Houses may receive individual and collective petitions, always in writing; direct submission by citizens' demonstrations is prohibited*”²⁵). This distinction is significant, as it signals a breakage between the voices expressed in informal politics and that of those engaged in governmental institutions that is not present in the Portuguese case, where protest at the Parliament is a rather common sight (chapter 3). Additionally, the Spanish Constitution does not predict the right to dissent, as in its Portuguese counterpart.

The country’s Penal Code also includes several provisions relating to the rights associated with protest. These include article 203, which indicates that whoever enters or remains in a place of business open to the public past business hours shall be punished with a prison sentence between six months to one year and a fine from six to

²⁵ “*Las Cámaras pueden recibir peticiones individuales y colectivas, siempre por escrito, quedando prohibida la presentación directa por manifestaciones ciudadanas*” (my translation).

ten months. Remaining in said place is punished with a fine of one to three months, and employment of violent means increases the prison sentence up to three years.

Slander and defamation are extensively contemplated in the Penal Code – and are relevant here, particularly in relation to the Spanish Royal Family and the political class:

- Articles 490 and 491 are concerned with defamation and slander targeting members of the royal family (or the Regency), specifically while they are carrying out their official duties – anyone who slanders or defames them shall be punished with a prison sentence of six months to two years (serious slander or defamation) and a fine of six to twelve months; further, anyone who uses an image of any member of the royal family or regency that may damage the prestige of the Crown shall receive a fine from six to twenty-four months²⁶.
- Serious defamation against the national or regional parliaments is coded in article 496, which states that this is punishable with a fine from twelve to eighteen months.
- The Penal Code also protects other political institutions from serious slander and defamation, as well as from threats – article 504 indicates that the sanction for targeting the central government, the General Council of the Judiciary, the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court, the Governing Council or High Court of Justice of the Autonomous Communities, the armed forces, police or the security forces with slander or defamation goes from twelve to eighteen months, and it adds that anyone who uses force, violence or intimidation to prevent the members of the governing and judiciary bodies above from performing their job risks a sentence of three to five years.
- In addition, article 543 states that public offences or outrages against Spain, the Autonomous Communities or their symbols / emblems shall be punished with a fine of seven to twelve months.

Other articles relevant to protest include:

²⁶ There have been several convictions under this article, including some very mediatic cases, such as those involving rappers Valtouy (2018) and Pablo Hásel (2021), both also convicted for infractions under article 578 of the Penal Code.

- Article 342: anyone who disturbs the operation of a nuclear plant, causing serious hazard to life or health, shall be punished with a prison sentence from four to ten years, and barred from public employment and office for a term from six to ten years.
- Articles 493, 494 and 495 apply to the functioning of the Congress, Senate and Legislative Assemblies of the Autonomous Communities; Article 493 states that anyone that (without public uprising) trespasses or uses violence or intimidation at those locales will be punished with a prison sentence between three and five years; Article 494 specifically targets protest: *“Those who promote, direct or lead demonstrations or other kinds of meetings before the seats of the Congress of Deputies, of the Senate or a Legislative Assembly of an Autonomous Community, when in session, altering the normal operation thereof, shall incur a sentence of imprisonment of six months to one year or a fine of twelve to twenty-four months”*²⁷; Article 495 concerns the attempt to enter these locations bearing weapons or other dangerous instruments, with the intention to lodge personal or group petitions there, which is punished with a prison sentence of three to five years.

Disturbance to the governing organs is also codified in article 503, which states that whoever trespasses (*“violently or threateningly”*) on the premises where the Council of Ministers or Governing Council of an Autonomous Community is in session, or interferes or hinders the liberty of a central or regional government council will receive a prison sentence between two to four years, and in article 505, which states that whoever seriously disturbs the order and the functioning of a plenary meeting of a local council, as well as prevents access to it, will incur in a prison sentence of six months to a year.

Articles 514 also specifically pertains to protest: point 4 states that preventing the lawful exercise of the freedom to assemble or demonstrate (or seriously disturbing assemblies and demonstrations) constitutes a punishable offence: between two to three years imprisonment if violent means are employed (or three to six months prison sentence or

²⁷ Spanish Penal Code in English translation, available at https://www.mjusticia.gob.es/es/AreaTematica/DocumentacionPublicaciones/Documents/Criminal_Code_2016.pdf (accessed on 13-04-2023).

a fine for six to 12 months with non-violent means), and point 5 adds that organisers who insist on protesting after a protest event is suspended or prohibited, *“provided they intend to subvert the constitutional order or to seriously alter the public peace, shall be punished with imprisonment of six months to one year and a fine from six to twelve months”*.

Article 550 indicates that a person who attacks or offers serious resistance to authorities in the line of duty, provided that that resistance is accompanied by serious intimidation or violence, will be convicted of assault, and punished with a prison sentence of one to four years and a fine of three to six months; this penalty is increased to a prison sentence of one to six years and a fine of six to twelve months when the attack or resistance targets a member of the central and regional governments and parliaments, the Senate, local authorities, the General Council of the Judiciary, a Magistrate of the Constitutional Court, and a judge, magistrate or member of the Public Prosecution Service. Another aggravating factor is, according to article 551, if these actions occur *“during a riot, protest or collective incident within a prison”*.

Resistance to authority is further codified in article 556 – anyone who, in any other circumstance than those mentioned in article 550, resists or seriously disobeys authority or its agents (including private security personnel when cooperating with police forces), shall be punished with a prison sentence of three months to one year or a fine of six to eighteen months.

The Penal Code also includes provisions on public disorders (article 557) – the penalty for participation in a public disorder can be aggravated by multiple factors including if the resistance or disobedience occurs during a demonstration or mass meeting (article 557 bis), incurring in a prison sentence of one to six years, and addresses (serious) disturbances to court hearings, public political acts, but also sports and cultural events, which are punished with a prison sentence of three to six months or a fine from six to twelve months, and, possibly, a ban from entering those locations (article 558).

Finally, article 578 is concerned with the glorification of terrorism – anyone who praises or justifies terrorist acts shall be punished with a penalty of one to three years imprisonment and a fine from twelve to eighteen months (the offence is aggravated when

disseminated in the media or using instruments of the web 2.0, as well as if it is “*capable of gravely altering the public peace or of generating a serious feeling of insecurity or fear in society*”).

More important, however, are the Spanish laws specifically devoted to citizen security. The first such piece of legislation is the *Ley Orgánica 1/1992, de 21 de febrero, sobre Protección de la Seguridad Ciudadana* (Law of February 21st, 1992, on the protection of citizen security), which was replaced in 2015 by the *Ley Orgánica 4/2015, de 30 de marzo, de protección de la seguridad ciudadana* (Law 4/2015 of March 30th, of protection of citizen security). Both laws affirm that their provisions conform to the Constitution and that they seek to guarantee that the government is able to fulfil its duty of guaranteeing both the exercise of rights and freedoms, along with the security of the citizenry (article 1 in both texts). The 2015 law, however, takes it one step further, by indicating its goals (article 3) and stating that these are to be achieved through public authorities’ orders and prohibitions (article 14). The goals include:

- Guarantee of the normal operation of institutions and normal provision of public services,
- Respect for laws,
- Peaceful use of the public sphere, and
- Transparency in the acts of security forces.

The 2015 law further includes “*Guiding principles for the action of the public authorities in relation to citizen security*” (article 4)²⁸: security forces should act in a way that ensures the full realisation of fundamental rights and public freedoms – in particular the rights of assembly and demonstration, freedom of expression and information, freedom of association and the right to strike – and adds that repressive actions are justified when there is a threat to public security, to individual and collective rights and freedoms, or “*to disrupt the normal functioning of public institutions*”²⁹.

The 1992 law specifically referred to protest events in article 16, which stated public authorities had the responsibility to protect demonstrations while ensuring that public

²⁸ «*Principios rectores de la acción de los poderes públicos en relación con la seguridad ciudadana*» (my translation).

²⁹ “... *alterar el normal funcionamiento de las instituciones públicas*” (my translation).

safety was not disturbed; said authorities, through the action of the security forces, had the power to dissolve those events, and restrict circulation and permanence in the public space, in “*cases of disturbance of order, citizen security or peaceful coexistence*”³⁰ (article 19). The law also defined a serious offence (article 23) – holding assemblies or demonstrations without giving prior knowledge to the authorities or failing to abide by their instructions (including for the dissolution of a protest event). Sanctions were established in article 28: a fine between 300,52 and 30050,61 Euros.

Authors had already indicated that the 1992 law gave police forces wide discretionary powers to use coercion mechanisms in protest events, deepening the conflictual relationship between protesters / protest organisers and the State (della Porta *et al.*, 2018, p. 101). Fernandes (2014, pp. 1090-1091) further adds that, in the wake of the law, authorities have used their coercive power to dissolve organisations whose aims openly opposed the interests of the government.

This would be intensified with the approval of the 2015 law, which has often been referred to as “*Ley mordaza*” (Gag law) (Sampedro and Lobera, 2014, p. 16). As with the previous legislation, this also includes a provision specifically concerning assemblies and demonstrations (article 23), stating that public authorities are to take the necessary measures to protect these events, while preventing any disturbance of public security, which may entail the dissolution of assemblies and demonstrations as a last resort (point 2). This is not much different from the previous legislation, but that is not the case with the predicted sanctions (article 35, on very serious offences, 36, on serious offences, and 37, on light offences), with a vast expansion of the behaviours likely to occur in a protest event that are considered unlawful:

- Holding an assembly or a demonstration without prior notice to the authorities or which has been prohibited in or around public basic services is considered a very serious offence.
- Serious offences include:

³⁰ “*en supuestos de alteración del orden, la seguridad ciudadana o la pacífica convivencia*” (my translation).

- Disturbance of citizen security in public events as well as in religious services or other meetings attended by numerous people,
 - Serious disturbance of citizen security during assemblies or demonstrations in front of the national or regional parliaments, the Congress of Deputies, and the Senate – including when they are not in session,
 - Obstruction or causing disorder on roads, public spaces, or public services, thereby causing serious concern for public security,
 - Any action preventing a public authority or a public servant from the legitimate exercise of their functions – including the fulfilment or execution of administrative or judicial decisions,
 - Disobedience or resistance to the police forces, as well as refusal to provide an identity document,
 - Refusal to dissolve assemblies and demonstrations in places of public transit when ordered by the police,
 - Disturbance of the development of a lawful assembly or demonstration,
 - Entry into public services and seriously interfering with their activities,
 - Failing to cooperate with the security forces in the investigation of crimes or in the prevention of actions that may put citizen security at risk, and
 - Unauthorised use of images, personal or professional data of members of the Security Forces.
- Light offences involve:
- Failing to comply with restrictions on pedestrian circulation or with the approved itinerary of a public event, meeting, or demonstration,
 - Disrespecting a member of the security forces on duty, and
 - Occupation of private property and public roads.

The respective sanctions are coded in article 39: a very serious offence can receive a fine of between 30001 and 600000 Euros, a serious offence is punishable with a fine from 601 to 30000 Euros, and a minor offence, 100 to 600 Euros. This is further codified into maximum and minimum degrees of seriousness: for a very serious offence, the minimum level of the fine oscillates between 30001 to 220000 Euros, the average

between 220001 and 410000 Euros, and the maximum between 41001 to 600000 Euros, and, for a serious offence, the minimum level corresponds to a fine of 601 to 10400 Euros, the average to 10401 to 20200 Euros, and the maximum to 20201 to 30000 Euros.

Finally, this law also predicts the creation of a Central Registry of Infractions against Citizen Security (*Registro Central de Infracciones contra la Seguridad Ciudadana*) at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as well as the possibility of the Autonomous Communities also creating their own records (article 43).

This law has been strongly opposed by both Spanish and transnational civil society. For example, the Spanish arm of Amnesty International alerted, already in 2014, that the revision of the Citizen Security Law was likely to bring up further limitations to the rights associated with protest – concerns that were expanded in the organisation’s international report of 2017. Other organisations – Transnational Institute (2017), Human Rights Watch (2016, 2017) – also mirrored those concerns. In fact, these opinions were shared by the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights (OHCHR, 2015), which commented that the Law appeared to be the Spanish’s government response to the intense anti-austerity protest cycle³¹, and added that *“the text of the reform project includes broad or ambiguous definitions that pave the way for a disproportionate or discretionary enforcement of the law by authorities”* that could criminalise participation in peaceful demonstrations. The Council of Europe, in addition, highlighted restrictions to the right to protest adopted in Spain were particularly disproportionate (2016). More recently, the Venice Commission, assessing the law in 2021, criticised it for being prone to abuses, given its inclusion of a number of open-ended provisions entrusting the police with broad powers, while failing to indicate in which situations these powers are to be used or to specify the measures police forces can take, and denounced the formulation of some offences in an overly extensive manner.

Internally, criticisms and opposition to the “Gag Law” were also widespread (Escaño and Michou, 2016), and at least one CSO was created to contest it: *No Somos Delito* (We are

³¹ “We are concerned that the reform proposals could be a response by the Government and the legislature to numerous demonstrations that have been carried out in Spain in recent years.” – available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2015/02/two-legal-reform-projects-undermine-rights-assembly-and-expression-spain-un?LangID=E&NewsID=15597> (accessed on 17-04-2023).

not a crime)³², a platform of multiple organisations, which devoted its mission to reform the Penal Code and the *Ley de seguridad ciudadana* (along with the *Ley de seguridad privada* – Private Security Law) and has been active in online and offline resistance to its implementation.

Ruth Simsa (2017, pp. 328-333) states that these legislative developments impose restrictions on civil society organisations, and individual activists and reduce the polity's freedom of assembly, demonstration, and expression. Based on data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, she indicates that, in the first seven months following the approval of the 2015 Citizen Security Law, about 40000 sanctions were imposed, the majority for disrespecting a police officer, resulting in significant pecuniary fines. Further, she adds that the ambiguity that is built into the text of the law, as well as selectivity in its application, result in uncertainty on how to legally protest (including in resisting these laws) for both citizens and citizen initiatives.

A common argument against this type of laws is that they combine repression of popular mobilisation with economic deterrence, as the fine amounts are remarkably taxing. This is often coupled with arguments against the ambiguity present in the laws and the articles of the Penal Code that criminalise several aspects relating to protest in a rather abstract fashion – for example, committing an offence against Spain, disrespecting a member of the security forces, or verbally injuring the Royal Family. However, these developments precede the approval of these laws – as García (2013) demonstrates, forceful protest policing during the anti-austerity protest cycle was combined with a plethora of municipal by-laws and administrative sanctions (including financial penalties) that, together, built a coercive environment that was both highly visible (through police tactics) and invisible (through legislative and administrative measures). It is this combination, Simsa argues (2017, p. 321), that creates a particularly difficult environment for activists, with “*effects far beyond the manifest acts of the repression itself*” – such as dissuasion from participation in street politics, demobilisation, and an overall climate of fear.

³² <https://nosomosdelito.net/> (accessed on 17-04-2023).

Fishman has also been arguing that the repressive state in Spain is stronger than in Portugal – in his opinion, this can be rooted in Spanish political actors’ belief that there is a *“political boundary separating what goes inside official institutions from the expression of popular sentiments outside”*, in the streets, where protesters, in turn, also consider those very actors as distant and unapproachable (2019, p. 76), responsible for violent repression, especially when demonstrators gather, in defiance of the law, outside the national or regional parliaments. Sampedro (2004), too, is clear in his evaluation of a clear disconnect between popular mobilisation and electoral politics, which he roots to anti-democratic legacies remaining in the Spanish public sphere, a conclusion reiterated in 2014, when the potential end of the consensus period inaugurated with the Transition is discussed (Sampedro and Lobera, 2014, p. 16).

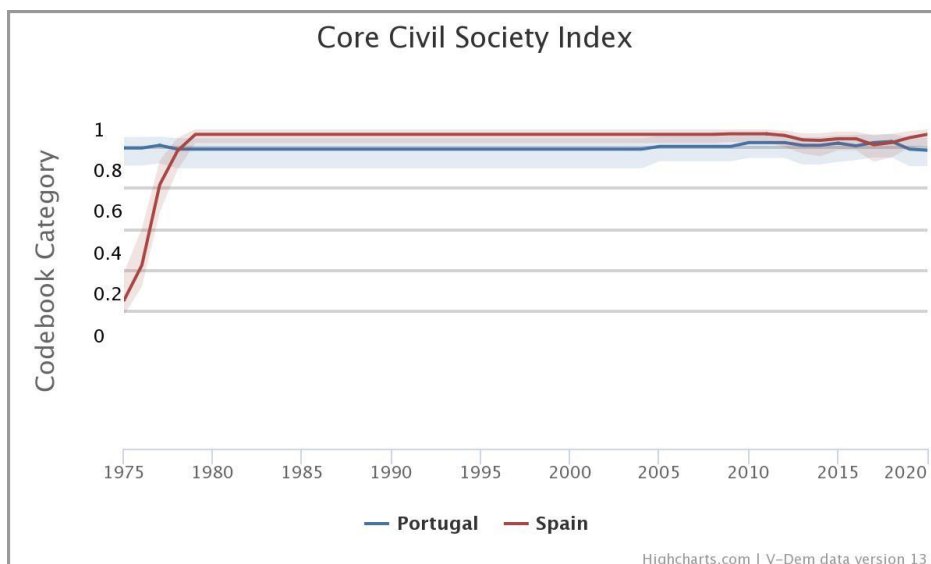
This stands in contrast to the Portuguese case, where, according to Fishman (2019, p. 80), protest has been understood as a core part of the country’s democratic practice, perfectly *“compatible with public order and with the smooth functioning of democratic institutions”* – resulting in lower levels and lower intensity of protest policing, as well as in a virtual absence of formal political actors attempts to devalue protest as non-political. Data from the Civicus Monitor of Civic Space (2021)³³ seems to support his view, as the organisation has been classifying the Portuguese civic space as ‘open’ – and ‘narrowed’ in the neighbouring country.

Despite the validity of these theoretical points, the discussion above should not obscure that the two case studies also differ in more obvious ways: the size of territory and population, the internal linguistic and national diversity in Spain, reflected in a different political organisation, and also, and not less significantly, the history of separatism and independentist struggles in Spain, closely connected to the existence of internal terrorist actors. Spain was, in addition, the target of transnational terrorism in the 21st century. The two countries also have different levels of economic development, with Portugal dragging behind. This is, paradoxically, coupled with historically higher levels of unemployment in the larger country, most notably in the 21st century. All these factors are likely to distinctly shape the protest sphere across the Iberian space.

³³ Available on <https://monitor.civicus.org/> (accessed on 25-12-2022).

Despite the marked distinctions discussed so far, Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem, hereafter) data does not exhibit a manifest discrepancy across the border considering the totality of the democratic period and considering a variety of indicators. V-Dem's Core Civil Society Index (figure 1), "*designed to provide a measure of a robust civil society, understood as one that enjoys autonomy from the state and in which citizens freely and actively pursue their political and civic goals*" (Coppedge et al. 2021, p. 51), is actually indicative of a more robust civil society in Spain than in Portugal for most years (the exception being the Catalonia crisis around 2017-19), even if only marginally, as both countries score rather high on this indicator.

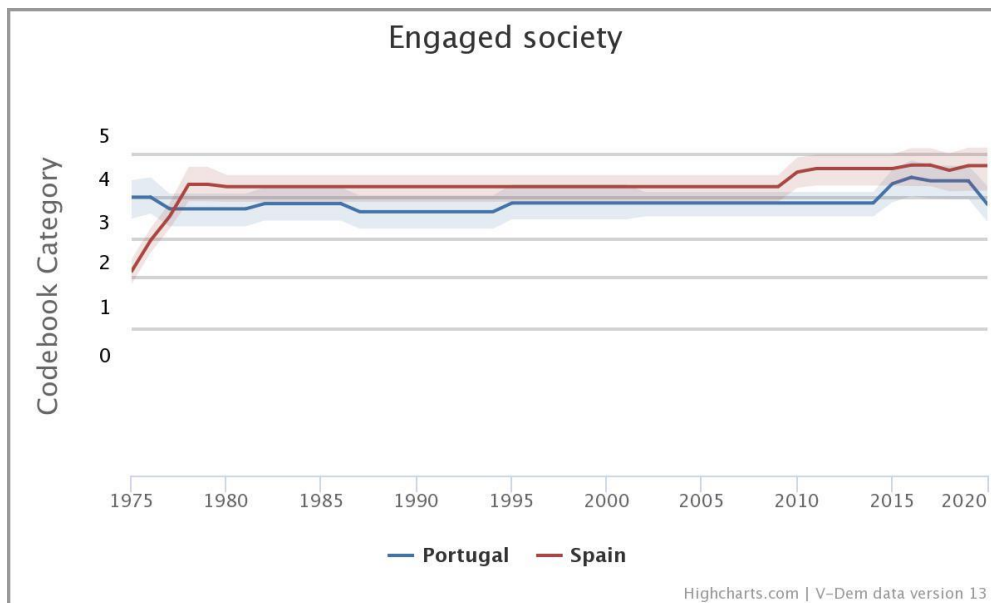
Figure 1. Core Civil Society Index in Portugal and Spain, 1975 and 2020.



Source: Varieties of Democracy dataset.

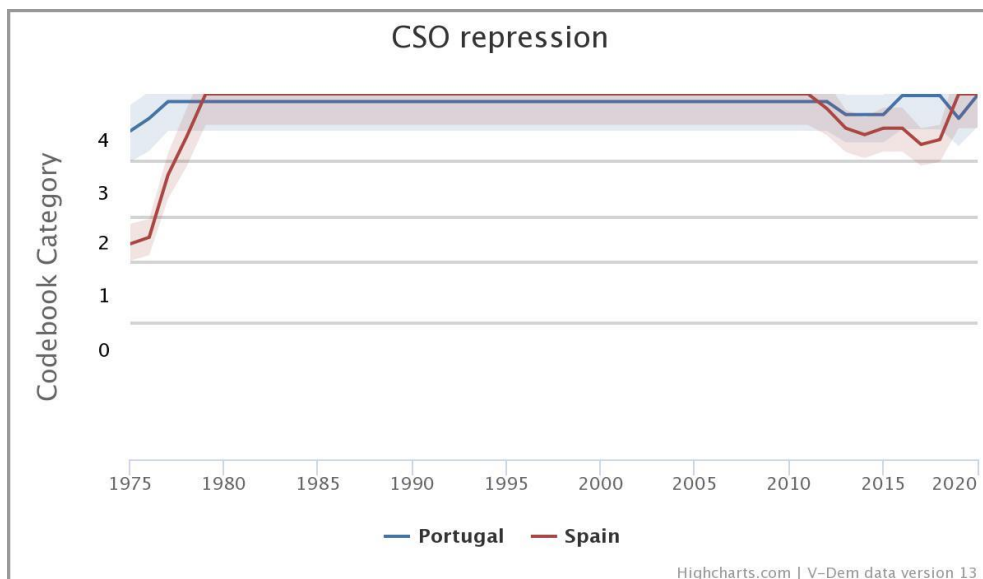
Another interesting insight is brought by the Engaged Society Indicator (figure 2), which gives information on the "*width and depth of public deliberations when important policy changes are being considered*" (id., p. 287) – here, Spain scores better than Portugal across the series, and the difference visibly grows from the beginning of the Great Recession. It was only with the electoral change in Portugal in 2014, with the election of the informal coalition between the Socialist Party and those further to the left (Portuguese Communist Party and the Left Bloc) that the level of society engagement would rise to similar levels in Portugal (although rapidly declining in the last year considered here).

Figure 2. Engaged Society Index in Portugal and Spain, 1975-2020.



Source: Varieties of Democracy dataset.

Figure 3. CSO Repression in Portugal and Spain, 1975-2020.



Source: Varieties of democracy dataset.

Spain also scores remotely better when considering the level of repression of Civil Society Organisations (figure 3) from the 1980s onwards until the beginning of the mass protest against austerity in the country. It is, however, from 2011 onwards that there is an important rise in repression of civil society activities in the country, corresponding to three key developments:

- The intensification of the anti-austerity protest cycle, with the creation of new social movements and civil society organisations with a high mobilisation power and aiming at a deep restructuring of the Spanish political system (Flesher Fominaya, 2017, pp. 9-11; Romanos, 2017, Fernandes *et al.*, 2021; Romanos and Sádaba, 2022, pp. 100-101; Sampedro and Lobera, 2014, p. 16),
- The discussion and approval of the Citizen Security Law of 2015 [as Simsa (2018, p. 331) indicates, the intense mediatisation of the discussions on the law had effects that precluded its actual ratification), and
- The Catalonia crisis.

It is noteworthy, however, that, from 2019 onwards, levels of repression of civil society organisations in Spain were again decreasing. Although with less intensity, Portugal actually exhibits a similar trend during the anti-austerity protest cycle, but it is in the last years considered here – particularly in 2019 – that higher levels of repression of CSOs were recorded in the country.

For the purposes of this study, it is also essential to consider each country's respect for the freedoms that are sine qua non conditions to protest: freedom of expression (figure 4)³⁴, freedom of association (figure 5)³⁵ and freedom of (peaceful) assembly (figure 6)³⁶.

It is evident that both Portugal and Spain have limited restrictions on freedom of expression and association overall – however, a retreat in freedom of expression in Spain occurs with the public discussion and passing of the Citizen Security Law of 2015. The picture is complicated when analysing the evolution of freedom of peaceful assembly – past the instability of the transition period, there was a clear improvement of the right to freely assembly in both countries, but Spain actually scored better than

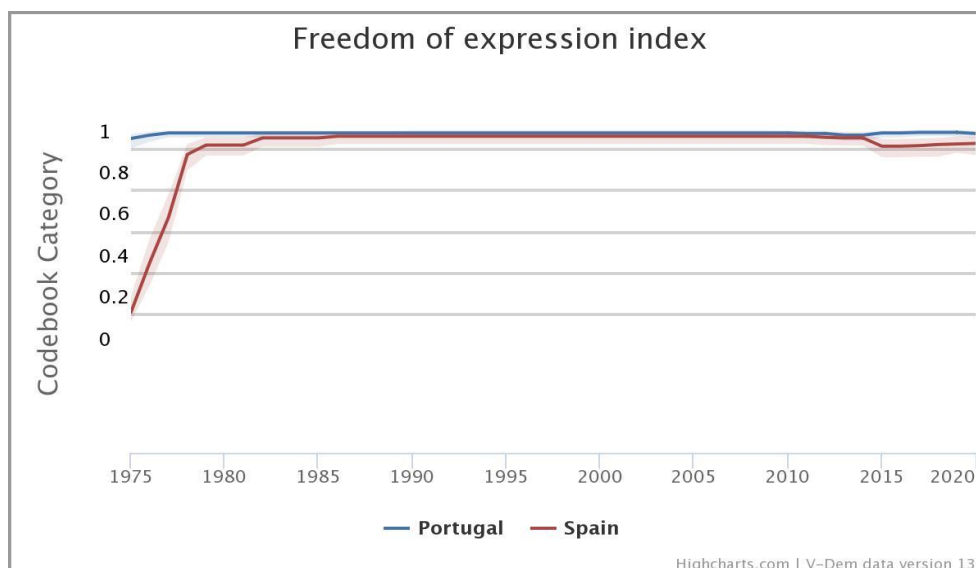
³⁴ V-Dem calculates freedom of expression on the basis of answers to the following question: “To what extent does government respect press and media freedom, the freedom of ordinary people to discuss political matters at home and in the public sphere, as well as the freedom of academic and cultural expression?” (Coppedge *et al.*, 2021, p. 307).

³⁵ V-Dem calculates freedom of association on the basis of answers to the following question: “To what extent are parties, including opposition parties, allowed to form and to participate in elections, and to what extent are civil society organisations able to form and to operate freely?” (Coppedge *et al.*, 2021, p. 47).

³⁶ V-Dem calculates freedom of assembly on the basis of answers to the following question: “To what extent do state authorities respect and protect the right of peaceful assembly?” (Coppedge *et al.*, 2021, p. 225).

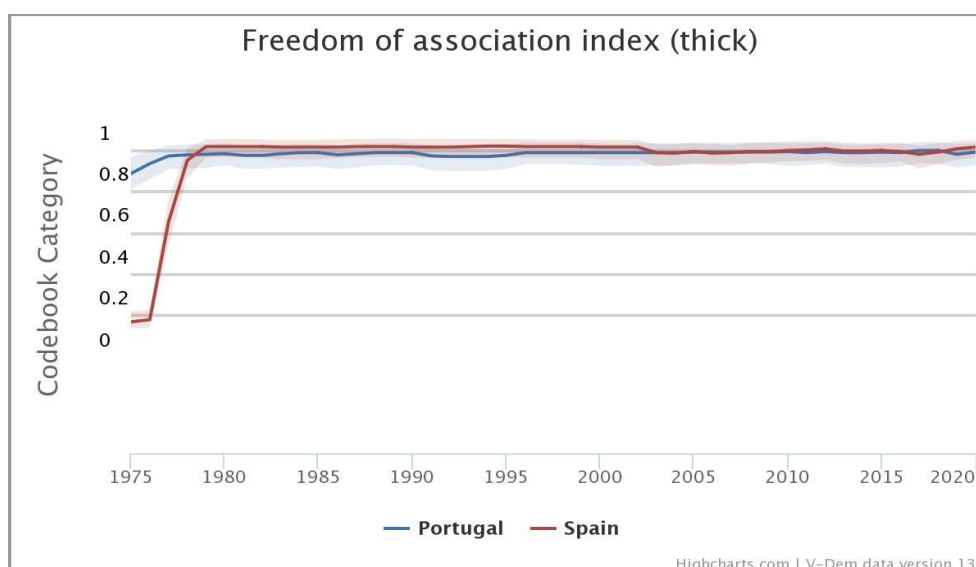
Portugal in the last two decades of the twentieth century. This is, however, inverted in the twenty-first century.

Figure 4. Freedom of Expression in Portugal and Spain, 1975-2020.



Source: Varieties of democracy dataset.

Figure 5. Freedom of Association in Portugal and Spain, 1975-2020.

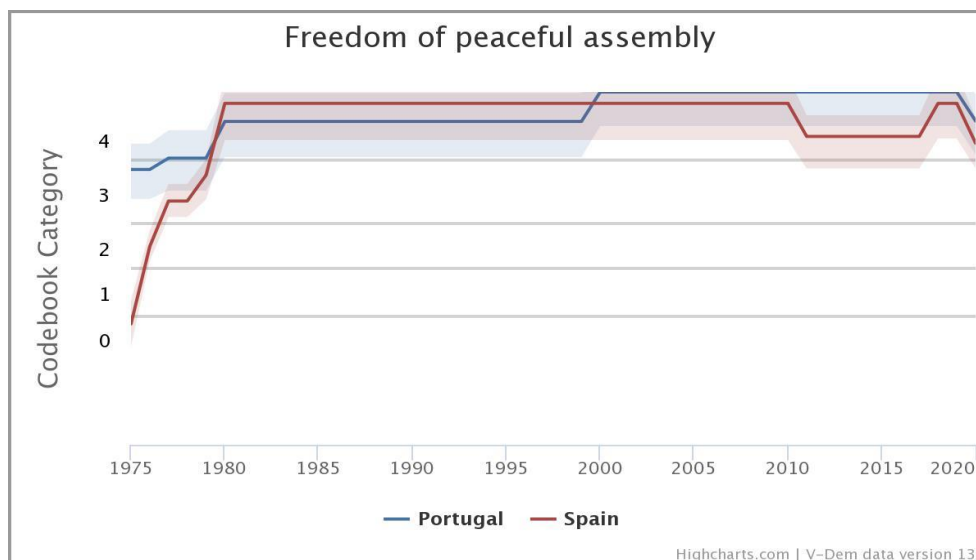


Source: Varieties of democracy dataset.

It is from 1999 onwards – one year before the beginning of the time series considered in this study – that Portugal overtook its neighbour. Here, the very intense anti-austerity protest cycle did not have any impact on the citizens' right to join in peaceful assembly, while, in Spain, one witnesses a significant recoil in freedom of assembly from 2010 onwards – which can be associated with the three factors indicated above. There is a

recovery in the level of this freedom as of 2019, but, as expected, the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 marks a decrease in this freedom across the border.

Figure 6. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly in Portugal and Spain, 1975-2020.



Source: Varieties of democracy dataset.

The V-Dem data presented here provides an insight into the perceived legitimacy of the Portuguese and Spanish protest sphere. The two countries are, in fact, rather close in most indicators, with Spain fairing negligently better in those relating to civil society engagement. Nonetheless, the fact that the country records higher levels of repression and a decrease in freedom of assembly, particularly in the second decade of the twenty-first century, is undeniable.

V-Dem does not include any specific indicators on protest and there is no protest event dataset for the full democratic period in each of the case studies. There is, however, a Protest and Coercion Dataset for twenty-six European countries between 1980 and 1995, in which protest events in Portugal and Spain are included³⁷ (Francisco, N.d.). The project's codebook indicates that the data collection relied on newspapers accessed through the Reuters Textline³⁸ and that coders included all reported protest events that had a specific date and location. The source used, however, poses a particular shortcoming concerning smaller countries (such as Portugal): it does not include most

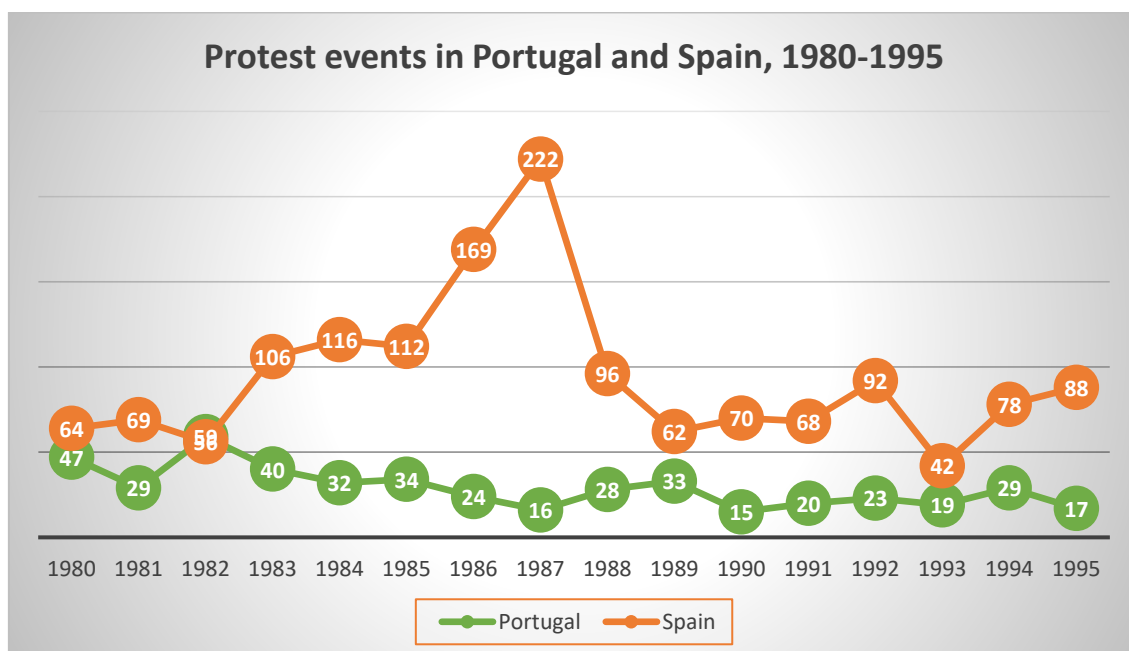
³⁷ <https://ronfran.ku.edu/data/index.html> (accessed on 20-04-2023). The dataset also includes state coercion events (i.e., arrests and trials), as well as political violence (terrorism) occurrences that were excluded from this analysis.

³⁸ Reuters Textline was an electronic intelligence source available for the most part of the 1990s.

Portuguese newspapers, which is not the case in Spain, where both national and local sources were considered.

This results in an under-reporting of Portuguese protest events, as per figure 7, which exhibits a clear peak in Spanish protest in 1986-87 – these years were of strong mobilisation relating to multiple issues, of which the following can be highlighted: accession to the European Economic Community Union³⁹, coupled with resistance to the country's NATO membership⁴⁰, resistance to changes in education and labour policy, but also – and present throughout the series – protest relating to autonomic claims, particularly prevalent in the Basque Country, with mobilisation both against and pro the terrorist group ETA and the political party *Herri Batasuna* (HB). This is, intrinsically, a significant difference between the two countries' protest spheres – the levels of political violence experienced in Spain in these years have no correspondence in Portugal, and it is safe to assume that these created legacies that have shaped the first country's popular mobilisation culture, as well as media culture in reporting dissent. This will be considered in the qualitative chapters.

Figure 7. Protest events in Portugal and Spain, 1980-1995.



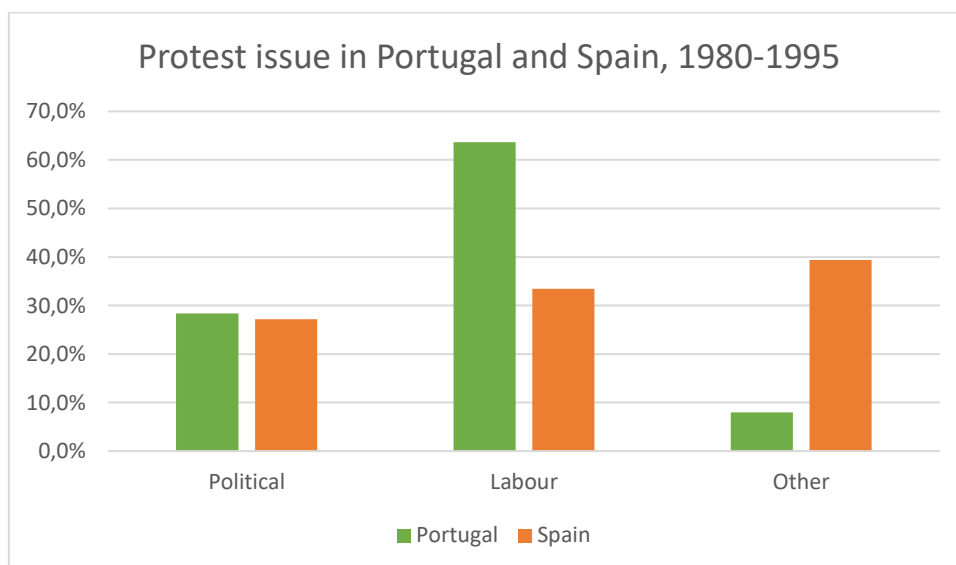
Source: <https://ronfran.ku.edu/data/index.html>; own elaboration.

³⁹ Both Portugal and Spain entered the European Economic Community on January 1st, 1986.

⁴⁰ Portugal is a founding member of NATO (1949), while Spain entered the organisation on May 30th, 1982.

Although the underreporting of Portuguese protest events prevents any consistent comparative effort, two variables are considered here – the issues expressed by protesters and police intervention. Figure 8 demonstrates that the levels of specifically political protest (pertaining to the organisation of the State and to foreign policy, as well as to democratic politics) seem to have been rather similar across the border (28.4% in Portugal and 27.2% in Spain). Labour related demands (i.e., wages negotiations, lay-offs, unemployment), however, were significantly more present in Portuguese protest (63.7%) than in the Spanish case (33.4%), which exhibits more variety in the type of claims expressed in the protest sphere – 39.4% of protest events in the country related to (national and transnational) public policy, equality and human rights, or environmental protection, as well as other locally specific issues (and only 8% in the Portuguese case). As will be demonstrated in the following chapters, these tendencies – predominance of labour in the Portuguese protest sphere and more diversity in the Spanish case – are still valid at the beginning of the 21st century.

Figure 8. Issues expressed in protest events in Portugal and Spain, 1980-1985.

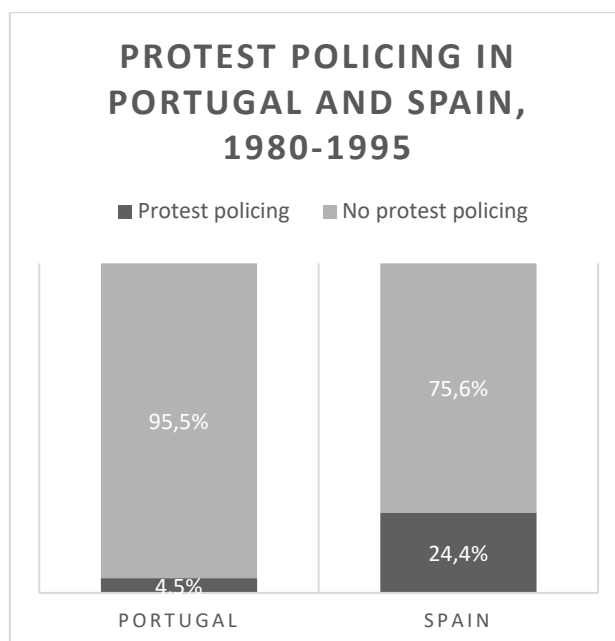


Source: <https://ronfran.ku.edu/data/index.html>; own elaboration.

In terms of police intervention in protest events (figure 9), it is clear that the occurrence of police action in instances of popular mobilisation is substantially more common in Spain (24.4% - almost a quarter of all protest events recorded) than in Portugal (4.5%). Although one must take caution in interpreting these data due to the limitations indicated above, it is safe to assume that protest events with police intervention are

more likely to make it to Reuters Textline, due to their increased salience (see chapter 1). In that sense, the vast difference reported between cases is important and can be related to the diverse democratic practices across the Iberian space, as well as to the other dynamics identified above.

Figure 9. Protest policing in Portugal and Spain, 1980-1995.



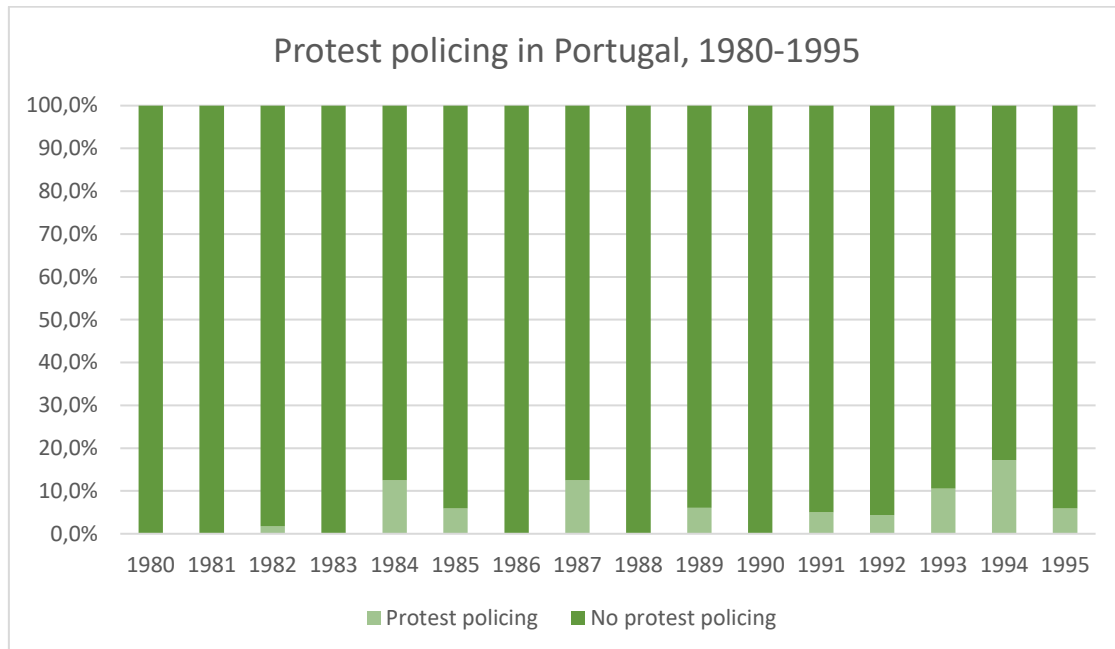
Source: <https://ronfran.ku.edu/data/index.html>; own elaboration.

Considering those events with protest policing in the Portuguese case (figure 10), four years stand out: 1984 and 1987 (12.5% of protest events with police intervention, referring exclusively to protest events led by inmates, mostly from the FP25 – *Forças Populares 25 Abril*, or “April 25th Popular Forces”, a far-left terrorist group active in the post-revolutionary period), and 1993 (10.5% – one protest event related to labour and one relating to education) and 1994 (17.2% of occurrences featuring police intervention).

1994 deserves special attention, as it features a number of protest events against tolls in the bridge connecting Lisbon to the Southern Riverbank (a dormitory area for people working in the capital) which were particularly policed. After days of civil resistance to paying the tolls (honking cars, paying with big value notes, driving extremely slow), truck drivers blocked the bridge on July 24th. The minister of Internal Affairs went to the crossing to negotiate with protesters, who refused to fully demobilise. It would be

during the night, when motorcycle drivers would attempt to once again block the bridge, that more serious confrontations with police forces would ensue, resulting in one seriously injured protester as a result of a bullet fired by the police.

Figure 10. Protest policing in Portugal, 1980-1995.



Source: <https://ronfran.ku.edu/data/index.html>; own elaboration.

Another episode of protest policing that is noteworthy in the Portuguese protest sphere is the April 20th, 1989, demonstration of members of the police forces, who gathered outside the Ministry of Internal Administration in Lisbon to demand the right to join unions, a weekly day off, and overall better working conditions – labour rights that had been established for most other professional groups. This protest event was severely repressed by police forces, whose commanders ordered those policemen who were not demonstrating – including the riot police – to descend on the demonstrators to forcefully disperse them. As with the bridge toll protests, images of the chaos that ensued were vastly reproduced in the printed and televised media – many protesting police officers were beaten and arrested by other police officers, and a minority responded with violence. This was also the only protest event in the country (to the end of 2020) when water cannons were used against demonstrators, hence the name given to the event in the news: “*Secos contra molhados*” (Dry against Wet), referring to “dry” policemen dispersing the protest, against “wet” policemen demonstrating. Some policemen on duty refused to participate in the intervention – and were dismissed from

the forces for failing to follow an explicit order, but the next day, all arrested policemen were released with all charges dropped.

Public opinion stood on the side of the demonstrators, who were seen as workers fighting for rights that were already accepted as common labour rights. The decision to order the dispersion of the demonstration was judged as a massive political mistake tarnishing the reputation of the government, that, the next year, acquiesced to the policemen's main demand – the law setting the possibility of policemen forming and joining labour union associations would be approved in 1990.

These two protest events remain topical in the Portuguese protest sphere, in part because print and broadcast media tend to revisit them in their anniversaries, highlighting their political impact and the potential importance in shaping protest policing for years to come, thus reinforcing public opinion's siding with the legitimacy of street politics in the country⁴¹. The left-right divide in reaction to the protest events was also clear – it was a right wing government that ordered police intervention, and that was vocal in condemning the protesters, depicting them as dangerous (leftist) extremists, while the leftist opposition reiterated the legitimacy of popular mobilisation and the need for dialogue between formal and informal political spheres (this was particularly the marked stance of the Socialist President of the Republic at the time, Mário Soares).

The case in Spain is significantly different (figure 11). It is the years with more protest events that also feature more protest policing – between 1984 and 1988, over a third of all protest events in the country experienced some sort of police action (36.2% in 1984, 30.4% in 1985, 37.3%, the highest percentage recorded in 1986, and 30.2% in 1987 and 1988). Due to the prevalence of police intervention in instances of popular mobilisation,

⁴¹ See <https://www.tsf.pt/sociedade/seguranca/secos-e-molhados-quando-lisboa-foi-um-campo-de-batalha-de-policias-contra-policias-10673772.html> (accessed on 26-04-2023); <https://www.sabado.pt/portugal/detalhe/20220420-0905-policias-assinalam-33-anos-da-manifestacao-secos-e-molhados-com-protesto-em-lisboa> (accessed on 26-04-2023); <https://www.dn.pt/pais/secos-e-molhados-deram-liberdade-sindical-a-psp-e-30-anos-depois-ha-17-sindicatos-10817025.html> (accessed on 26-04-2023); <https://www.dn.pt/poder/bloqueio-da-ponte-o-principio-do-fim-do-cavaquismo-foi-ha-25-anos-11035094.html> (accessed 26-04-2023); <https://www.publico.pt/2019/06/22/politica/noticia/bloqueio-ponte-ha-25-anos-principio-fim-ciclo-cavaquismo-admite-exassessor-cavaco-silva-1877307> (accessed 26-04-2023); <https://arquivos.rtp.pt/conteudos/1994-bloqueio-na-ponte-25-de-abril/> (accessed 26-04-2023).

it is not possible to single out specific events as for the Portuguese case, but one can extract some tendencies from the available data.

Figure 11. Protest policing in Spain, 1980-1995.



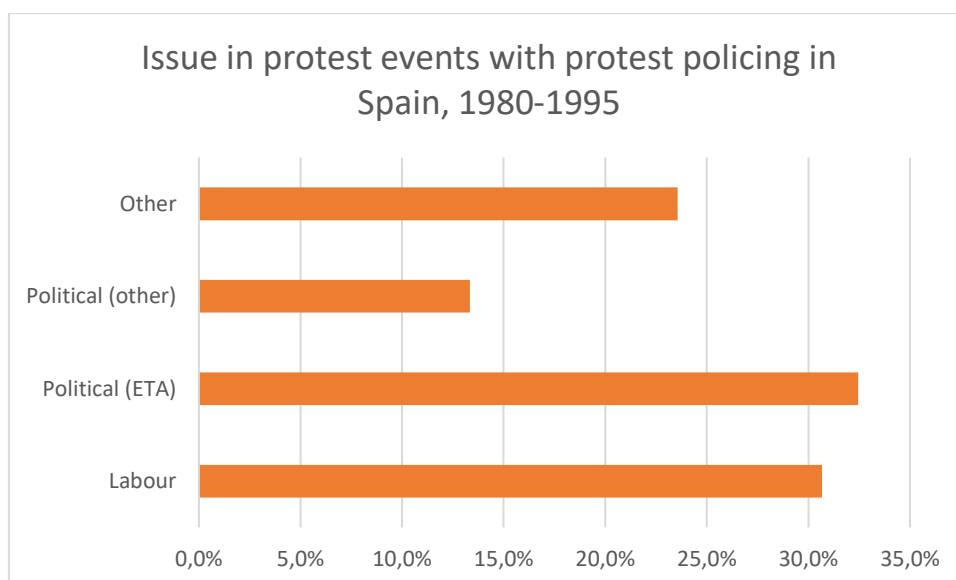
Source: <https://ronfran.ku.edu/data/index.html>; own elaboration.

Considering the issue disputed on the protest events with police intervention in Spain (figure 12), it becomes clear that it is political protest that attracts more police action (45.7%), particularly protest directly connected to ETA and HB (32.4%). Although the centrality of these actors in the period analysed here cannot be overstated, the fact that labour related protest event is also frequently the object of police control (30.7%) is significant. Popular mobilisation about other issues is the target of protest policing on 23.6% of all occasions.

It is noteworthy that, over these five years, more than 85% of police intervention in protest events is forceful, including, in some cases, the use of less lethal weapons (rubber bullets, tear gas) – this, in fact, is a tendency identified in the series, as over 80% of all protest events with protest policing feature some sort of forceful intervention. This prevalence could be the result of the coding procedures and sources used in constructing this dataset, as it is probable that those events with a more attention-grabbing type of protest policing were more likely to have made it to the Reuters Textline, but it is nonetheless indicative of a predisposition on the part of the police and

of political actors to consider protest as a disturbance of public peace, calling for police intervention to end that disturbance by any means necessary, instead of negotiation.

Figure 12. Issues in protest events with protest policing in Spain, 1980-1995.



Source: <https://ronfran.ku.edu/data/index.html>; own elaboration.

In the next chapter, this work will use innovative data to assert if the scenario hinted here finds continuation in the early 21st century. An undeniable advantage is the access to a more balanced coding procedure and a more comprehensive dataset. In addition, the period analysed is one of ETA demobilisation, so its effect on the protest sphere (and on protest policing) is expected not to be so significant.

One final aspect to consider is the media system in both countries, as newspapers constitute the source of this investigation. Southern Europe's media system (the various types of media that operate in a particular context, and their interrelations) has been described as one of "*polarised pluralism*", characterised by poorly developed press markets, insufficient professionalisation of journalists, high levels of parallelism with the party system, and strong state intervention, inherited, in the cases of Portugal and Spain, from censorship practices put in place by the dictatorship and traditions of central state intervention (Hallin and Mancini, 2004, p. 61⁴²). Democratisation, however, modified some of these features, particularly with the advent of private media groups which

⁴² The authors also established a distinction for Catalonia and the Basque Country, which, because of their higher levels of economic development coupled with higher literacy levels, featured stronger press markets – that were, nonetheless, still subject to bipartisanship and strong state intervention (p. 128).

gained substantial leverage as representatives of public opinion, creating a more balanced relationship with the organs of the State (Brüggemann *et al.*, 2014, pp. 1058-1060), with important newspapers becoming largely independent of political affiliation, commercially oriented, and defined by internal pluralism (Santana Pereira and Sousa, 2017, p. 165).

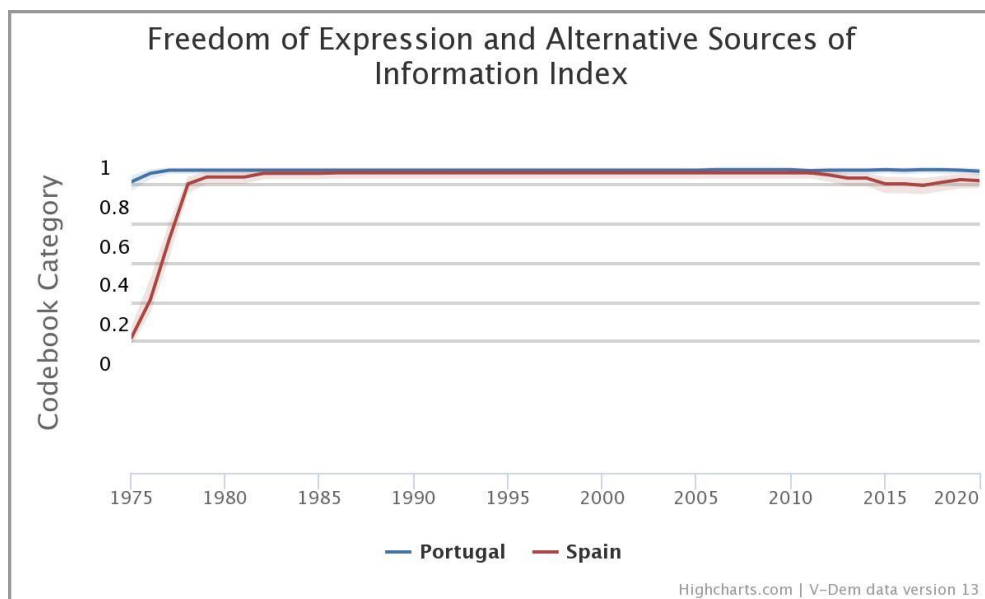
It has also been argued that the polarised pluralism model did not apply to Portugal, as, here, the media has been less involved in political conflicts, journalists have enjoyed a high degree of professionalisation, and there has been lower political parallelism (Traquina, 2010; Brüggemann *et al.*, 2014, p. 1056; Santana Pereira, 2015). Spain, too, appears to diverge from the model, particularly during the transition, when the media is considered to have played a crucial role [being dubbed *Parlamento de Papel*, or Paper Parliament (Hallin and Mancini, 2004, p. 103)], despite the prevalence of high levels of political parallelism (Brüggemann *et al.*, 2014, pp. 1056-1057). The model has also been criticised overall for not considering a most important factor – freedom of the press (Santana Pereira e Sousa, 2017, p. 196).

Indeed, the V-Dem's index on freedom of expression and alternative sources of information for Portugal and Spain (figure 13), which combines indicators for media censorship effort, harassment of journalists, media bias, media self-censorship, print / broadcast media critical (which measures the number of major news outlets that routinely criticise the government), and print / broadcast media perspectives (designed to capture if the country's major media outlets represent a wide range of political perspectives), as well as freedom of discussion for men / women, and freedom of academic and cultural expression (Coppedge *et al.*, 2021, p. 46) is telling in this regard. Although both countries score fairly well for the totality of the democratic period, there is a clear dip on the Spanish side as of 2013 that intensifies from 2015 onwards.

This work's concern is the way the media reports on protest activity and, in that regard, it agrees with Robert Fishman's 2019 (pp. 96-97) work, in considering that "*the full inclusion of protest movements into a democratic polity is contingent on the practices of... journalists*". Fishman (2011, p. 237-239; 2019, pp. 95-100) believes that Portuguese journalists and media channels are more inclined to report a variety of voices involved in democratic politics, including those of protesters with limited economic or political

power, than their Spanish counterparts, to whom, he states, “[d]emonstrations are of little interest” (2011, p. 239). He further argues that the Spanish media has been more prone to governmental pressures and is often clearly aligned with a specific political perspective – that not being the case in Portugal, whose media is, in his view, more impartial. In fact, he denotes that these two characteristics – impartiality and inclusiveness – have been paramount of the Portuguese media sphere and are rooted in the organisational structure of media outlets themselves (which he, once again, attributes to the legacies of the transition period).

Figure 13. Freedom of expression and alternative sources of information in Portugal and Spain.



Source: Varieties of democracy dataset.

For the Spanish case, Victor Sampedro (1997; 2004) and Jaume Asens (2004, pp. 302-303) had already alerted that protest movements enjoyed small windows of media opportunities, as these tended to be bureaucratised by government elites, resulting in the diluteness of the newsworthiness of protest, which, further, is often associated with the level of disruption caused by the protest event, thus emptying it of its political significance. Media’s coverage of Spanish social movements, then, seems to be more focused on the adopted protest repertoires, but amiss on expressed political concerns. This is a form of depoliticising activists and delegitimising their presence in the shared public sphere.

José Santana Pereira and Pedro Sousa (2017, p. 211) also indicate the presence of informal limitations to freedom of the press in Spain, connected mainly to two issues – the royal family and autonomic claims – as well as high levels of pressure from politicians (which, in Portugal, are substituted by pressure from economic interests).

The purpose of this discussion was to situate the analysis presented in the next chapters. It identified a dissonance in the literature on democracy in Portugal and Spain – while some authors argue that the Portuguese democracy is stronger precisely because the legacies of the social revolution permitted the building of bridges between informal and formal political actors that are still relevant, those conclusions are not supported by quantitative data on the level of engagement and of autonomy of civil society. Nonetheless, the separation between those two spheres of political participation (street politics vs. institutional politics) does appear wider in the Spanish case and is, actually, clearly codified in Spanish legislation. This seems to have lasting implications in terms of protest and protest policing, which will be investigated in the following chapters.

Chapter 3. Protest in Spain and Portugal at the beginning of the twenty-first century – an overview

This chapter will present an overview of the protest arena in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020, based on data collected in the Disobedient Democracy database, complemented with further data collection to complete the time series. It will first be concerned with the dimension of protest in both countries during these twenty-one years, considering both the number of protest events and the level of participation. It will then address the organisational dynamics of popular dissent, regarding typologies of protesters and how they are coordinated in both countries' public spheres. A third dimension is concerned with what protesters actually do – how they protest (their collective action repertoires), what they claim / demand, and who they address.

3.1. Dimension of protest

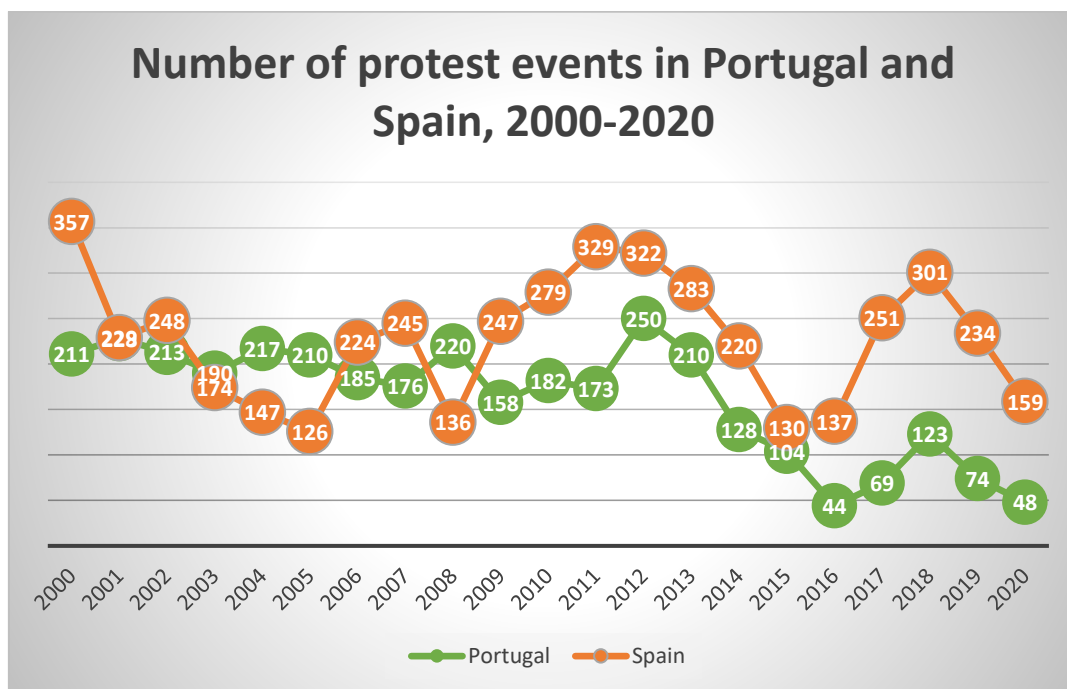
A first probe into popular mobilisation in Portugal and Spain concerns the number of protest events by year in each country. Figure 14 provides that information and unveils some converging and diverging tendencies.

Portugal has a total of 3413 protest events, and Spain 4779. Protest levels in the first country were relatively stable until the Great Recession – up until 2011, protest events averaged 197 per year, although exhibiting a mild decreasing tendency (0.73% per year). The first six years of the series saw high mobilisation (between 190 protest events in 2003 and 228 in 2001), due to intense resistance to reforms in education (particularly a significant increase in tuition prices in public universities), in labour legislation (negotiation of wages and career progression regimes, rise in retirement age), as well as in public services provision. The number of protest events rose exponentially in 2012, reaching the highest peak of the series, at 250 occurrences (rising 44.5% from 2011). Anti-austerity protest is, then, an important standout feature of the Portuguese collective mobilisation landscape.

It is, however, the sharp fall from 2014 onwards that constitutes the biggest variation noted in the Portuguese series (a decrease of 39.1% already noted in 2014, with 128

protest events recorded, and an average yearly decline of 7.9% since), with the number of occurrences reaching its lowest point in 2016 (44 protest events) and remaining low since (averaging at 84 incidences between 2014 and 2020).

Figure 14. Number of protest events in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

While the 2012 peak is easily explained, the subsequent plunge is quite remarkable and remains to be fully understood – feelings of exhaustion or despondency experienced by protesters and protest organisers after the very intense anti-austerity protest cycle can contribute to justifying it (Fernandes *et al.*, 2018), but this can also be attributed to the demobilisation of actors in Portuguese anti-austerity resistance (mainly “*Que Se Lixe a Troika*” / Screw the Troika – QSLT), which started retreating from the protest arena already in 2013 (Fernandes *et al.*, 2020, p. 50; 2021), and whose influence and ability to call for participation in protest events did not find a replacement in the Portuguese public sphere.

The proximity of the 2015 parliamentary elections may further contribute to explaining the unprecedented fall in protest events in Portugal from 2014 onwards – not only were prominent members of QSLT politicians themselves, mainly in the Left Bloc (“*Bloco de Esquerda*” – BE) and the Portuguese Communist Party (“*Partido Comunista Português*” – PCP), but also some younger members of the Socialist Party (“*Partido Socialista*” – PS),

others had ties to electoral politics through their engagement with the most mobilising labour union in the country – CGTP – which has a strong association with PCP.

What is more, the new government resulting from those elections (which ruled until 2019, when it was re-elected in a similar format) has seen the least dissent in the series. This was a minority Socialist (PS) government, known as “*geringonça*” (contraption) – a term initially used derogatively by the election’s losers, but that was appropriated and re-signified by the government itself – which relied on informal support from parties further to the left, namely the Left Bloc and the CDU (“*Coligação Democrática Unitária*” – Unitary Democratic Coalition), a standing electoral coalition between the PCP and the green party (“*Os Verdes*”) since 1987. The decrease in protest numbers, then, can also be attributed to the very importance of PCP and BE in the governmental arrangement, as these are, traditionally, the political parties which are able to mobilise stronger protest (PCP’s influence on labour unions, again, is particularly relevant here), but also to a sense of shared hope that was associated with a radically different governmental solution (Fernandes *et al.*, 2020, p. 53; 2021), decreasing people’s incentives to take to the streets.

In Spain, the number of protest events is less regular, with the highest peak right at the beginning of the series: 357 protest events in 2000, a year of particularly intense mobilisation related to internal terrorism, with extensive protest to condemn ETA attacks, as well as significant mobilisation in support of ETA prisoners. This year also features consistent migration related protest – both pro and against migrant rights. The Great Recession also saw extraordinary dissent – 329 protest events in 2011 and 322 in 2012 – followed by the same decreasing tendency identified in Portugal, although not as sharp (a decrease of 25.1% between 2013 and 2015). This can be attributed to a transfer of demands made at street level to new political parties / movements that gained national representation (particularly *Podemos*) and rose to power also in local elections (i.e., municipal platforms elected in Madrid, Barcelona and other major cities in 2015), but the same feelings of exhaustion and despondency identified for the Portuguese case may also have played a role (Romanos and Sádaba, 2022, p. 94; Fernandes *et al.*, 2020, pp. 53-54; 2021,).

2018 is, too, a year of extensive mobilisation, with 301 protest events, relating to intensive mobilisation by Catalanian independentist movements, as well as resistance to them, but also features a significant number of events related to gender equality.

Apart from 2015/2016 (with 130 and 137 protest events recorded, respectively), the lowest mobilisation occurred in 2004/2005 (147 and 126 occurrences), decreasing, on average, almost 13% per year since 2002, and in 2008 (136 events, decreasing 45% from 2007). These years are outliers in terms of protest numbers in Spain and stand well below the average number of protest events per year: 228 events, higher than the average in the neighbouring country, where only two years – 2001 and 2012 – saw the number of protest events rise to that figure.

With the exception of the years 2003 to 2005 and 2008, Spain exhibited a higher number of protest events than Portugal. This difference is more pronounced after 2016, years of extraordinary quiescence on the Portuguese side of the border. Despite these differences, there is a clear convergence in the evolution of protest in both countries in the second half of the series. If during the Great Recession, this convergence is evidently related to anti-austerity mobilisation, the 2018 peak cannot be related to any cross-border circumstances – as, in Portugal, that is informed mainly by labour related protest (Fernandes *et al.*, 2021), an issue that, as indicated above, was not as salient in the Spanish public sphere at that stage (Romanos and Sádaba, 2022, pp. 99-100).

Although the analysis of the number of protest events provides some insights, this needs to be complemented with a scrutiny of actual participation in dissent. Protest is not protest without people, so it is imperative to determine the dimension of participation in street politics in Portugal and Spain during the time series (figure 15)⁴³.

Overall, a total of 71.607.346 people are said to have engaged in street politics between 2000 and 2020 in Spain, and 14.126.725 in Portugal. The same tendency for more stability on the Portuguese side can be clearly identified – the number of protesters per

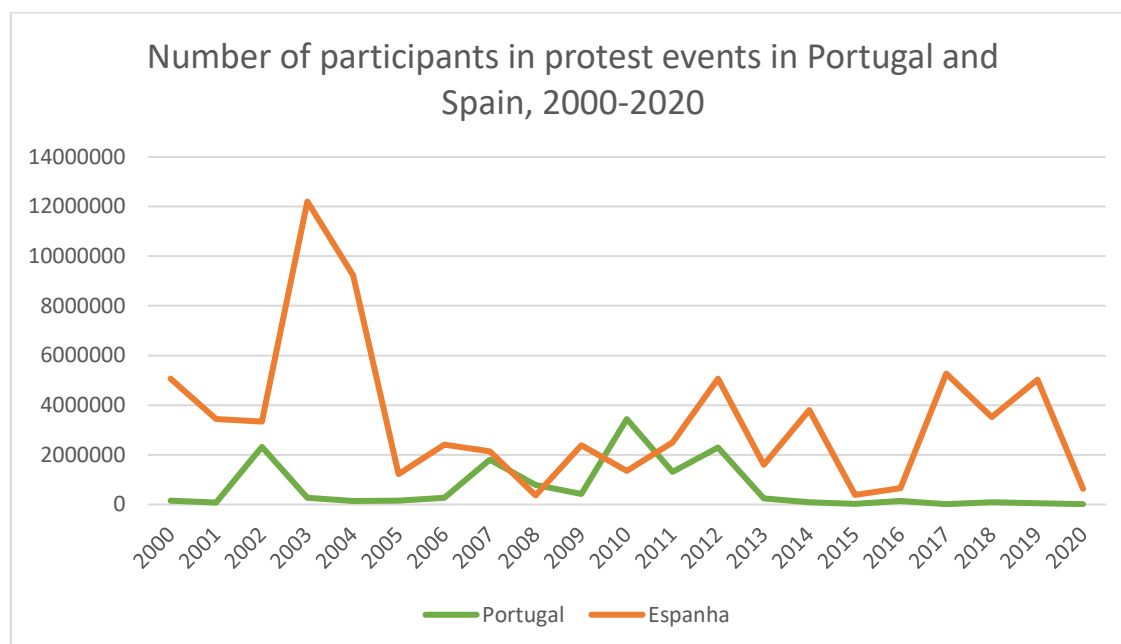
⁴³ It should be noted that (1) a significant number of protest events do not have a reported number of participants; (2) in particular for the case of Portugal, important protests such as sectorial strikes are generally not reported with the total number of participants, but rather with a percentage of workers that were deemed to have gone on strike – these were not considered here; (3) there is a tendency for underestimating the number of participants across the board, which was informed by the coding procedures.

year averages at around 670.000 (672.701). Nonetheless, there are four significant peaks:

- 2002, with 2.314.352 protesters, relating to two particularly mobilising strikes (one with over half a million public servants, and a general strike in December with 1.7 million participants),
- 2007 (1.805.866 people), with 1.4 million workers joining a general strike, and one protest event with over 200.000 people targeting the 2007 European Union Summit,
- 2010 exhibits the highest participation recorded in the series, with 3.440.655 people taking to the streets, and featuring the series' most participated event: a general strike with over 3 million participants,
- 2011 saw over 1 million participants (1.315.622 people), with one event against austerity featuring 630.000 people, and a second one 200.000 (including 10.000 members of the country's security forces), and
- 2012 (2.295.496 people) had the biggest demonstration called by an anti-austerity citizen initiative (QSLT), with 1.026.300 people recorded to have demonstrated across the country, plus a protest with 300.000 participants asking for a rise in the minimum wage, and a demonstration called by ANAFRE – *Associação Nacional de Freguesias* ("National Association of Local Councils"), the lowest level of government in Portugal, corresponding to the local administration – gathering 150.000 people.

These peaks, then, are either located in the first half of the series or during the Great Recession, with a weighty retreat in popular mobilisation from 2014 onwards, when, with the exception of 2016 (147.418 protesters), the total number of participants in protest events per year never reached one hundred thousand. One can say, thus, that the retreat from the streets already noticeable when examining the number of protest events is reinforced when analysing the number of protesters – for example, less than 25.000 people are reported to have participated in popular dissent in 2015 (24.305), and only 14.406 in 2017.

Figure 15. Number of participants in protest events per year in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

The average number of participants in the Spanish protest arena is much higher, standing at 3.410.683 people per year, and the median is also, as in the Portuguese case, slightly lower, at 3.173.311 participants. Spain sees the highest mobilisation in 2003 (with over 12 million people reported to have participated in protest events – 12.201.189) and in 2004 (almost 10 million participants – 9.230.984). These two years of extraordinary mobilisation are connected to the persistence of more consensual themes in the public sphere, with intense anti-terrorism mobilisation (2004 saw several highly participated events condemning the Al-Qaeda terrorist bombings at Atocha, the main Madrid train station, with one protest event reported to have gathered 7.449.500 people), but also extensive resistance to the Spanish government support to the Iraq invasion of 2003 (multiple protest events with 5.527.000 total reported participants)⁴⁴. Both years also saw high mobilisation around the LGBTQIA+⁴⁵ rights, with the Gay Pride of 2003 in Madrid featuring one million people, and the one in 2004 gathering over 600.000 participants (601.500 people).

⁴⁴ Mobilisation against the Iraq war continued in 2004, with one protest event gathering at least 255.500 people.

⁴⁵ LGBTQIA+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex and Asexual, and the plus sign indicates that these identities are not stable and other people can be included in the acronym.

Other important years in terms of popular participation are 2012 and 2014 (5.071.253 and 3.803.815 total participants, respectively). While 2012 corresponds to anti-austerity mobilisation [one demonstration in 57 cities with at least 722.700 participants; two general strikes, including one with over 1.2 million participants (1.246.085) reported, and another with almost half a million strikers (498.120 workers), plus a myriad of other highly participated protests]⁴⁶, those demands were already mostly absent from highly participated protest in 2014, when independentist-type claims were the most mobilising (470.000, plus 110.000 Catalonians demonstrated in favour of an independence referendum in two separate events, and 2.2 million people in Catalonia voted in the consultation on sovereignty of November that year⁴⁷) – the exception would be the Dignity Marches (“*Marchas de la Dignidad*”), a protest campaign occurring throughout the year during which multiple demands current during the peak of the anti-austerity cycle were repeated (i.e., labour rights, inequality, debt, access to housing)⁴⁸. Prior to that, 2012 had already featured the most attended Catalonia Day celebrations to date, with 600.000 people demonstrating in support of Catalanian Independence.

Further, the strong retreat from the protest sphere experienced in Portugal after the anti-austerity protest cycle finds no correspondence in Spain, as the final years of the series are ones of extraordinary mobilisation – 5.274.043 people in protest events in 2017, 3.514.161 in 2018, and 5.033.288 in 2019. Participation in the most mobilising events is broken down as follows:

- 2017:
 - One million people at Gay Pride in Madrid (as part of the World Pride event celebrated in the city that year),
 - Half a million people in Barcelona against the terrorist attack of August 2017,

⁴⁶ These include 103.600 people on the anniversary of 15-M, 225.850 people participating in Labour Day demonstrations, 127.000 demanding a referendum on the austerity measures imposed by the government, and other two significant anti-austerity demonstrations with 238.000 and 177.500 participants each.

⁴⁷ On top of these, 110.000 Basques demonstrated for the Human Rights of ETA prisoners, and 150.000 participated in a human chain for Basque independence.

⁴⁸ The most participated protest event of the Dignity Marches campaign took place on March 22nd, 2014, with newspapers recording between 10.000 and 50.000, both estimates significantly below that of protest organisers [according to Cortavirta (2014, p. 5-6), hundreds of thousands of people participated in that event alone, and thousands more joined the subsequent events of the protest campaign during that year].

- 700.000 protesters in a general strike of Catalonia in support of independence,
- Three protest events gathering 350.000 participants each in Barcelona against the Catalanian independence movement, and
- Two very participated demonstrations to protest the imprisonment of Catalanian pro-independence leaders (200.000 and 750.000 participants).

- 2018:

- 346.000 people participated in marches on International Women's Day across Spain,
- 320.000 pensioners in one protest event,
- Another two high mobilisation demonstrations (350.000 people, plus 110.000 people) to protest the imprisonment of Catalanian pro-independence leaders,
- 175.000 people in an event for Basque sovereignty,
- 1 million people at Pride in Madrid,
- A minimum of 200.000 participants in the *Diada*, demanding independence, and
- 180.300 protesters gathered to celebrate the anniversary of the Catalanian referendum.

- 2019:

- 200.000 people against the trial of Catalanian pro-independence leaders,
- 820.000 people marched on International Women's Day 2019,
- 1.6 million people at Gay Pride,
- 600.000 people at the *Diada* in Barcelona, and
- Two protests against the sentence of Catalonia independentist leaders, featuring 525.000 and 350.000 people.

The protest arena in Spain, then, quickly moved from anti-austerity dissent to mobilisation around two very different sets of demands. One first demand lies around human rights: demands for LGBTQIA+ rights were, from 2018 onwards, accompanied by demands for gender equality voiced in very participated, nationwide events. However, the most significant rise in mobilisation relates to independentist and sovereignty issues, on both sides of the barricade – although with a clear prevalence of pro-independence

protest, particularly in Catalonia. This shift, which, as noted, was already felt in 2014, could indicate that, unlike in Portugal, where the new government acted as a deterrent to protest, the political instability experienced in Spain after the 2015 general elections caused an opposite effect, triggering strong mobilisation around alternative governance possibilities. It also seems to indicate a parallel shift – as the central government is perceived as unable or unwilling to listen to protesters' demands expressed during the anti-austerity protest cycle, these relocate their hopes to a lower level of governance.

Finally, the first three years of the series are also of high mobilisation – 5.063.349 people in 2000, and over 3 million in the two following years (3.439.147 in 2001 and 3.339.582 in 2002). These are itemised below:

- 2000;
 - 250.000 people in Zaragoza against the National Water Resources Plan,
 - Over 200.000 people on a demonstration against ETA in several cities (200.200 participants),
 - 900.000 protesters against ETA in a demonstration in Barcelona, and
 - 358.000 people in a protest event requiring the Government to promote stable employment.

- 2001:
 - 300.000 protesters mobilising against the National Water Resources Plan in Barcelona and 200.000 in Zaragoza, and
 - Almost 1.5 million people (1.410.000) demonstrated to demand better occupational hazard policies.

- 2002:
 - 250.000 people in a protest event against inequality, globalisation, and capitalism,
 - Over half a million people in a general strike (504.300 reported participants),
 - Half a million participants at Gay Pride in Madrid, and
 - 325.000 protesters demonstrated about the Prestige oil spill in Galicia.

From this analysis, it is clear that there are two main issues which are highly mobilising in Portugal: labour and, connected to it, austerity – as precarity, curtailment of labour rights, and unemployment were a significant part of anti-austerity demands (Accornero and Ramos Pinto, 2015, pp. 505-506; Carvalho, 2018, pp. 119-125; Fernandes *et al.*, 2020, pp. 65-67; 2021). There is only one highly participated event in the country that is not directly related to labour rights, which is the demonstration during the EU Summit held in Portugal in 2007, which, nonetheless, had a strong labour component, as it was organised by CGTP (with BE and PCP as organisational allies), and featured labour related demands (workers' rights and precarity).

By contrast, in Spain, labour does not appear to be as mobilising, with only a few highly participated events relating to labour rights at the beginning of the series, plus two general strikes in 2012, as part of anti-austerity mobilisation. Other issues emerge as more rallying, such as terrorism (national and transnational), civil rights (in the forms of gender equality and LGBTQIA+ rights), environmental concerns, anti-war protest, and, finally, sovereignty issues.

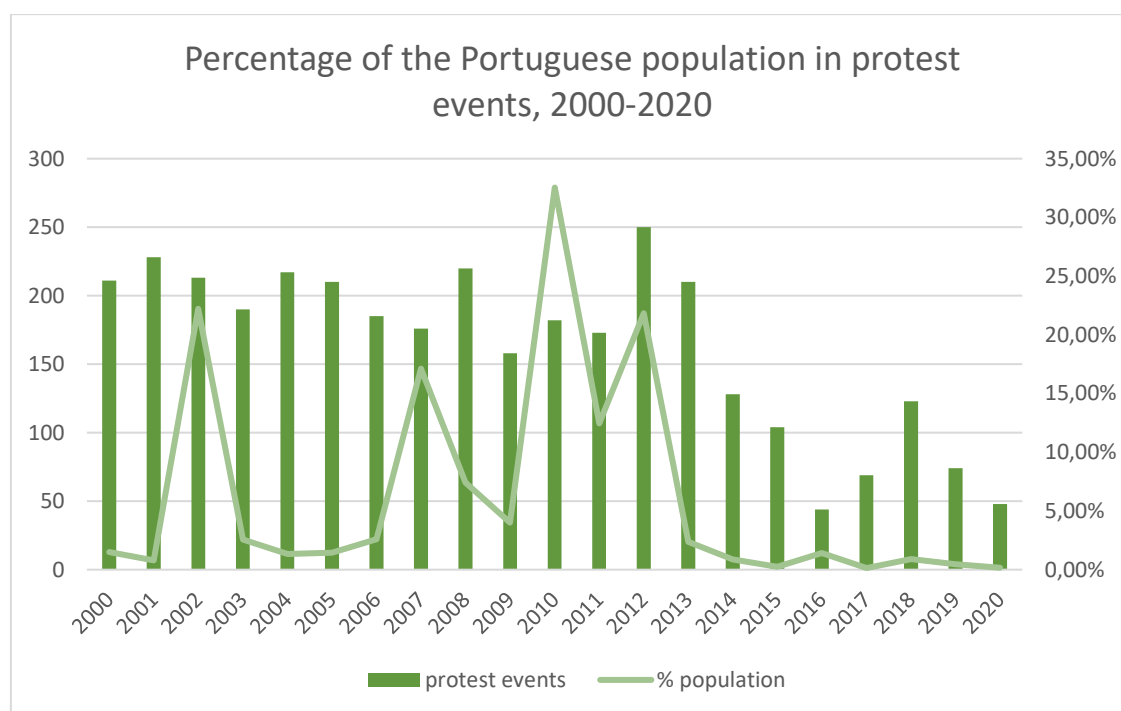
To further clarify popular participation dynamics in protest events, the percentage of the total population joining dissent per year in Portugal and Spain was calculated. This is presented in figures 16 and 17, along with the number of protest events.

One witnesses, first of all, the mass appeal of anti-austerity protest in Portugal – in 2010, over 30% of the Portuguese population took part in some sort of street politics (32.5%), and, in 2012, that percentage was close to 22% (21.8%); 2011, at the beginning of the anti-austerity protest cycle, also saw a significant proportion of the total population joining protest (12.5%). It is, hence, these few years of mobilisation that see the highest percentage of Portuguese residents participating in protest events. It was only in 2002 and 2007 that similar percentages were reached – 22.2% of the Portuguese resident population protested in 2002, and 17.1% in 2007 (see above). In 2008, additionally, 7.4% of the population participated in popular mobilisation.

In all the remaining years, less than 5% of the population engaged in popular dissent, and, from 2014 onwards, that proportion is always below 1.5%. Interestingly, the series shows a number of years that have a high number of protest events to which a very low

percentage of the Portuguese population adhered (2000-2001, with 1.5% and 0.8%, respectively; 2003-2004, with 1.3% and 1.4%; and 2013, with 2.7%), allowing for the assumption of the presence of a significant proportion of micro-protest in the country, that the media continuously reported on.

Figure 16. Percentage of the population participating in protest events in Portugal between 2000 and 2020.



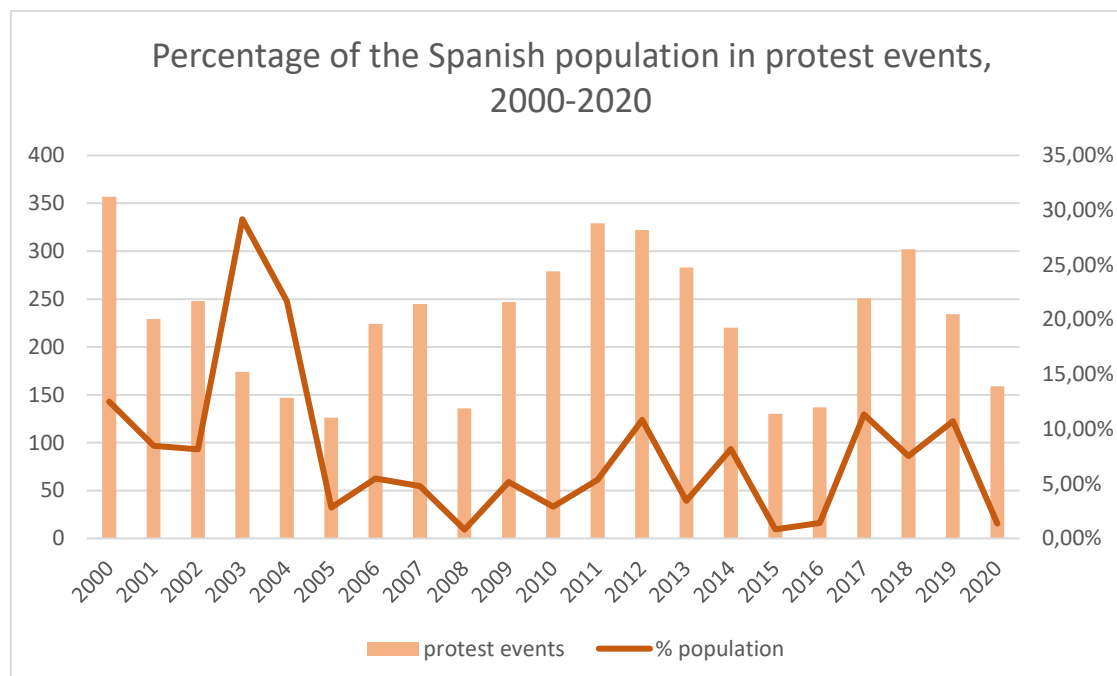
Sources: *Pordata*, Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

For the Spanish case (figure 17), the highest percentage of the resident population joining protest occurs in 2003 (29.2%), and in the following year (21.7%). Overall, then, the highest mobilisation in Spain is concentrated in the first five years of the series (12.5% of the Spanish residents protested in 2000, and 8.5% and 8.1% in 2001 and 2002).

Resistance to austerity also saw 10.8% of the Spanish population joining street protest in 2012. Similar levels were only to be reached closer to the end of the series, in 2017 (11.3%) and 2019 (10.7%). In all other years, participation in protest events was only appealing to 5% or less of the population (except for 2018 with 7.5% and 2014 with 8.2%). 2008 and 2015 had the lowest participation, as less than 1% of the total population (0.8%) is said to have joined protest events. However, even in the years of lower mobilisation, this percentage never falls below the lowest recorded percentage of participants in Portugal. Finally, in the Spanish case, excluding the first five years, there

is also higher convergency between the number of protest events and the number of people on the streets.

Figure 17. Percentage of the population participating in protest events in Spain between 2000 and 2020.



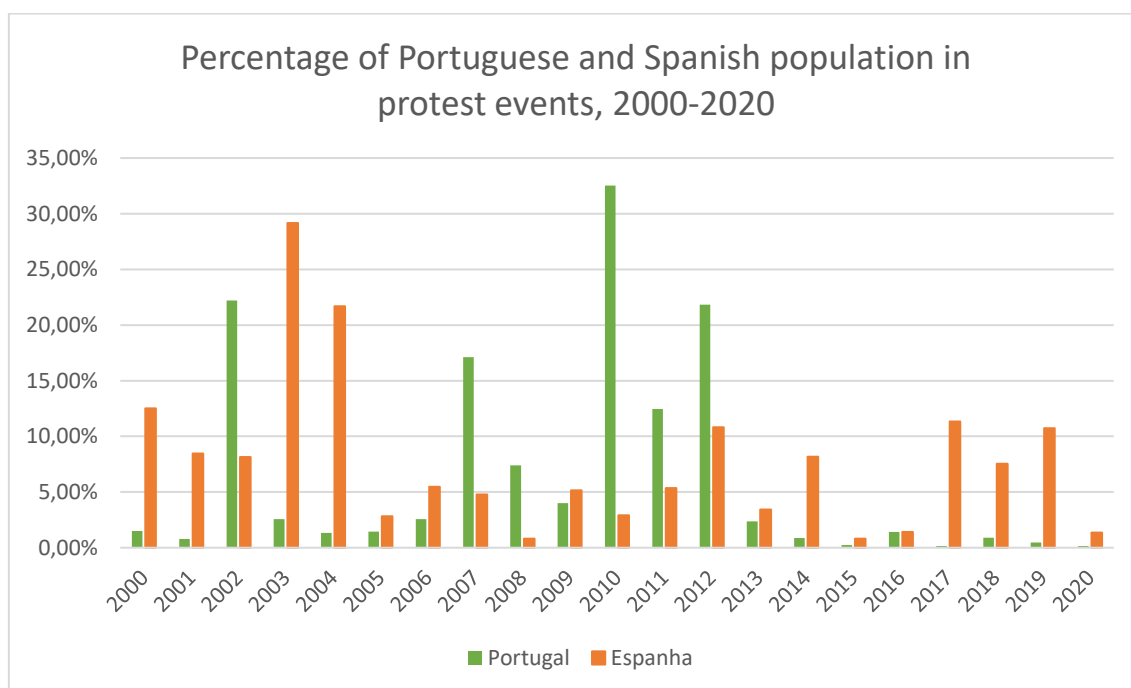
Sources: *Instituto Nacional de Estadística*, Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

In the following graph (figure 18), the comparison between the percentage of the population joining protest in both countries is presented. One tendency clearly stands out – the higher adherence of the Portuguese population to the anti-austerity protest cycle (as indicated by Fernandes *et al.*, 2021, p. 57). With the exception of 2012, there are only another three years of higher participation in Portugal than in Spain (2002 and 2007-8) – years of particularly high mobilisation in the first country. By contrast, it is in the first and last parts of the series that an unequivocally higher percentage of the Spanish population participated in street politics, in comparison to their western neighbours.

Nonetheless, the average percentage of each country's population who protests is rather close: 6.4% in Portugal and 7.8% in Spain. These figures are much closer excluding the last few years in the series: an average of 7.4% of the Portuguese population participated in street politics between 2000 and 2017, to an average of 7.9% of the residents in the neighbouring country. This, again, is testimony to the extraordinary

degree of demobilisation experienced in the Portuguese protest arena from the end of the anti-austerity mobilisation onwards, which finds no correspondence in the Spanish case.

Figure 18. Percentage of population participating in protest events in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.

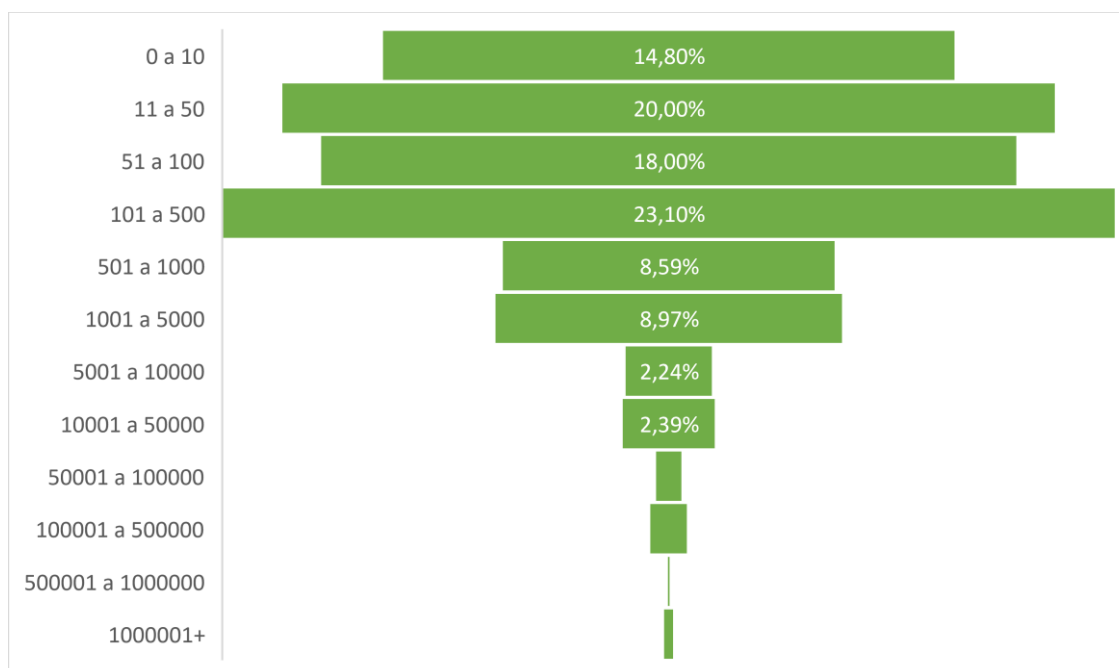


Sources: *Pordata*, *Censos España*, Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

In the ensuing graphs, an evaluation of the size of protest events is offered (figures 19 and 20). There is a significantly greater percentage of protest events mobilising a higher number of participants in Spain than in Portugal. Although there is a similar proportion of protest events with more than one million participants (0.25% in Spain and 0.24% in Portugal), the difference between countries increases in the following categories – 0.46% of protest events featuring between 500.001 and 1 million participants in Spain, against 0.05% in Portugal, and 2.05% of occurrences featuring between 100.001 and half a million people in Spain, against 0.95% in Portugal. The following interval (protest events featuring between 50.001 and 100.000 participants) exhibits a similar trend: 1.9% in Spain and 0.67% in Portugal.

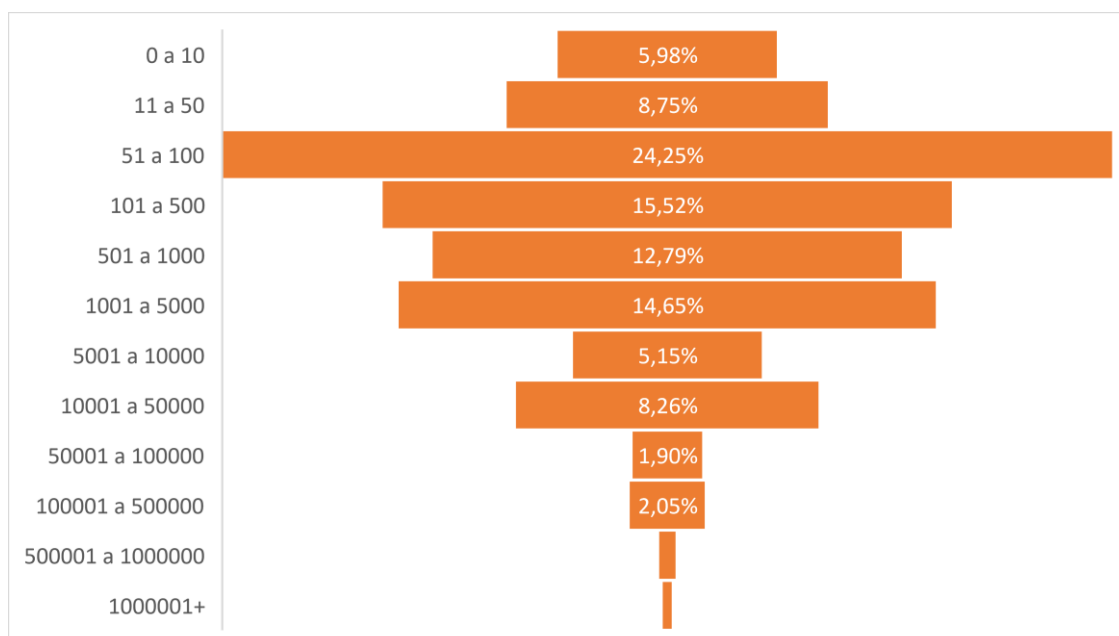
Additionally, the higher incidence of micro-protest in Portugal is made clear: here, 14.8% of all protest events have less than 10 participants, compared to 6% in Spain, and 20% of Portuguese protest events gather between 11 and 50 people, against 8.8% in Spain.

Figure 19. Percentage of protest events by interval of participants in Portugal between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

Figure 20. Percentage of protest events by interval of participants in Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

In fact, protest events with less than 100 people constitute over 50% of all events in Portugal (52.8%), and less than 40% in the neighbouring country (39%). However, in the Spanish case, protest events with between 51 to 100 participants are more frequently

reported on (24.3%), while, in Portugal, it is protest featuring between 101 and 500 people which is the most frequent interval (23.1%).

Despite these differences, it is clear that newspapers on both sides of the border report on protest that is not particularly salient in terms of participation levels, as there is a consistent flow of smaller protest events finding their way into the Iberian media space – this contradicts most of the literature on media and protest (Oliver and Maney, 2000, pp. 466-467; Fillieule and Jiménez, 2003, p. 261; Earl *et al.*, 2004, pp. 68-73; Hutter, 2014, pp. 351-352; Amenta *et al.*, 2017, pp. 5-7), and indicates that protest newsworthiness relates to other issues than the size of the crowd expressing dissent in the public sphere.

3.2. Organisational dynamics of protest

This work now turns to the organisational dynamics of protest events on both sides of the border, by offering an exploration of the type of participants in street politics and their organisers. The Disdem database includes twenty-six descriptors of protest participants, which were considered to create the following typology of protesters:

- Labour related protesters – this category of protesters includes workers (with no further affiliation), farmers and agricultural workers, public servants, private companies' employees, the unemployed, and precarious workers. Fishermen (not included in the Disdem database) were also included in this category, and so were labour union activists, under the assumption that the latter mobilise mainly – if not exclusively – in relation to labour issues,
- Youth – this investigation considers young people, university students and pupils (mainly high school pupils and youth attending professional schools, but also those attending lower levels of schooling) as part of the youth category of protest participants,
- Identity based categories – this typology features pensioners, people with disabilities, women, ethnic and religious groups, and migrants and refugees,

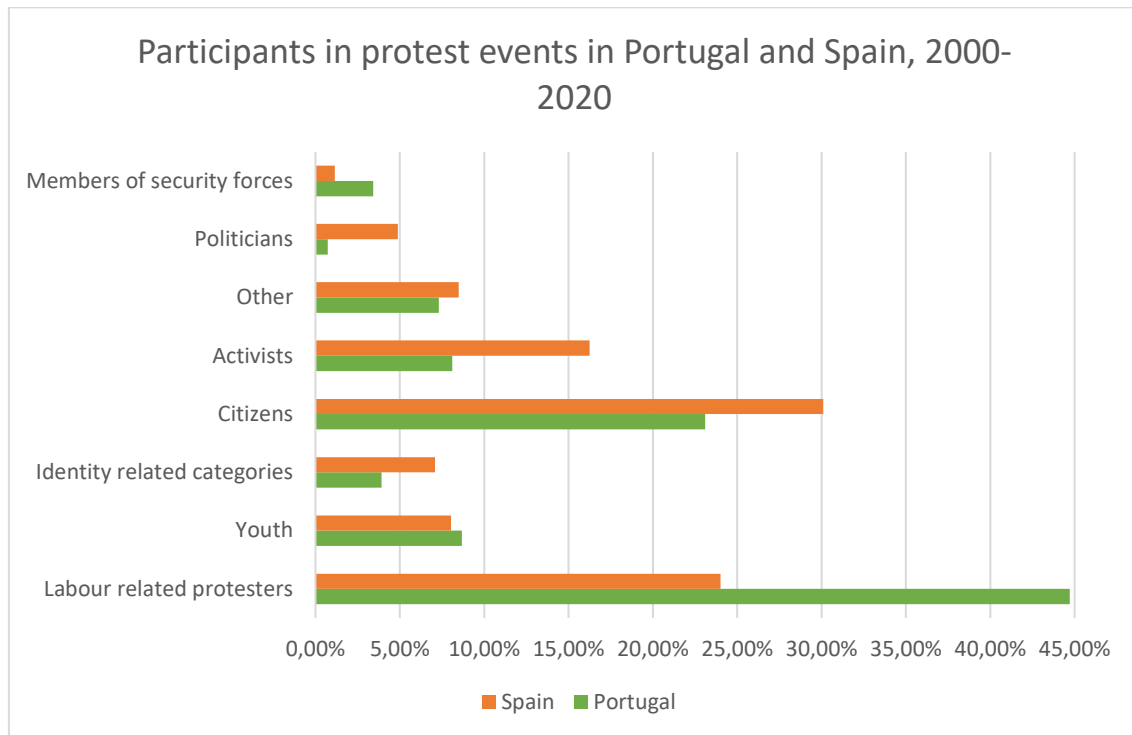
- Citizens – a standalone category in the Disdem database, which is maintained here,
- Activists (*id.*),
- Other – in this wider category of protesters, the following participants featured in the Disdem dataset are considered: people in homelessness, consumers, sports fans, and other protest participants (i.e., inmates and detainees, families, or business owners),
- Politicians (not considered in the Disdem database), and
- Members of security forces – this includes police, armed forces, firefighters, prison wards, and war veterans (and is, too, not an individual descriptor in the Disdem dataset).

These last two categories (politicians and members of security forces) are, in the Disdem catalogue, part of the wider descriptor ‘other participants’ and were manually lifted. This investigation opted to consider them as separate categories of protesters given their salience in at least one of the countries studied, and their potential importance for the research objectives.

The prevalence of labour in the Portuguese protest arena is evidently indicated in figure 21. Labour related protesters constitute well over 40% of all protesters in the country between 2000 and 2020 (44.7%). This is almost twice the proportion of the second most important category – citizens, representing 23.1% of all Portuguese participants in dissent. It is also almost double the percentage in the Spanish case, where labour related protesters constitute 24% of all the people taking to the streets during the period under consideration. Other than this type of protesters, only two other categories of participants are more relevant in Portugal than in Spain: youth (marginally, representing 8.7% of all Portuguese people joining dissent, against 8% in Spain) and members of the security forces – 3.3%, against 1.1% in Spain.

In this country, the most prevalent category of participants in protest events is regular citizens (30.1%). Labour related protesters are the second most important typology, followed by activists, which represent 16.3% of all protesters – a significant difference from the Portuguese case, where activists constitute half of that percentage (8.1%).

Figure 21. Categories of participants in protest events in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

The five categories in which Spanish protesters outweigh their Portuguese counterparts are citizens, activists, identity related categories (7.1% against 3.9% in Portugal), politicians, representing 4.9% of all protesters (scarcely present in the neighbouring country, at 0.73%) and other (8.5% vs. 7.3%). The protest arena in Spain, then, is more diverse than in the Portuguese case, as different categories of protesters take to the streets throughout the series.

These trends can be further clarified with the probe of the organisational dynamics of popular mobilisation (figure 22), particularly considering that, in both countries, the majority of protest events have a reported organiser (61.7% in Portugal and 56.9% in Spain). The Disdem database contemplates twenty-five types of protest organisers, which were systematised as follows:

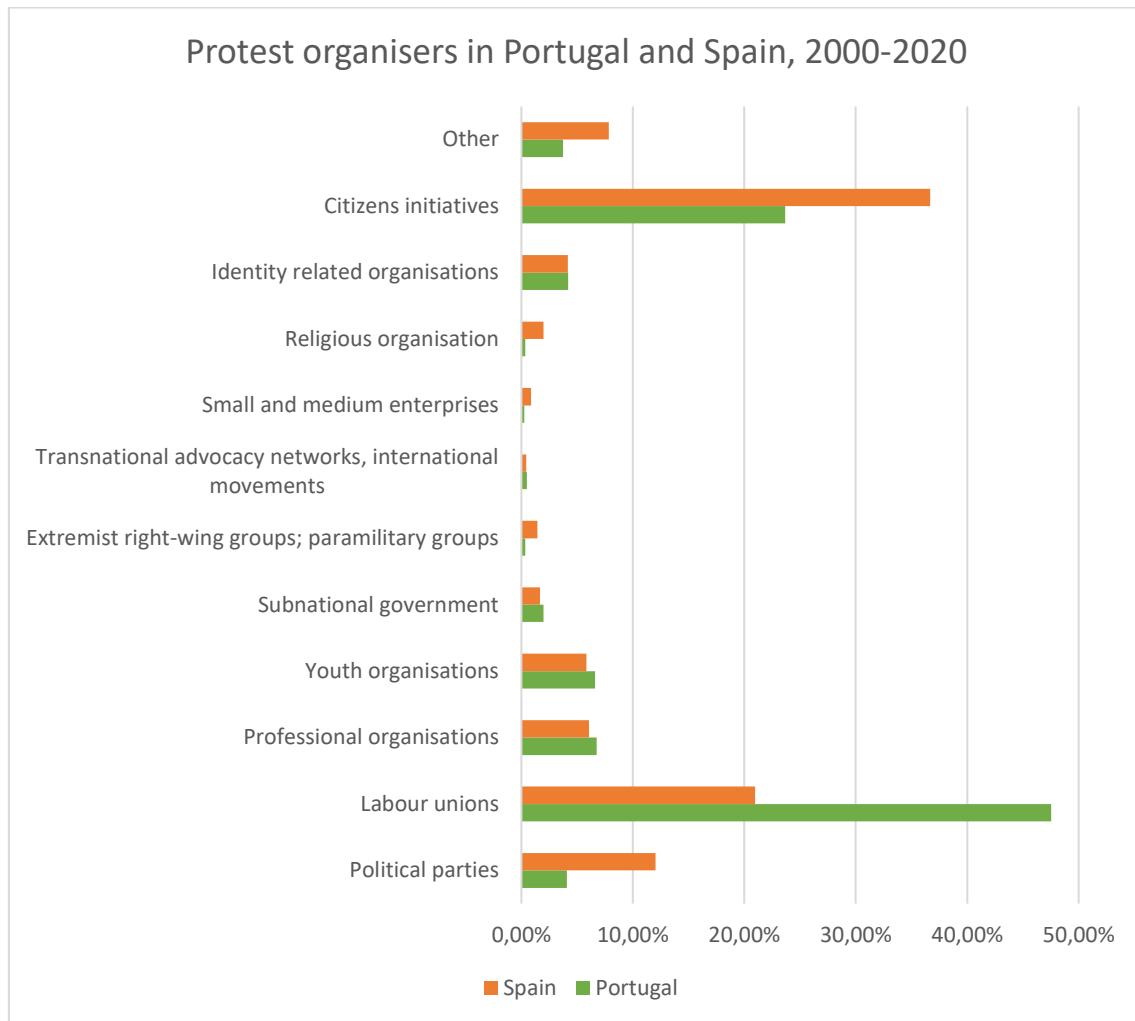
- Political parties (as a stand-alone category),
- Labour unions (*id.*),
- Professional organisations (including farmers organisations and fishermen associations),

- Youth organisations (featuring students and pupils associations, along with youth groups formed independently from each country's educational system),
- Subnational government – a category coded as part of the wider category 'other' in the Disdem database, that is individualised here,
- Extremist right wing and paramilitary groups (a standalone category of protest organisers),
- Transnational advocacy networks (*id.*),
- Small and medium enterprises (*id.*),
- Religious organisations, which include any (majority or minority) church and other religious organisations,
- Identity related organisations, featuring minority, ethnic and migrant associations, feminist organisations, and pensioners groups,
- Citizen initiatives, which include anti-eviction organisations, service provision and donor organisations, human rights organisations, environmentalist groups, as well as any other group of citizens organised around a particular issue,
- Other types of organisations, such as war veterans and victims of previous regimes groups, precarious workers associations, parents' associations, as well as any type of organiser that does not fit in the typology described above.

Two types of protest organisers immediately stand out: labour unions in Portugal – responsible for almost half of all protest events with a reported organiser (46.1%, against 21.1% on the other side of the border) – and citizens initiatives in Spain – calling 36.8% of all protest events (and 23% in Portugal). Professional organisations and youth organisations, negligently more important in Portugal than in Spain – 6.5% and 6.1%, vs. 6.1% and 5.9%, respectively – are also substantial mobilisers of popular dissent across the Iberian space.

One must also consider the role of political parties, which are the third most important organiser of popular mobilisation in Spain, accounting for 12.1% of all protest events with a reported organiser. In Portugal, political parties' role in calling for dissent is much less significant, at 4.1%. Nonetheless, and due to the potential role of formal politics actors in the processes analysed in the qualitative probe, this investigation zoomed on their involvement as forces behind protest, presented in the two graphs below.

Figure 22. Protest organisers in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.



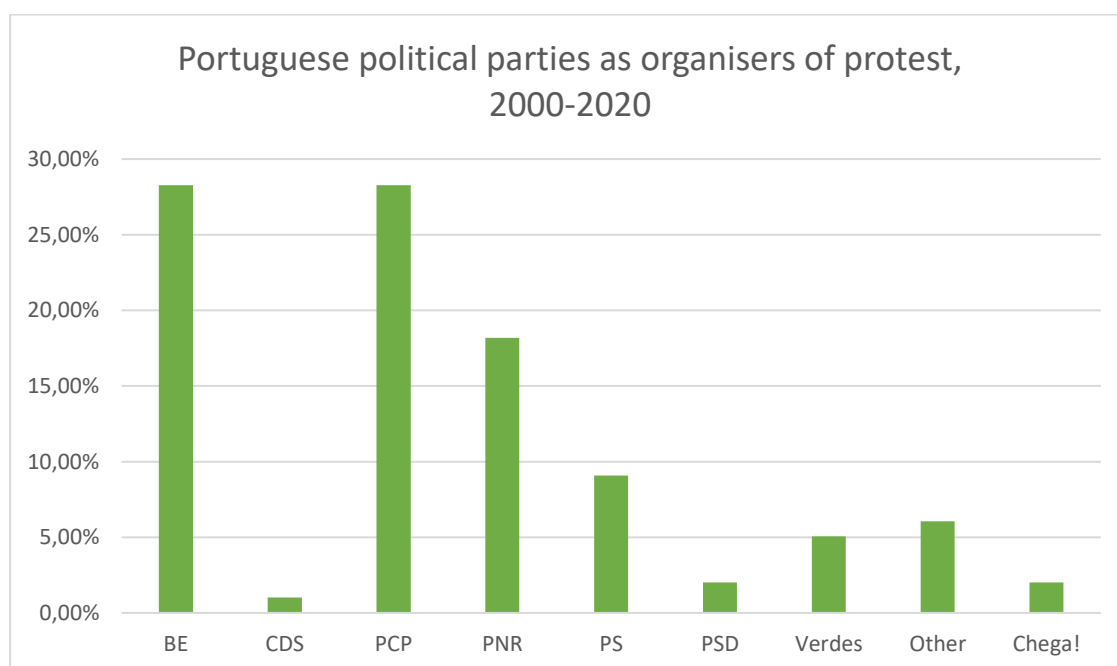
Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

The Portuguese case (figure 23) visibly displays a monopoly of the parties on the left of the electoral spectrum in the organisation of protest – as the Left Bloc, the Communists, the Socialists, and the Green Party called over 70% of all protest events organised by political parties (or by a coalition including political parties). In particular, the Left Bloc and the Communist Party were responsible, in tandem, for calling 23.8% of protest events. If one considers protest organised by the Green Party, in coalition with PCP since 1987, these three political parties, standing on the further left, organised over 60% of protest events triggered by a political party (61.6%).

Further, there is a clear absence of the mainstream right from the Portuguese protest arena, with “*Partido Social Democrata*” (PSD – Social Democrat Party) organising 2% of protest events, and “*Partido Popular*” (CDS-PP – Popular Party) 1%. The far right,

however, in the figure of “*Partido Nacional Renovador*” (PNR – National Renewal Party⁴⁹), is well present, as the party stands as the third most important political party in the organisation of protest events (18.2%). It is also worth noticing that the far-right populist party “*Chega!*” (Enough!) organised 2% of protest events (between 2019 and 2020). The Portuguese far right, then, is responsible for 20.2% of all mobilisation with a political party as a convening actor.

Figure 23. Political parties as organisers of protest in Portugal between 2000 and 2020.



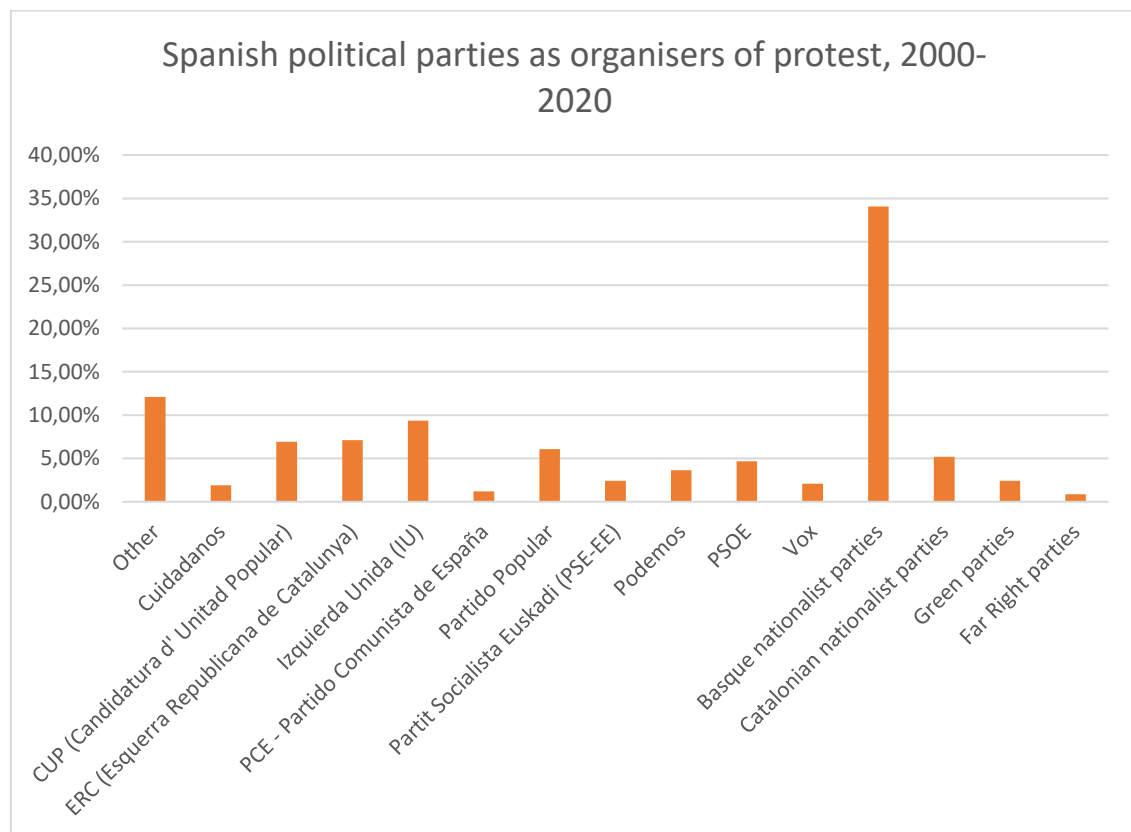
Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

In the Spanish case (figure 24), there is one clearly mobilising type of party: Basque nationalist parties, which have called 34.1% of all protest events with a political party at its origin. The second most important party in the organisation of protest is “*Izquierda Unida*” (IU – United Left), which called for 9.3% of protest events led by this type of organiser – and 10.4% when considering, in addition, protest called by “*Partido Comunista de España*” (PCE – Communist Party of Spain), which is a part of IU since 1986. This is the most important mobiliser with a national presence, as the only non-regional party standing out in the organisation of protest between 2000 and 2020. All other parties able to mobilise a significant proportion of protest are rooted regionally, namely in Catalonia – “*Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*” (ERC – Catalonia Republican Left,

⁴⁹ PNR has since changed its name, in 2020, to “*Ergue-te!*” (Stand up!).

organising 7.1% of occurrences) and “*Candidatura d’ Unidad Popular*” (CUP – Popular Unity Candidacy, with 6.9% of protest events). One can say, then, that the left-right division that is clear in the Portuguese case is not present in Spain, where the monopoly of the protest arena is taken by regional, independentist (leftist) political parties – together, Basque and Catalanian nationalists have called 53.3% of all protest event with a political party as a reported organiser.

Figure 24. Political parties that organised protest events in Spain between 2000 and 2020.



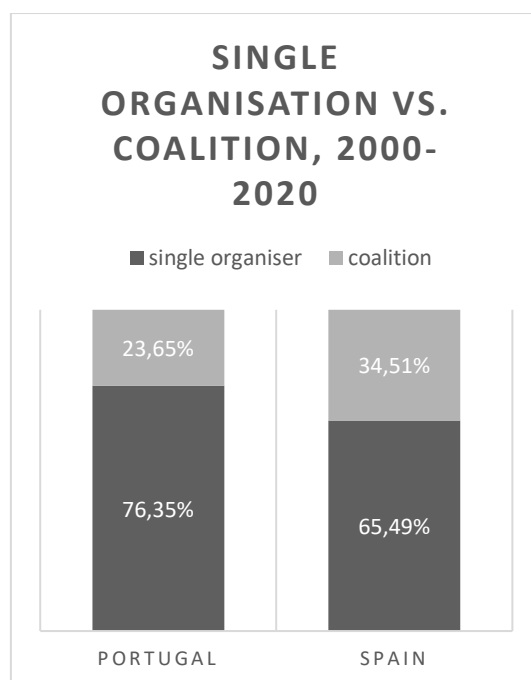
Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

Another significant difference is that far right parties organise a much lower proportion of dissent in Spain – having called 3% of all protest events with a political party as an organiser (with Vox being responsible for 2.1% of these occurrences at the end of the series). The main electoral contender on the mainstream right, however – *Partido Popular* –, has been rather active, having called for 6.1% of all protest events with a political party reported as the convening actor. By contrast, PSOE is significantly less mobilising (4.7%) than the Portuguese Socialists (9.1%) – results that seem to contradict Fishman’s (2011, p. 241; 2019, pp. 81-82) view of PP as generally averse to street politics,

and certainly more than PSOE. This will continue to be explored in this and the next chapters.

In order to further explore the dynamics of protest organising in both countries, one can also consider the presence of organisational coalitions, as well as that of organisational allies of street politics. Coalitions are those arrangements between two or more protest organisers that openly declare their joint role in calling a protest event or campaign, while allies are those organisations or vested actors which state their support for the mobilisation and may act as enhancers of popular participation and engagement but are not directly responsible for the event.

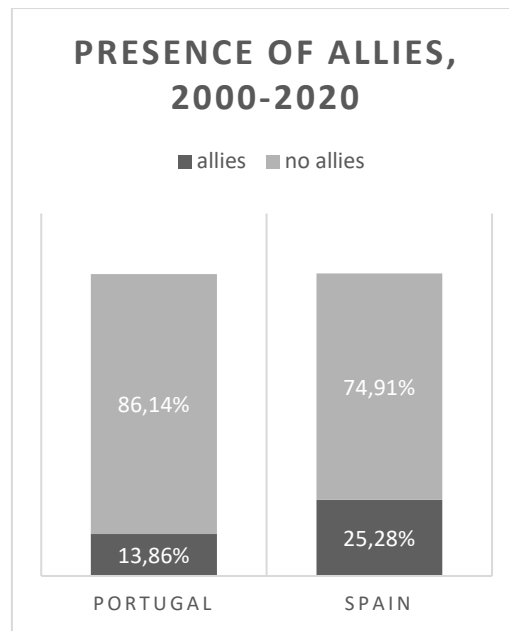
Figure 25. Presence of coalitions in the organisation of protest in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

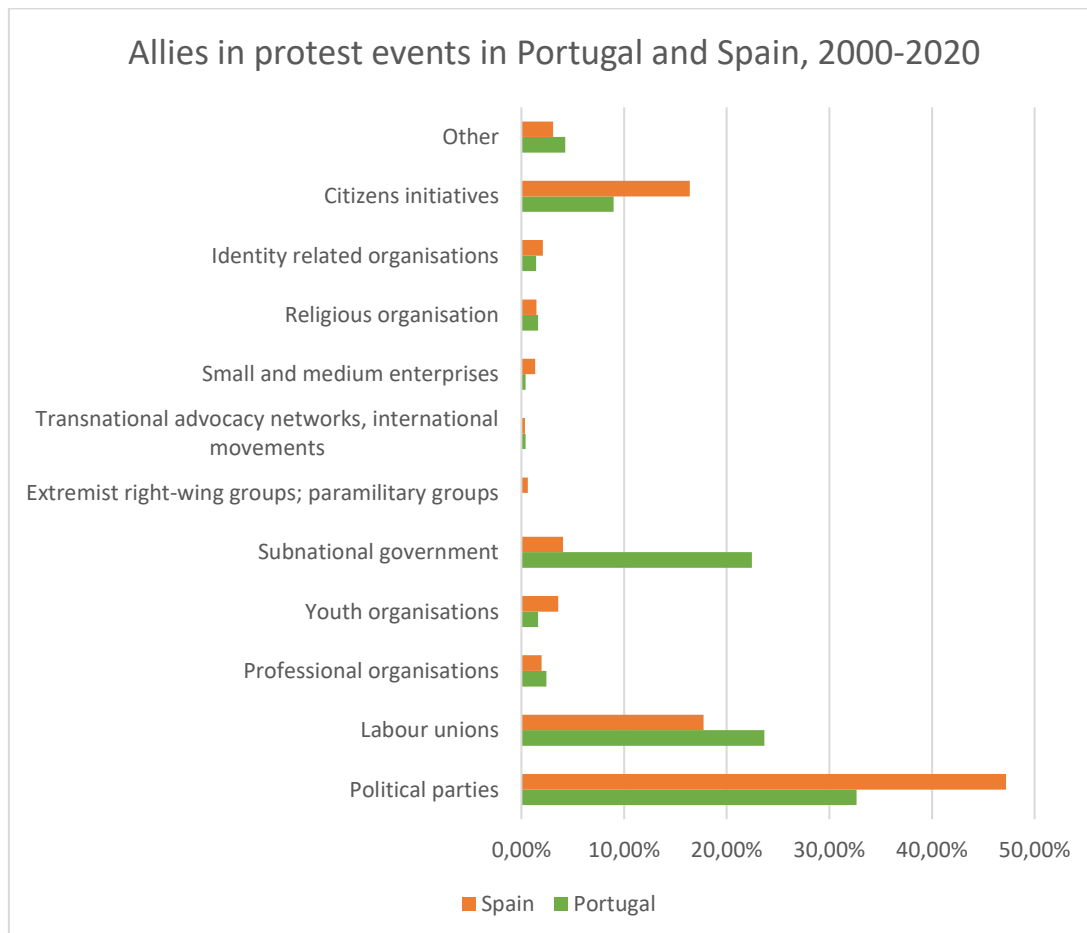
As per figures 25 and 26, there are more cooperative dynamics in popular mobilisation in Spain than in Portugal (34.5% of coalitions and 25.3% of organisational allies, against 23.7% and 13.7% in Portugal). A survey of the type of allies present in each country's protest arena is presented in figure 27.

Figure 26. Presence of allies in protest events in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

Figure 27. Allies in protest events in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

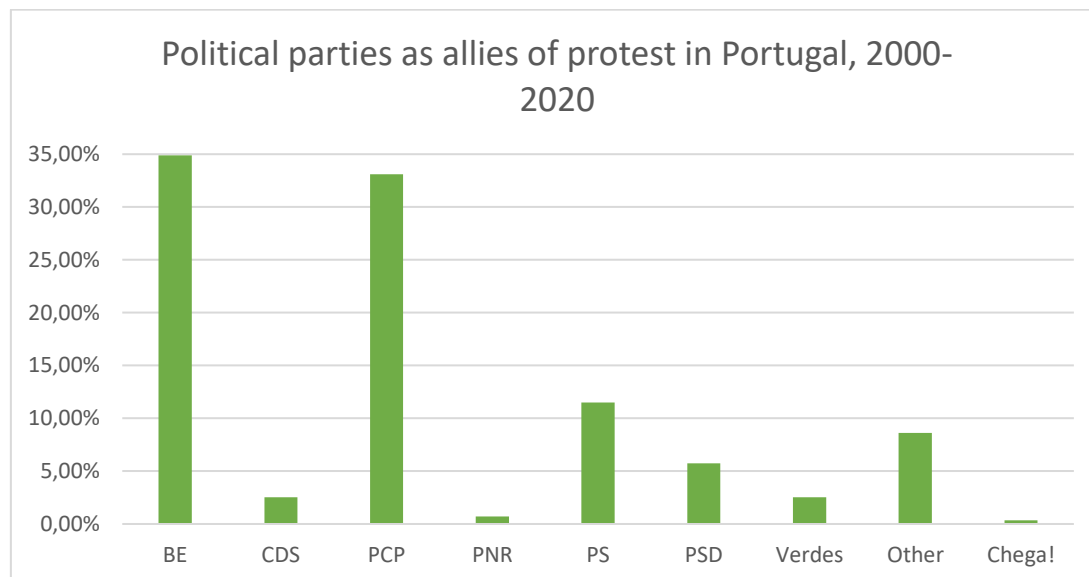
In both countries, it is political parties that emerge as the most important ally in popular mobilisation – although their presence is more strongly felt in Spain (47.2%) than in Portugal (32.7%). Political parties show up as allies much more frequently than they do as organisers of protest: 42.5% more in Spain, and 38.8% more in Portugal. This may be an indication of parties' risk mitigation strategies – it may be less costly to arise in the protest arena as an ally of a protest than as an organiser, carrying less reputational risks and higher chances of gains in terms of public opinion, particularly when protest is considered as likely to be successful, with a significant level of popular participation, around claims and demands perceived as fair, and adhering to traditional, consensual protest repertoires. On the other hand, parties may not stand up as allies of popular mobilisation if that poses significant risks – if the protest is predicted to be scarcely participated, featuring non-traditional protest repertoires, or perceived as unfair, unnecessary, or irrelevant. In that sense, alliance making can also be considered a form of legitimisation of street politics by political parties.

Labour unions are the second most present ally of protest in both countries, although noticeably more relevant in Portugal (23.7%, versus 17.8% in Spain), which serves as added evidence of their stronger presence in the Portuguese protest arena. It is, however, in the third most important organisational ally that the two countries differ more widely – while in Spain, citizens initiatives, the second most important organiser, are also an important ally (16.4%, against 9% in the neighbouring country), in Portugal, it is subnational governments that take that third position (22.5% – versus 4.1% in Spain).

The same exercise was conducted in relation to political parties as allies of popular mobilisation. In the Portuguese case (figure 28), one witnesses the reinforcement of the role of the parties on the left in the country's protest arena, with the Left Bloc stepping in as the most important ally in protest (39.4%), followed by PCP (33.1%). Another trend is the retreat of the far-right party PNR from the role of ally of protest (0.72%), perhaps not by choice, but rather due to the absence of other actors in the public sphere willing to enter an alliance with them. Finally, the fact that both the PS (11.5%) and the PSD

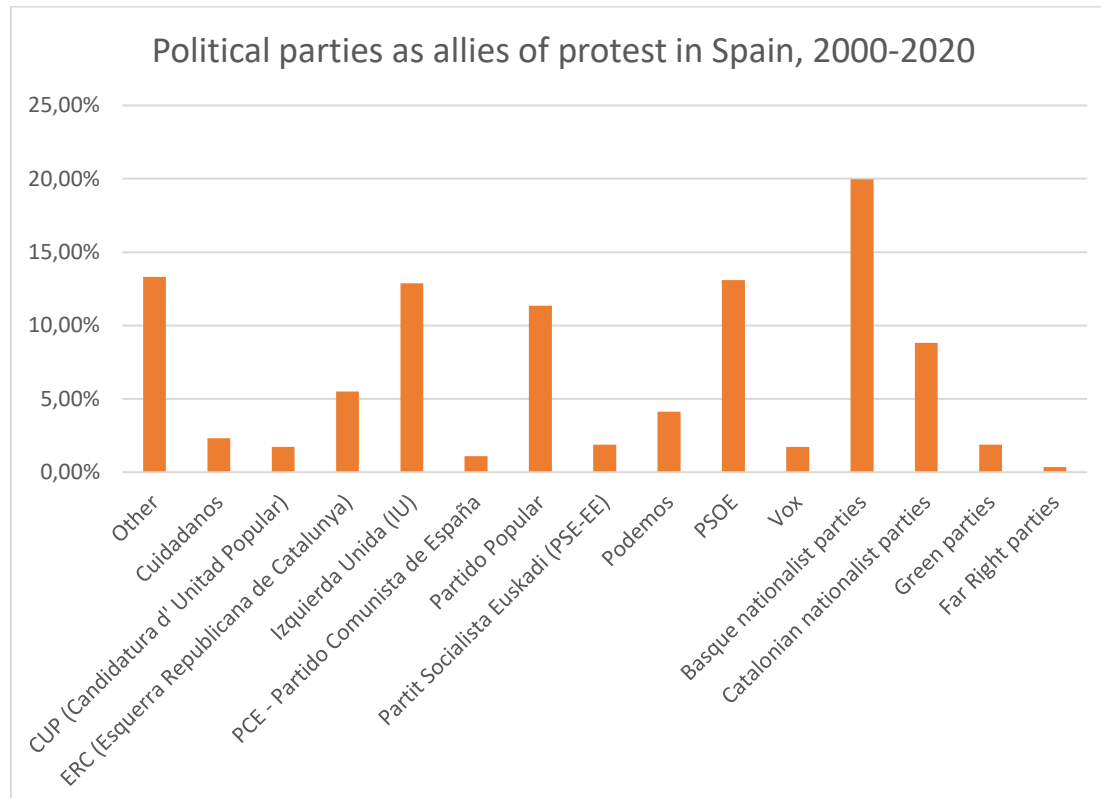
(5.8%) are more present as allies of protest than as organisers seems to lend validity to the risk mitigation explanation proposed above.

Figure 28. Political parties that act as allies in protest events in Portugal between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

Figure 29. Political parties that act as allies in protest events in Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

The Spanish case exhibits quite more dispersion (figure 29). Despite the fact that Basque nationalist parties are still the most important ally of popular mobilisation (20%), other electoral politics actors stand as allies of protest – in particular, the two main electoral contenders between 2000 and 2020 – PSOE (13.1%) and PP (11.4%) – and the Socialists actually stand as allies of street politics more often than the IU (12.9%). One also witnesses a decline in the action of the Catalanian independentist parties as allies of dissent (more felt for the CUP, only present at 1.7% of the occurrences, than the ERC, with 5.5%).

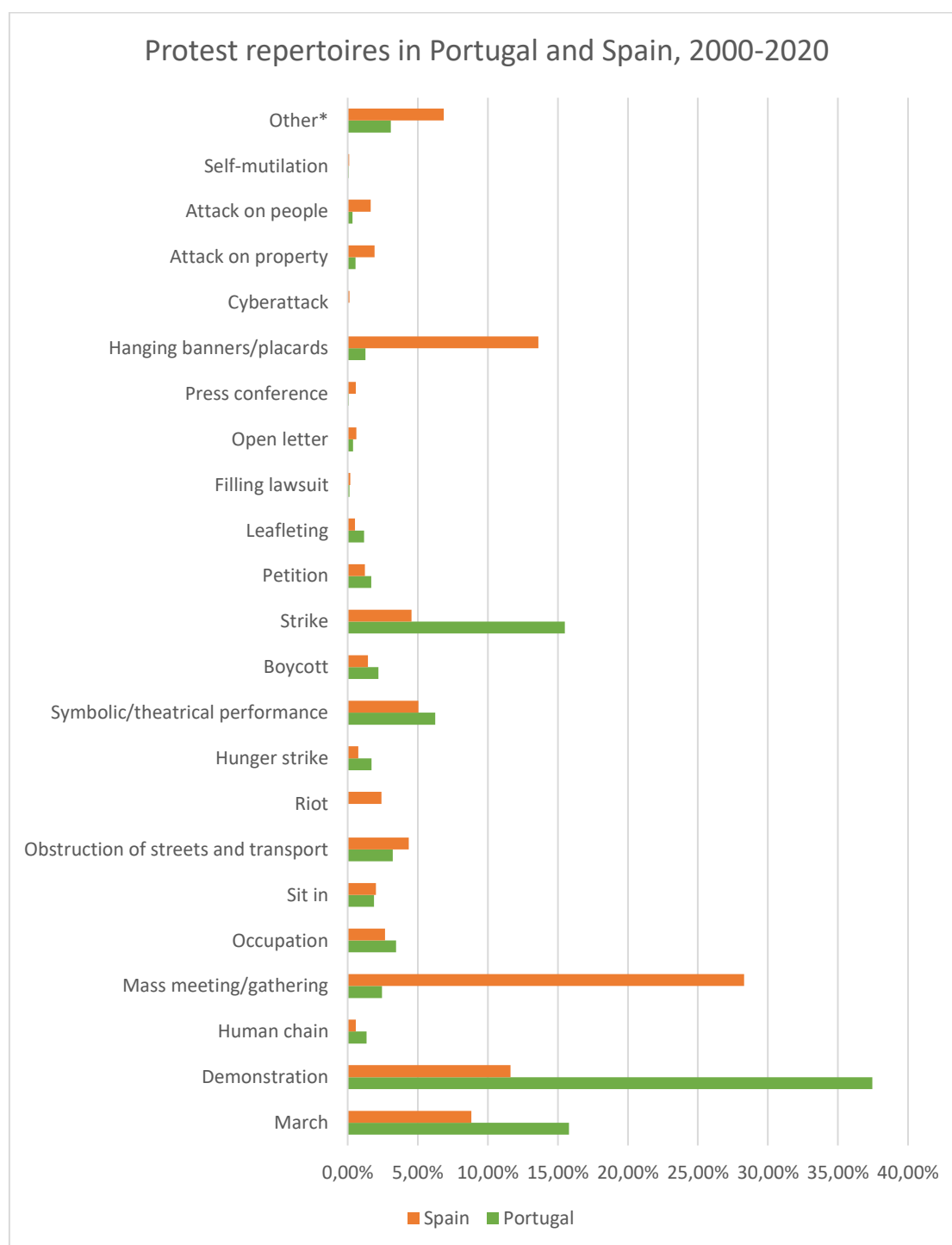
These results seem to contradict the idea of *Podemos* as a protest party (della Porta, 2020, ch. 4), considered both from the perspective of organisation of dissent (3.6%) and as allies of protest (4.1%), but it could also be a symptom of the Spanish media's reluctance to report on them. What is more, these results, again, seem to contradict Fishman's (2011, p. 241; 2019, pp. 81-82) considerations about PP's (and PSOE's) aversion to street politics, as it is parties on the Portuguese mainstream right (PSD and CDS-PP) which are less prone to engage with street politics.

3.3. What protesters do

This investigation will now consider protesters' actions in the public sphere – their repertoires of collective action, their demands and claims, whom they address them to (the targets of protest), and the presence of protest campaigns, as testament to protest participants' and organisers' choice to continuously engage with the same issue / demand, directing their dissent at the same target(s). Information on repertoires is presented in figure 30, considering the totality of repertoires coded in the Disdem database (twenty-three different forms of collective action)⁵⁰.

⁵⁰ Petitions, filing lawsuits, open letters, and press conferences are not considered stand-alone protest repertoires and were only coded when partnered with another repertoire of collective action.

Figure 30. Protest repertoires in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

Spanish protesters and protest organisers display a clear preference for mass meetings and gatherings, representing 28.3% of all repertoires used. This is a particular form of collective action that entails the creation of a discussion forum open to protest participants, aiming at reaching a consensus expressed in collective claims and

demands. This type of repertoire is not common in the Portuguese protest arena, where it is only appealed to on 2.5% of occasions. Rather, in this country, classic demonstrations are the most important protest repertoire (37.4%), followed by marches (15.8%) and strikes (15.5%). In Spain, these repertoires, although still important, are considerably less frequent – 11.6% of demonstrations, 8.8% of marches and 4.6% of strikes.

This is indicative of the important role of protest organisers in setting the protest message on the Portuguese side of the border – a demonstration, march, or strike is called around a specific claim or demand that is likely to be attractive and consensual to potential participants. In that sense, protest organisers are legitimised to act as the mouthpiece of Portuguese protesters. In Spain, by contrast, there are more opportunities for the collective creation of the main message of the protest – be it in mass meetings, or by the public exposition of protest materials displaying different slogans around one issue / demand: hanging banners and placards is the second most important protest repertoire (13.6% – with very little significance in Portugal, at 1.3%). This is suggestive of different patterns of occupation of the public sphere between Portugal and Spain, that are likely to trigger different reactions.

There are a few protest repertoires that are similarly appealed to across the Iberian Peninsula – symbolic performances (6.3% of all forms of collective action in Portugal and 5.1% in Spain), obstructions of transport infrastructure (more prevalent in Spain, with 4.7%, than in Portugal, with 3.2%), occupations (3.5% in Portugal and 2.7% in Spain), boycotts (more frequent in Portugal, with 2.2%, than in Spain, with 1.4%) and sit-ins (2% in Spain and 1.8% in Portugal).

Finally, one sees that protest repertoires that feature some forms of altercation are significantly more prevalent in Spain than in Portugal:

- Attacks on people: 1.6% in Spain, vs 0.3% in Portugal,
- Attacks on property: 1.9% in Spain, vs. 0.6% in Portugal, and
- Riots: 2.4% in Spain, and 0% in Portugal.

A systematisation of protest repertoires can reveal other important structures that may be significant to this study. This investigation opted for a different classification of protest repertoires other than that proposed by Tarrow (2012, ch. 8) and used by Romanos and Sádaba (2022, pp. 102-103) and Fernandes and Araújo (2024, forthcoming), which separates conventional, confrontational, and violent protest forms. Given the focus of this work on discourse (and particularly discourse which is reproduced in the media), it chose to avoid categorisations of protest repertoires that describe the protest event as violent or confrontational, as these descriptors are indicative of judgement calls on the appropriateness of the protest repertoire – as Mansley posits it (2014, p. 5), “‘Violence’ is more than a descriptive term. The label is moralistic underneath: its use implies a judgement on the legitimacy of the act it describes”. Hence, repertoires of collective action are, here, classified in accordance with their impact – and three types of repertoires are considered:

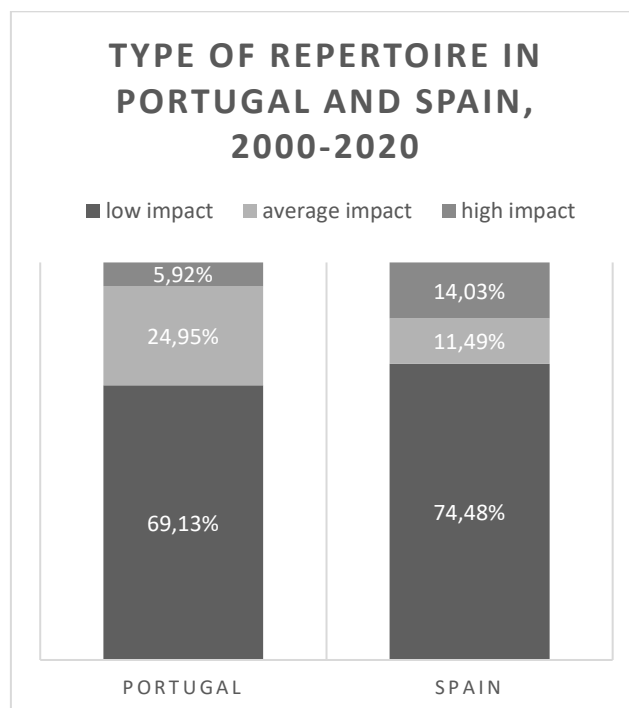
- Low impact protest repertoires, causing low levels of (temporary) disruption to the day-to-day activities in the places where protest occurs (marches, demonstrations, human chains, mass meetings, performances, leafleting, hanging banners, open letters, petitions, and press conferences),
- Average impact protest repertoires, causing a medium level of disruption, that is geographically contained, but may be prolonged in time (such as occupations and sit-ins, boycotts, strikes and filing lawsuits), and
- High impact protest repertoires, causing high levels of disruption, which may be prolonged in time, and whose impact can have a spill-over effect (corresponding to obstruction of transport infrastructure, riots and attacks on people, property and cyberattacks, as well as self-harm and hunger strikes).

The protest arena in both countries is populated mainly by low impact repertoires of collective action (figure 31)⁵¹, although these are more prevalent in Spain (almost three quarters of all protest events – 74.5%) than in Portugal (69.1%). By contrast, in the latter country, there is a significantly lower proportion of high impact repertoires (5.9%, vs

⁵¹ Repertoires coded as ‘other’ were scanned in order to ascertain their impact and are also considered here.

14% in Spain). In addition, average impact repertoires are significantly more important in Portugal (25%) than in Spain (11.5%), specifically due to the pervasiveness of strikes – “*the quintessential socioeconomic protest repertoire*⁵²” (Fernandes *et al.*, 2021, p. 26), requiring the interference of the country’s most mobilising actor, labour unions.

Figure 31. Type of protest repertoires in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

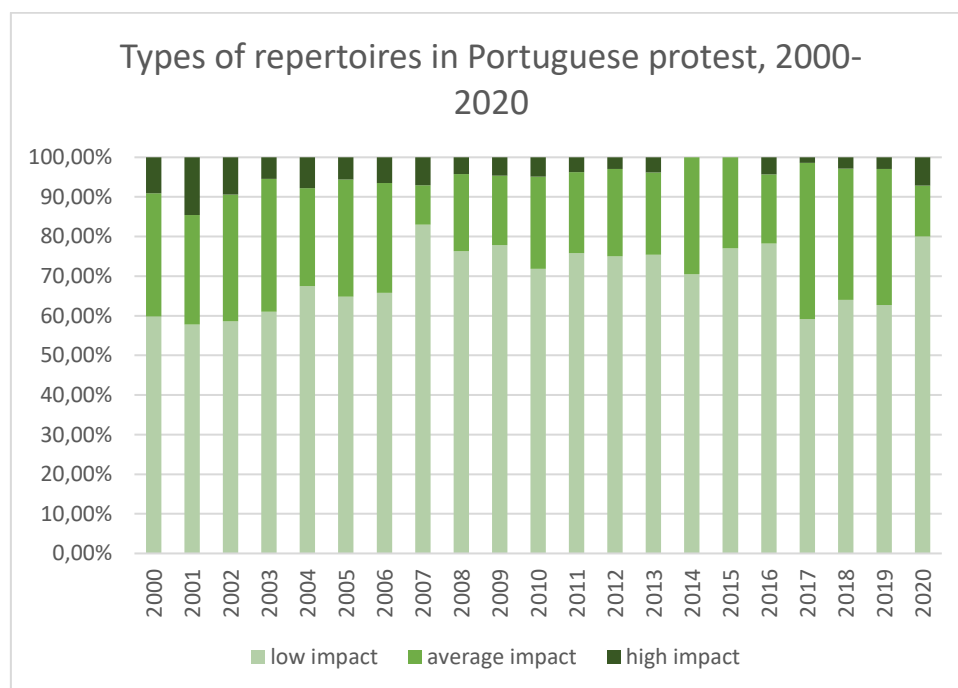
For the Portuguese case (figure 32), one witnesses that average impact protest repertoires are actually more visible in the first and the last few years of the series – up until 2006, these types of collective actions repertoires never dropped below 25%, reaching their peak in 2002 (32%) and 2003 (33.6%), and it is only post-austerity that this type of repertoires returns to the public sphere: 29.4% in 2017, 33.1% in 2018, and 34% in 2019.

High impact repertoires, on the other hand, are seldom appealed to (inclusively, there are two years when no such protest repertoire is reported – 2014 and 2015), only reaching more than 10% in 2001 (14.6%); in fact, it is the first three years of the series which record a higher percentage of this type of repertoire (9.1% in 2000 and 9.4% in

⁵² “[o] *repertório de protesto socioeconómico por excelência*” (my translation).

2002). This can be connected to the previous protest cycles in the country, as Mendes e Seixas (2005, pp. 118-119) have found that over 25% of popular mobilisation between 1992 and 2002 resulted in some sort of (mostly verbal) altercation, and to the salience of very high profile protest events in the Portuguese public sphere, such as the already mentioned protest against tolls of the late 1990s. Interestingly, at the highest moment of contention in this series – the anti-austerity mobilisation –, protest repertoires remained mainly low impact. However, and unlike in the neighbouring country, low impact protest never surpasses 80% of the total repertoires.

Figure 32. Type of protest repertoires in Portugal between 2000 and 2020.



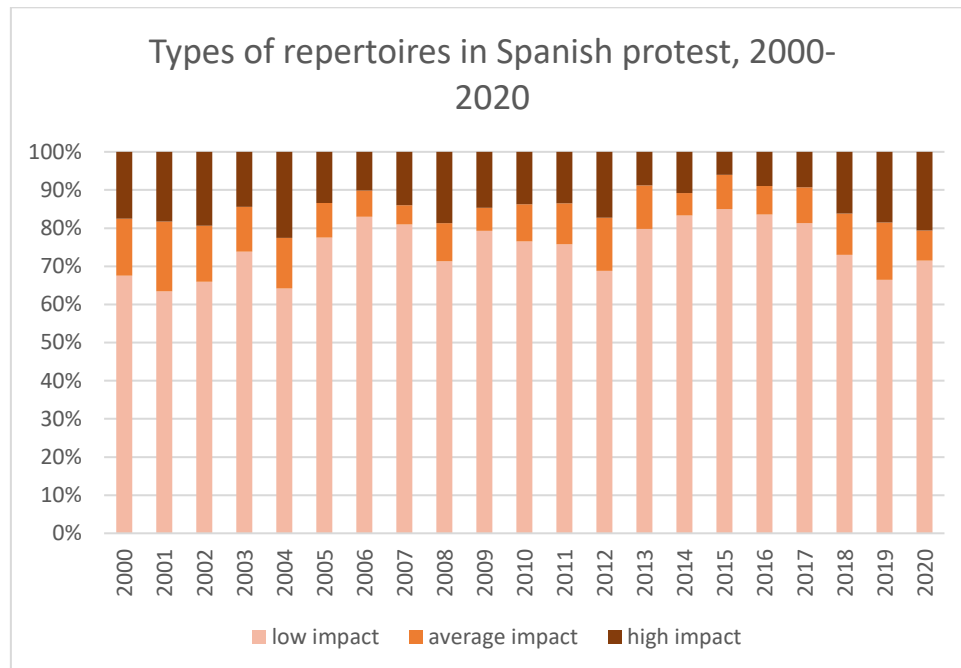
Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

In Spain (figure 33), the picture is quite different. Low impact protest is, overall, more prevalent than in Portugal (the exception being 2004, 2007, 2008 and 2012), and this type of repertoire is appealed to in more than 80% of protest events in several years: 83% in 2006, 81% in 2007, and between 2014 and 2017 (83.3%; 85% – the highest proportion recorded, 83.6% and 81.3%).

There is also a significantly lower proportion of average impact repertoires, which never rises over 20% (the highest proportion is hit in 2002, with 18.3%), and averages at 10.5%. Unlike in the Portuguese case, the years of anti-austerity protest actually see a slight

increase in the use of this type of protest repertoire (9.8% in 2010, 10.8% in 2011, 13.9% in 2012 and 11.4% in 2013). Remarkably, and despite the higher propensity to engage with high impact protest repertoires in the country, this is not the case during the anti-austerity protest cycle, except in 2012 (17.9%).

Figure 33. Type of protest repertoires in Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

High impact repertoires are, however, always more significant in Spain than in the Portuguese case, and are particularly present at the beginning and the end of the series: 17.6% in 2000, 18.3% in 2001, 19.3% in 2002 and 22.6% in 2004 (inclusive in years where more consensual themes were bringing people to the streets, such as 2004), and 18.7% in 2018, 18.5% in 2019, and over 20% (20.7%) in 2020. Unsurprisingly, as more contentious themes appear in the protest arena – mainly regarding sovereignty – the percentage of high impact protest repertoires seems to rise. In the early years, however, this relates to a higher presence of migrants protesting, often recurring to hunger strikes and having their instances of popular mobilisation described as riots (see chapters 5 and 6).

The analysis of the repertoires of collective action reinforces the fact that, in the Iberian media space, newspapers report on protest that is not particularly salient, be it in terms

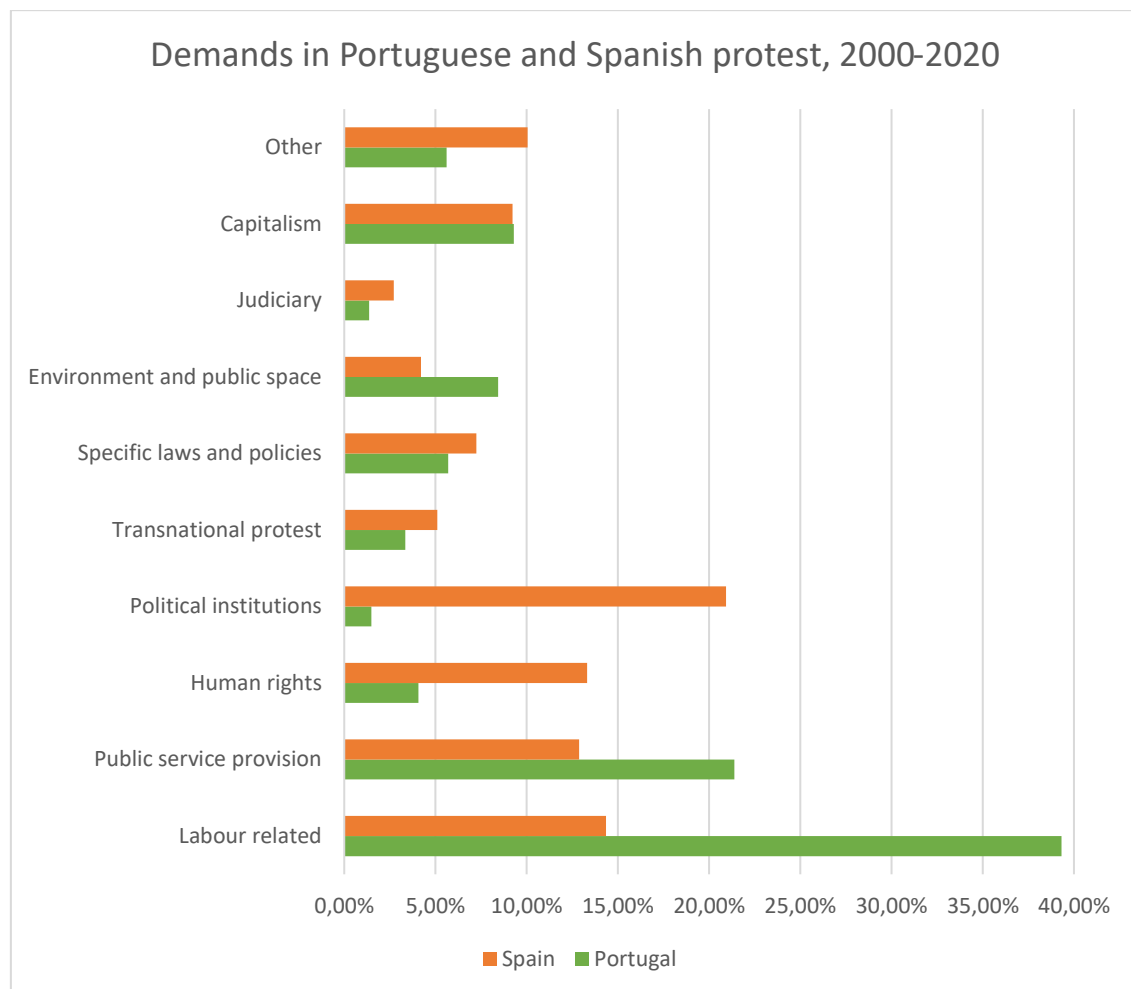
of the level of participation, be it in terms of the disruptiveness of the collective action repertoire, as the vast majority of the protest events which find their way into the pages of the printed media is either low or average impact.

Considering the action of protesters also concerns analysing the demands they utter in the public sphere, and who they choose to address. The Disdem database coded thirty-eight varieties of demands, which are systematised as follows, and presented in figure 34:

- Labour related demands – concerning any protest event around issues such as labour rights, precarity or unemployment,
- Public services provision – featuring demands related to cuts to public services, but also to education and health provision, as well as to utilities supply (gas, electricity, water),
- Human rights related claims, such as LGBTQIA+ rights, civil rights, disabled rights, gender equality and the right to abortion, as well as minority rights,
- Claims relating to political institutions, including deliberate and inclusive democracy, electoral system, political parties, corruption, self-determination and independence, condemnation of Salazar / Franco regimes and the form of regime itself,
- Transnational protest around themes such as globalisation, supranational institutions, foreign governments, war, and migration,
- Protest caused by specific laws and policies (a standalone category in the Disdem database that was kept in this investigation),
- Demands associated with the environment and the shared public space (including environmental and animal rights claims, and urban planning and quality of public space),
- Claims concerning the judiciary (a stand-alone category),
- Contestation to capitalism, such as resistance to inequality, austerity, price increases, but also debt, privatisations, and the banking system, and
- Other (any demand / claim that cannot be placed in any of the categories above).

The centrality of labour in the Portuguese protest arena (advanced by Fernandes *et al.*, 2020, p. 58, p. 65; 2021) is again reinforced by the assessment of demands uttered in the public sphere – with labour related claims representing 39.3% of all claims uttered in protest, against 14.6% in Spain. Three other issues are more salient in Portugal than in its neighbour – public service provision (21.4%, against 12.9%), issues related to the environment and the quality of the public space (8.4% versus 4.2%), and, marginally, capitalism related claims (9.3% and 9.2% in Spain).

Figure 34. Demands expressed in protest events in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

By contrast, there is a considerable percentage of strictly political protest in Spain, as political claims are the more prevalent in the country (20.9%, compared to a very low proportion in Portugal – 1.5%). This does not correspond to most highly participated protest events identified above for the majority of the time series, as it is only from the

end of the anti-austerity protest cycle that one witnesses these types of demands appealing to a large number of protest participants. Nonetheless, this trend speaks to the pervasiveness of these demands across the series (Romanos and Sádaba, 2022, pp. 98-100) and is indicative of a larger engagement with the political of Spanish protesters.

Notwithstanding, labour related issues, public service provision and human rights (14.3% and 4.1% in Portugal) are also important demands uttered in the Spanish protest arena. Spanish residents, in addition, take to the streets more often in contestation to specific laws and policies (7.2% vs. 5.7% in Portugal), and with regard to transnational issues (5.1%, and 3.4% in Portugal), as seen by high mobilisation in anti-war and anti-transnational terrorism activism, but also in the prevalence of significant mobilisation related to migration in the first few years of the series. Finally, mobilisation concerning the judiciary is also more prevalent in this country (2.7%) than in its Portuguese neighbour (1.4%). This relates to the high levels of contestation to judiciary decisions around sovereignty issues, but also on high visibility cases on gender equality (both particularly prevalent at the end of the series).

These demands are addressed to different targets in both countries. The Disdem database considers a wide range of possible targets of protest (twenty-nine categories), that are, here, arranged as follows:

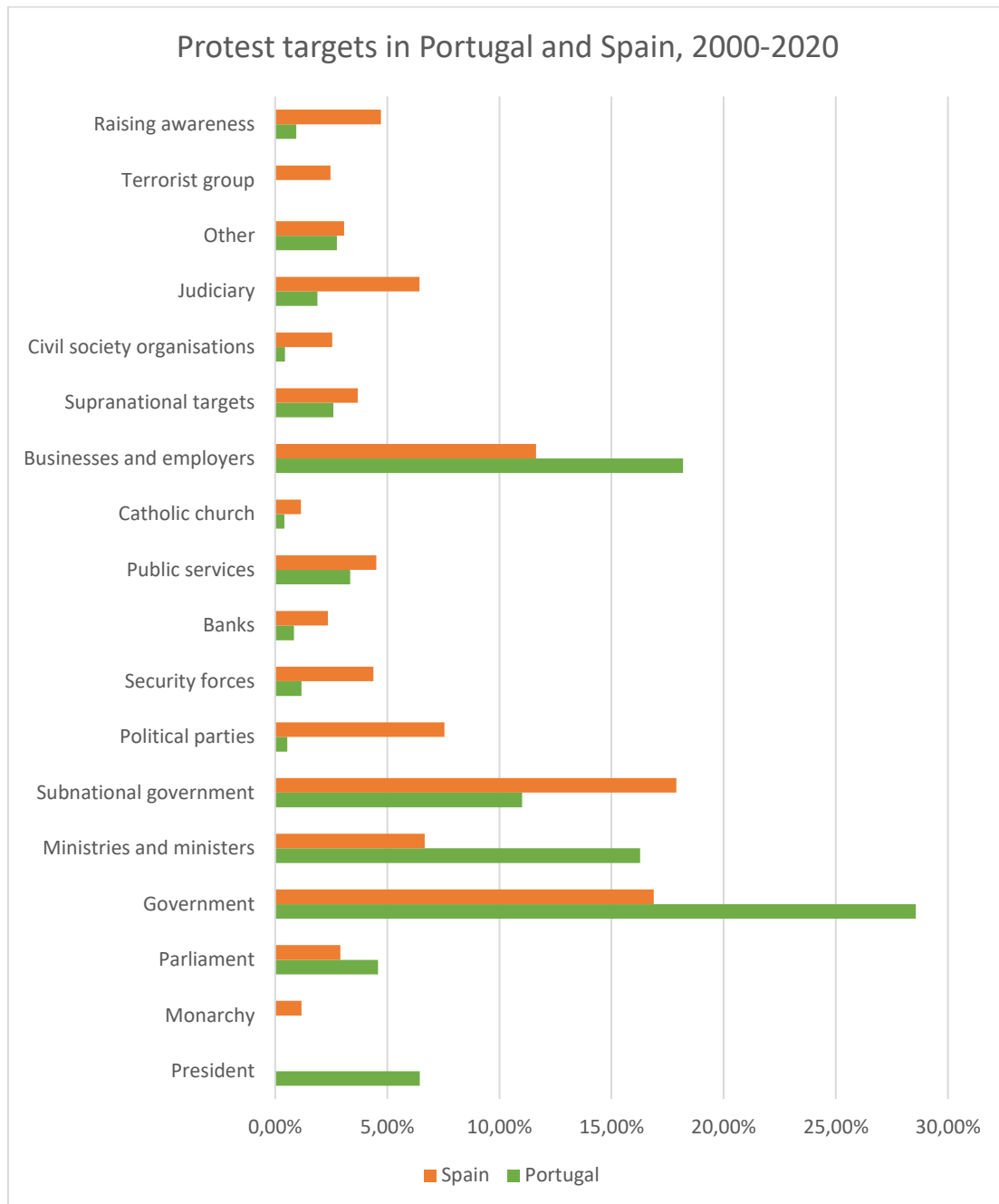
- The president or the Presidency of the Portuguese Republic,
- The monarch, the royal family, or the Monarchy of Spain (coded as part of the wider category 'other' in the Disdem log, but manually lifted here),
- The National Parliament (and protest against specific Members of Parliament, which is infrequent across the border),
- The central government,
- Ministries or ministers of the central government,
- Subnational government,
- Political parties,
- Security forces (considering protest targeting both the armed forces and the police),
- Banks,

- Public services (protest targeting public health and education providers, as well as other public services),
- The Catholic church,
- Businesses and employers, which include protest against management / boards of directors (as employers) and against both domestic and foreign business owners,
- Supranational protest targets, considering mobilisation against international organisations or foreign governments,
- Protest targeting civil society organisations, such as labour unions, civic and non-state organisations, social movements, and local / regional organisations,
- The judiciary,
- Protest against terrorism and terrorist groups (coded as other at the Disdem database, and
- Protest aiming to raise awareness (*id.*).

A perusal of figure 35 clearly indicates that the Portuguese government is the most common target of protesters in the country, as it attracted 28.6% of all dissent. When combined with protest against the government's ministries and ministers, these institutions attract dissent in over 40% of occasions (44.8%). There are two other standout targets of protest in the country: businesses and employers (18.2%) – particularly in labour related protest – and subnational government (11%).

It is worth noticing that, in the Portuguese case, the government is targeted not only to express discontent and resistance to their policies, but also in terms of the preservation of public services and the environment, and even labour rights – with frequent protest demanding government support for workers in labour related negotiations. As such, the government is considered the legitimate provider of those services, and, to a certain extent, the guarantor of labour rights and equality (Fernandes *et al.*, 2021). The same can be said of Portuguese subnational government, which is often targeted as a potential ally in the preservation of local public services, local employment, or local nature and public space, and, in some cases, called upon to stand against the national government in relation to those very issues.

Figure 35. Direct targets of protest in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.



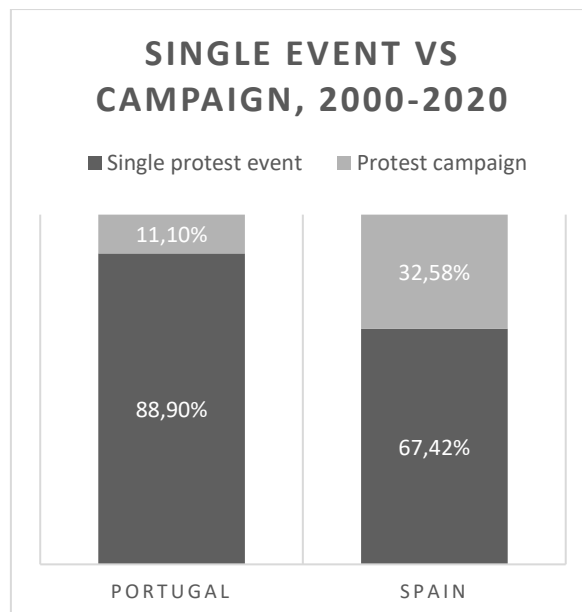
Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

The Spanish case is, again, more nuanced. Subnational government is the political institution which attracts more dissent (17.9%), closely followed by the Spanish central government (16.9%). If combined with ministers / ministries, the central government attracts less than one quarter of all protest (23.6%). Other political institutions also lie on the receiving end of people's discontent – namely political parties, which attract 7.6% of protest (this is fuelled by protest against independentist parties, particularly targeting

those from the Basque country at the beginning of the series, and those from Catalonia at the end, but also concerns corruption related demands and anti-austerity claims), the judiciary (6.4%), and the security forces (4.4%). By contrast, none of these institutions attracts a significant amount of dissent in the neighbouring country (discontent against political parties is almost absent, at 0.5%, more prevalent against the country's security forces, at 1.2%, and more pronounced against the judiciary – 1.9%).

Another significant difference lies in protest targeting the President of the Republic in Portugal, attracting 6.5% of all protest across the series in Portugal, and protest targeting the king or the monarchy in Spain (1.2%) in Spain. This could be a fallacy deriving from the Disdem coding protocol since it does not provide the category “king / monarchy” as a target of protest, but it could also be a result of different collective views on the role of the head of state in both countries. As with the national and local government, the President of Portugal is also often targeted with demands for support in non-political issues (labour, public services) and there are very few demands for regime change in the country, while in Spain, the monarch and the monarchy are targeted in pro-republican protest, inherently political.

Figure 36. Protest campaigns in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

One last decision protesters and organisers face is whether or not to join protest campaigns (figure 36). These are distinctly more prevalent in Spain (32.6%) than in Portugal (11.1%), adding weight to the evidence that suggests a higher salience of communal dynamics in the Spanish protest arena.

Moving forward

This general overview of both countries' protest arenas permits the formulation of questions that will inform the following steps of this investigation. From the point of view of the level of participation, this work will be interested in finding out if higher frequency of protest and higher levels of participation trigger more negative reactions by vested actors, either depoliticising or delegitimising popular mobilisation, as well as more securitising moves, and, if so, how these are enacted and by who, as well as their possible consequences. Highly participated protest, particularly nationally, regionally, or locally rooted, poses a dilemma to vested interests and securitising actors: how to guarantee the adherence of the general public to delegitimation / depoliticisation / securitising discourse or frames. To that avail, the issue of the themes / demands / claims, but also types of participants and organisers, may bring particularly valuable insights, so this work will focus on understanding if there are specific themes and participants in highly participated protest that trigger this discursive / framing apparatuses. Additionally, and given the prominence of micro-protest in both countries' protest arena, it will also seek to assess if micro-protest can be the object of those strategies. It will also consider the impact of diverging organisational dynamics of protest in Spain and Portugal

In terms of the actual doings of protest, one first question must address the connection between repertoires of collective action and securitisation, politicisation, and legitimisation: are there specific types of repertoires more prone to being securitised, delegitimised, or depoliticised? This investigation is, in addition, interested in uncovering if 'vertical repertoires', such as the ones led by mass organisations in Portugal that set the message of the protest event, are more or less prone to being the

object of those discursive strategies than ‘horizontal repertoires’, as found in Spain, led by citizens initiatives that seem to prioritise forum-style forms of collective action.

The issue of campaigns will also be addressed, as this work will zoom in on whether or not campaigns (as prolonged protest events featuring a variety of actors and prolonged occupation of the public sphere) are more likely to cause negative framings of protest by vested actors. It will also reflect on the effects of diversity of actors (Spain) vs. homogeneity (Portugal). The rising intensity of pro-independentist protest in Spain will also be taken into consideration.

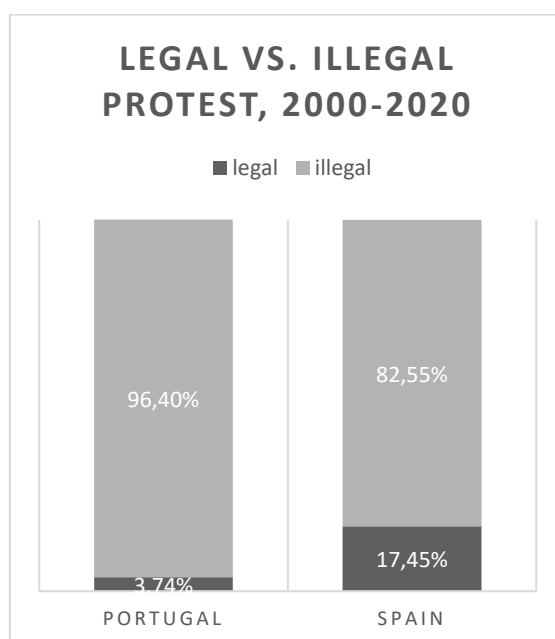
One other interesting issue uncovered by this initial PEA exercise concerns the role of formal politics actors – mainly political parties in Spain and Portugal (as participants, organisers, and allies of protest) and of local government (in the Portuguese case) – in setting frames in motion. This work will be interested in uncovering the way formal politics actors frame their own protest events (and contrast it with their framing of oppositional protest). The following chapter, whose focus is a PEA of all protest events with police intervention recorded between 2000 and 2020 will be a first step towards answering these questions.

Chapter 4. Protest Policing in Portugal and Spain Between 2000 and 2020

This chapter is devoted to protest policing in Portugal and Spain. Protest policing is, as previously mentioned, defined as the control of protest by police forces (della Porta *et al.*, 2006, p. 3). The data presented here relies, again, on the Disdem dataset – namely on the variable ‘police intervention’. The data was used to uncover general dynamics of protest policing, concerning participants and organisers, repertoires, and targets of protest events with police control, aiming at illuminating preliminary aspects affecting the potential securitisation of protest in both countries.

The first angle considered is the percentage of protest that is reported as illegal in Portugal and Spain (figure 37): less than 4% of all protest events in Portugal are reported to either be illegal or include any illicit action (3.7%), while, in Spain, this percentage is four times more important – 17.5%. Notwithstanding, it is clear that, in both countries, the vast majority of protest occurring between 2000 and 2020 is not considered illegal.

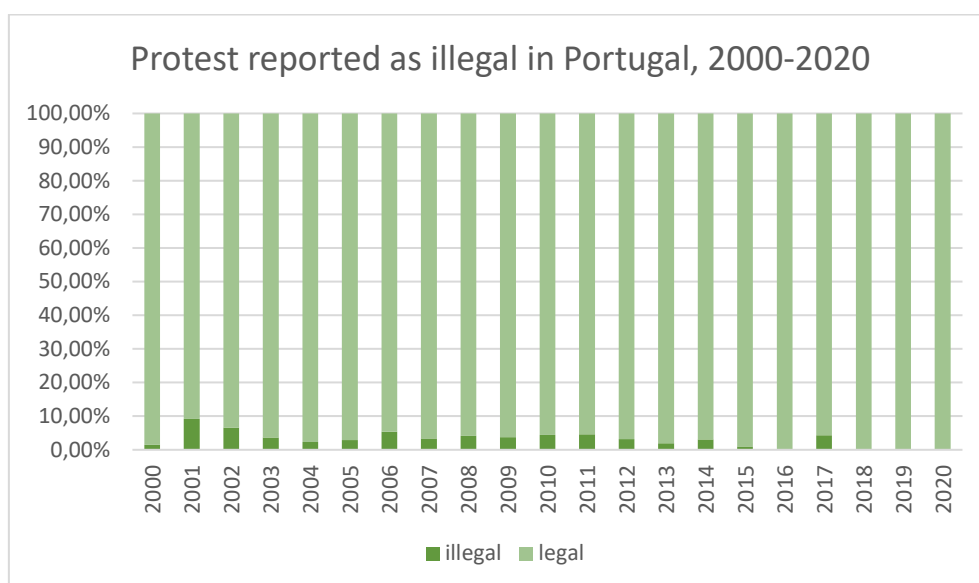
Figure 37. Overall protest reported as illegal in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

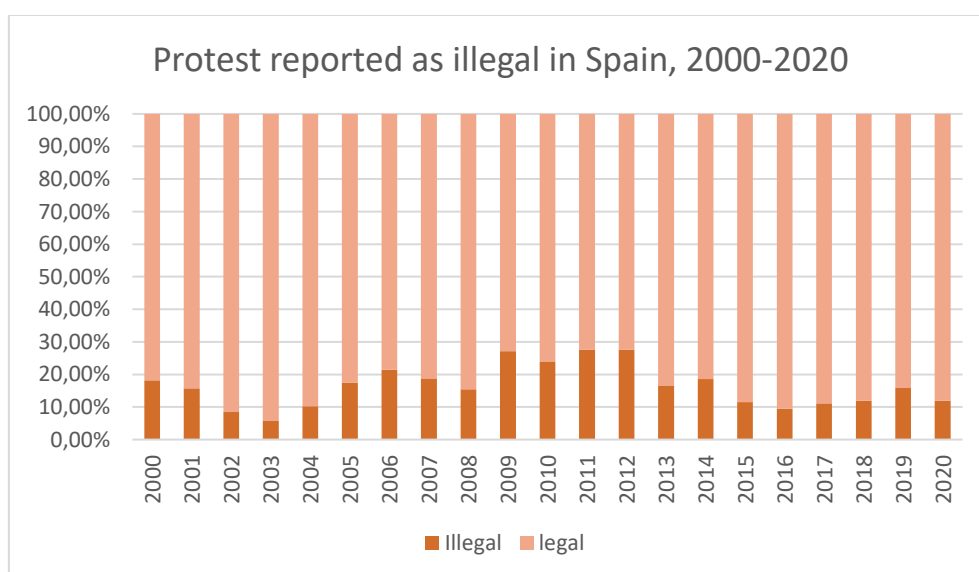
In Portugal (figure 38), there is little variation across the series on the reported illegality of protest, oscillating between 0% (as of 2016, four years didn't feature any protest events reported as illegal), and 9.2% in 2001 – a clear outlier – along with 2002 (6.6%).

Figure 38. Protest reported as illegal in Portugal between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

Figure 39. Protest reported as illegal in Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

In contrast, in the Spanish case (figure 39), one trend noticeably stands out: the higher percentage of protest reported as illegal during the anti-austerity protest cycle, particularly between 2009 and 2012, oscillating between 27.7% in 2011 and 2012, and 24% in 2010. The first year of the series also sees a significant proportion of protest events considered illicit – 18.2% in 2000. In the opposite direction, it is 2002 and 2003

which record the lowest percentage of protest events with any reported illegality (8.5% and 5.6%, respectively).

Another way to ascertain the perceived legality of a protest event is to consider police intervention. Independently of the actual legality of a protest event, the sight of police forces actively engaging in protest control can be understood as a sign of the presence of unlawful activity, or of the illegality of the protest event itself. While police presence in instances of popular mobilisation is all but normal, with security forces having to be previously informed of any planned protest activity and deploying agents to stand vigilant for its duration, police action is, presumably, taken at a different value. One can say that police exerting control over a protest event is, in itself, a form of conveying a narrative about that instance of popular mobilisation – that of illegality, or, alternatively, illegitimacy of the protest event, which is perceived as posing a risk that should be controlled or eliminated, and whose participants are likely to have engaged in some sort of illicit activity.

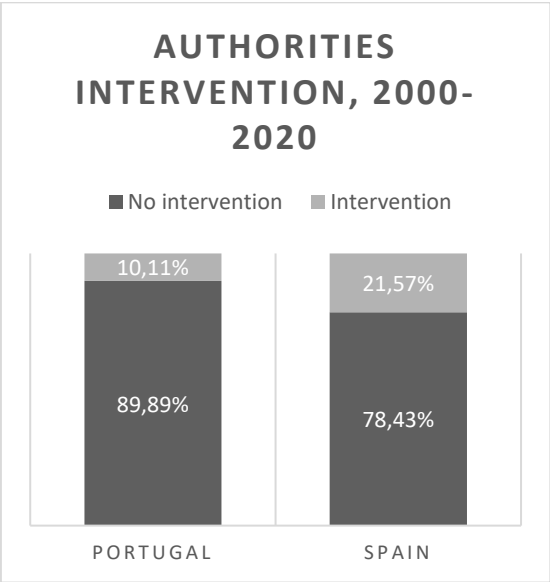
Figure 40 features the percentage of protest events that were subjected to police control. In both countries, there is a significantly higher percentage of protest policing than that of protest reported as illegal – 10.1% of all instances of popular mobilisation in Portugal were the target of police intervention, and 21.6% in Spain. This indicates that police actively interfere in instances of street politics with no reported illegality – and that is particularly so in Portugal, while the difference is lower in Spain.

Remarkably, in the Portuguese case, a vast majority (71.5%) of protest reported as illegal is not actually the target of protest policing, as only 28.5% of those instances of popular mobilisation feature police intervention (figure 41). The Spanish case presents a more balanced panorama, as police intervene in 54.2% of protest events reported as illegal and are absent in 45.8% of those. Nonetheless, this is a strong indicator that protest policing is actually not dependent on the legality of the protest event itself.

Concomitantly, and considering both police control and reported illegality of protest events (figure 42), one witnesses a similar equilibrium in Spain – with police intervention in 44% of protest events reported as illegal and in 56% of occurrences where no illegality was reported. Portugal, again, exhibits a substantially more uneven picture, as, here,

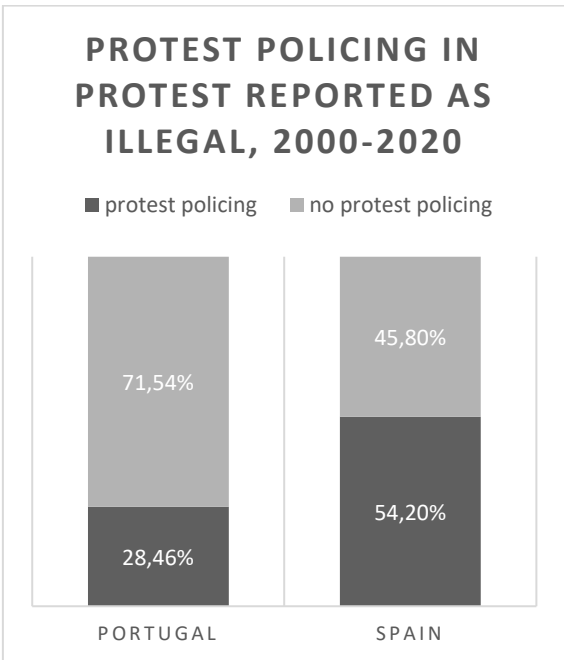
police control is a reality in a strong majority of protest events which were not considered illegal (89.6% vs. 10.4%). This, again, demonstrates that the reported illegality of protest is not the sole trigger for police intervention across the Iberian Peninsula.

Figure 40. Authorities intervention in protest in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.



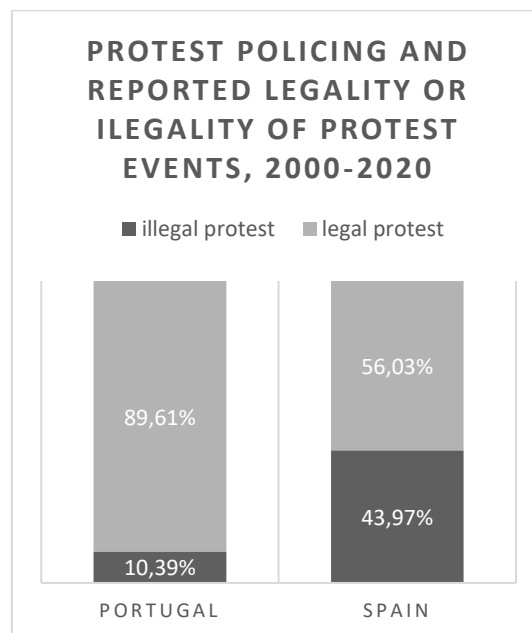
Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

Figure 41. Protest policing in protest events reported as illegal in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

Figure 42. Percentage of protest events reported as legal vs. illegal with police intervention in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.



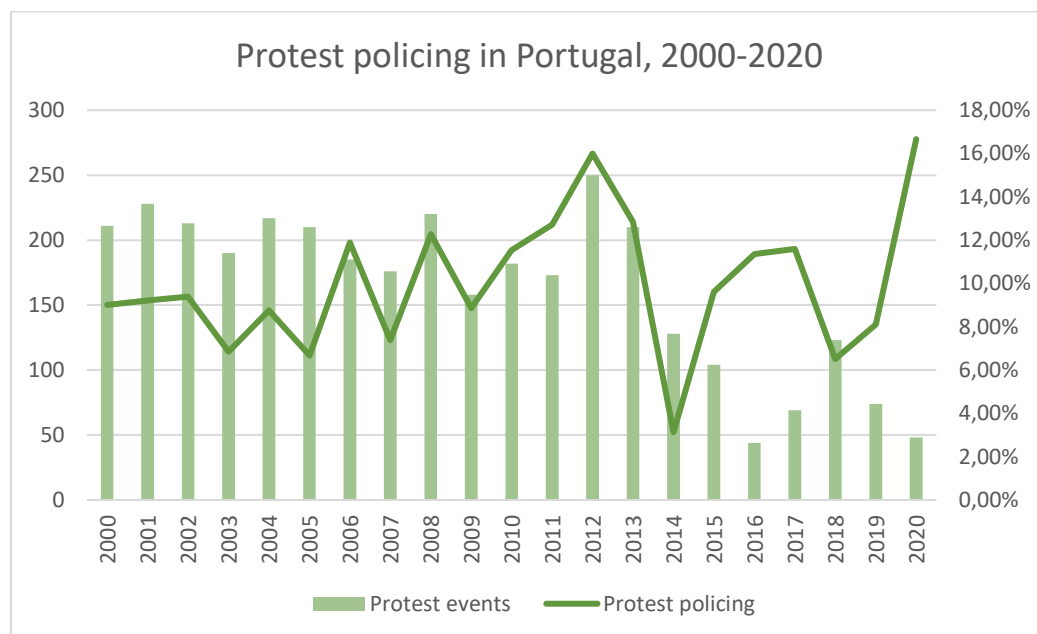
Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

This is significant as the sight of protest policing carries in itself a moral judgement – as previously mentioned, it is safe to assume that, for the general public who reads the news, reports of protest policing can amplify the perceived illegality of protest events. In that sense, this constitutes a form of securitisation in itself, that is more current in Spain than in Portugal – which could attest to a higher legitimacy of street politics in the latter country (Fishman, 2011, p. 237; 2019, pp. 78-85; Fernandes *et al.*, 2020, p. 70; 2021). Simultaneously, however, and precisely because of the acceptability of popular mobilisation in Portugal, the significance of active police control can amplify the perceived illegitimacy of a protest event, even without a formal declaration of its illegality.

Considering the evolution of protest policing in both countries in relation to the number of protest events (figures 43 and 44), one common trend emerges – a higher percentage of protest policing across the border during the anti-austerity protest cycle. It is the year with the highest number of protest events in Portugal – 2012 – which has the second highest percentage of protest policing (16%), while 2020, relating to the special circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic' state of emergency, sees the highest recorded percentage of police intervention (16.7%). In this country, an interesting trend emerges

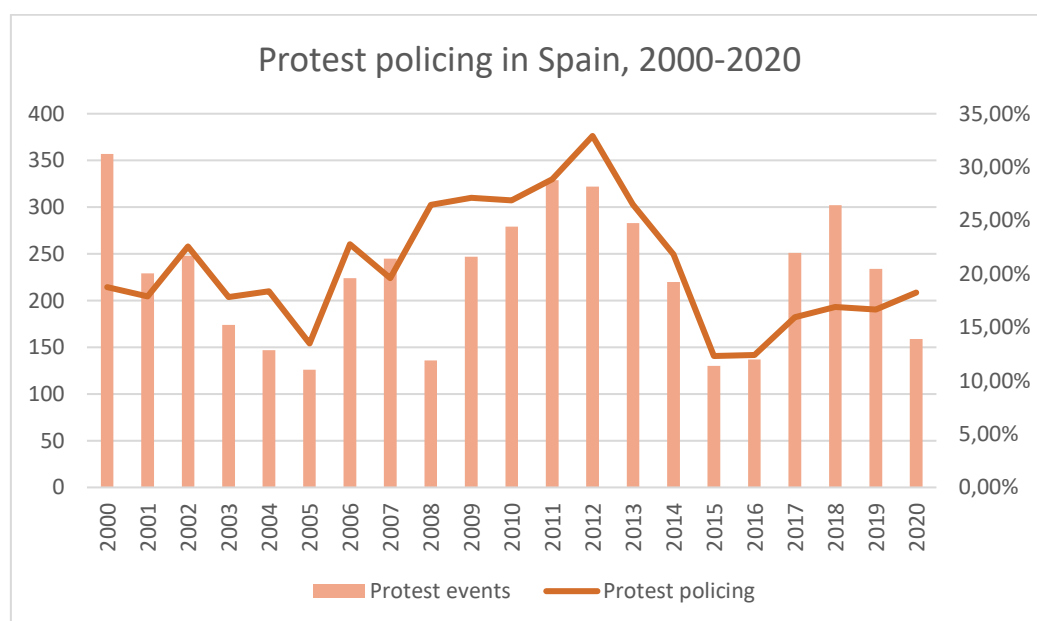
in the years with less protest, as, between 2016 and 2017, 11.4% and 11.7% of protest events were the object of protest policing. Nonetheless, the percentage of protest events that triggered some sort of police intervention is lower in Portugal than in Spain in every year of the series.

Figure 43. Protest policing in Portugal between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

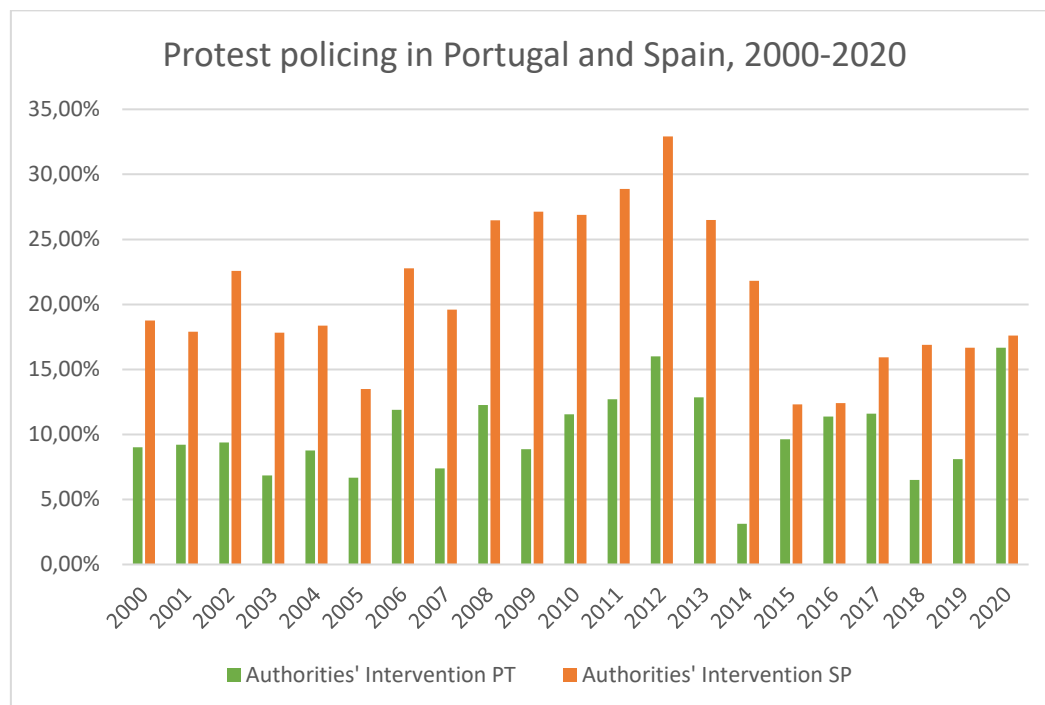
Figure 44. Protest policing in Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

In Spain, the percentage of protest events with police intervention fluctuates between 12.3% in 2015 and 32.9% in 2012 – in this last year, then, almost a third of all protest events was subjected to protest policing, which is the highest percentage recorded in the 21 years analysed here. As the anti-austerity protest cycle died down, so did police intervention, and the high level of popular mobilisation experienced between 2017-2019 in connection to independentist claims did not see a concomitant rise in the level of protest policing (15.9% in 2017, 16.9% in 2018, and 16.8% in 2019). Unlike the Portuguese case, the two years with lower popular mobilisation are also those with lower protest policing – 12.3% in 2014 and 12.4% in 2015.

Figure 45. Protest policing in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.



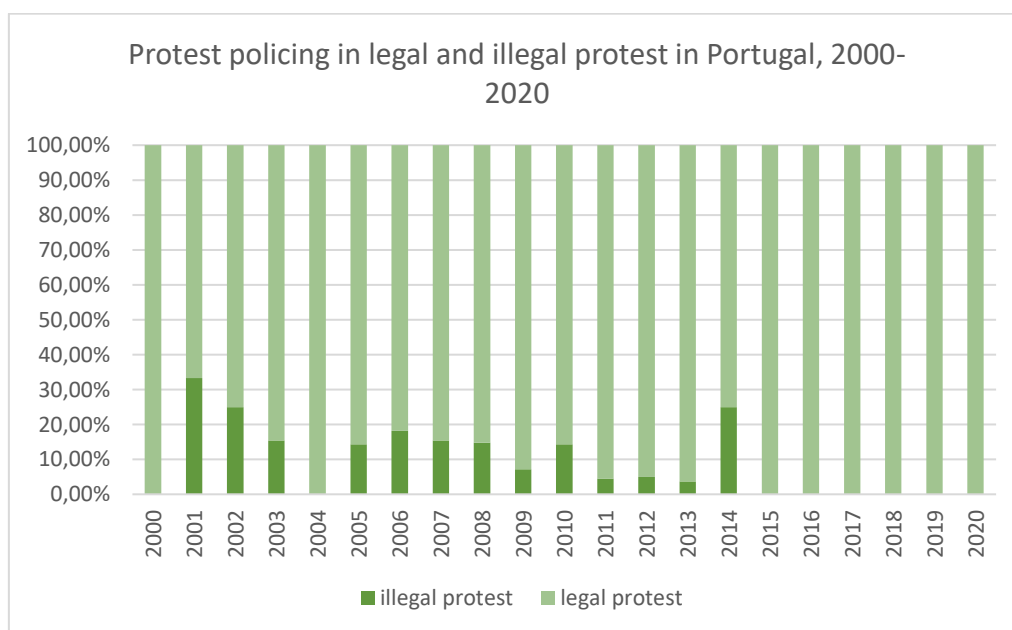
Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

The Spanish case, then, displays a more linear evolution between the number of protest events and the percentage of those where police interfere, which is not the case in Portugal, particularly from 2015 onwards. Further, one sees that the presence of police intervention in Spain is lower in the last third of the series, with a strong decline in protest policing which finds no correspondence in the Portuguese case. This dynamic is visible in figure 45 – although it is observable that the proportion of protest policing is significantly higher in Spain in every year of the series, that difference is considerably

lower from 2015 onwards (with the exception of 2018 and 2019, although still less prominently than in previous years and, in particular, during the anti-austerity protest cycle).

In the Portuguese case (figure 46), it bears reiterating that protest policing seems to be quite detached from the reported illegality of the protest event. The last few years of the series are particularly significant in this regard, considering the intersection of a higher percentage of protest policing, low number of protest events with none considered illicit, and low number of participants. The highest occurrence of protest policing during the anti-austerity protest cycle is also not related to the reported unlawfulness of those instances of popular mobilisation, as, at the height of anti-austerity mobilisation, Portuguese police mostly took action in protest with no reported illicit activity. It is only in the first few years of the series that police take a stand in a higher share of protest events that were reported as illegal (2001, with 33.3%, and 2001, with 25%) as well as in 2014 (the same 25%). These protest events were mostly labour related and featured a combination of low, average, and high intensity repertoires – in particular, obstruction of roads seems to trigger police intervention in instances of popular mobilisation reported as illegal.

Figure 46. Protest policing in legal and illegal protest in Portugal between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

In Spain (figure 47), the scenario is considerably more nuanced. Seven years in the series see police control in more protest events reported as illegal (2005, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2018 and 2019) but the overall trend is of balance in protest policing and the reported illegality of the protest event. The years that stand out are 2000, 2002, 2003, 2016 and 2017, as those during which police took action predominately in legal protest events, and 2019 in the opposite direction. In the latter year, these occurrences of street politics were massively political (mainly connected to the “*Procès*” sentence in Catalonia) and featured mostly high intensity protest repertoires. As for the years when protest policing occurred mainly in lawful protest, coincidentally, these were also mostly motivated by political reasons, again in relation to independentist claims, and featured a combination of high to low intensity protest repertoires.

Figure 47. Police intervention in legal and illegal protest in Spain between 2000 and 2020.

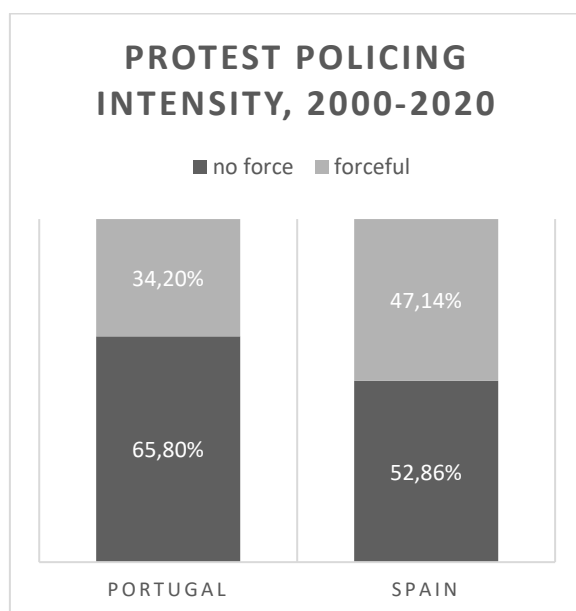


Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

To further clarify protest policing dynamics, I distinguish between low intensity protest policing – with no recourse to force – and high intensity – or forceful – police control and rely on two indicators reported in the Disdem database: police intervention without the use of force, and forceful police intervention. As shown in figure 48, across both countries, most protest policing is low intensity (65.8% in Portugal and 52.9% in Spain), but there is clearly more propensity for forceful protest policing in Spain (47.1%, against

34.2% in Portugal). Protest is, then, the object of high intensity protest policing in a little over one third of all instances of popular mobilisation in Portugal, while the Spanish police opt for forceful intervention in almost half of the occurrences.

Figure 48. Forceful vs. not forceful protest policing in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.

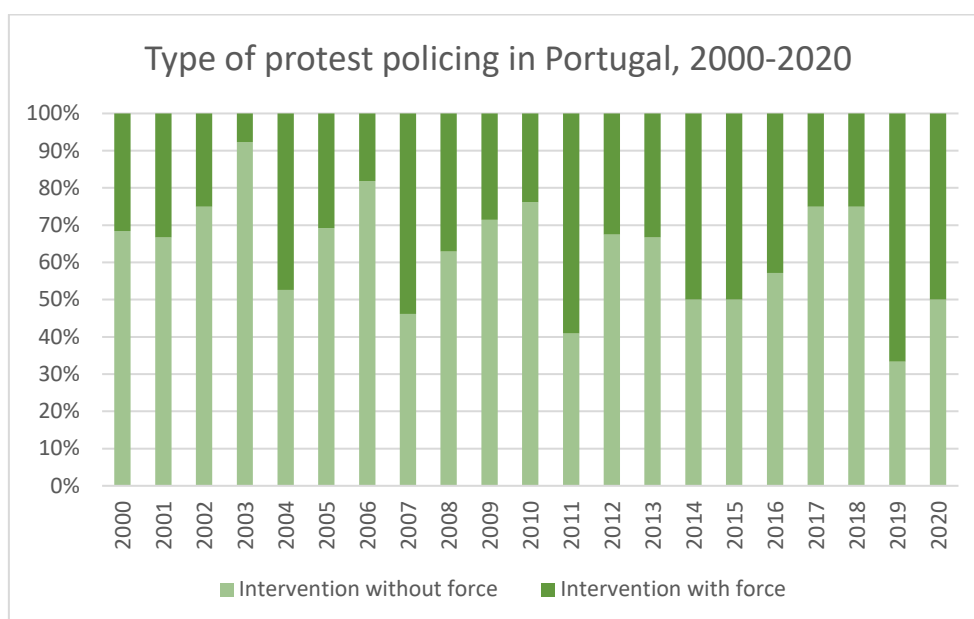


Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

Considering the evolution of the type of protest policing in Portugal across the series (figure 49), one observes that forceful police control oscillates between 8% in 2003 and 67% in 2019. Other years with a greater share of high intensity protest policing are 2007, 2011 and 2016 (54%, 59% and 60%). There are also a few years where forceful protest policing is as prevalent as police intervention without recourse to force (2014, 2015 and 2020). Although with variations, thus, the tendency identified before for more presence of the police forces in the Portuguese protest sphere towards the last years of the series finds correspondence with the escalation of the type of police intervention, as, from 2014 onwards, there seems to be an increase in high intensity protest policing.

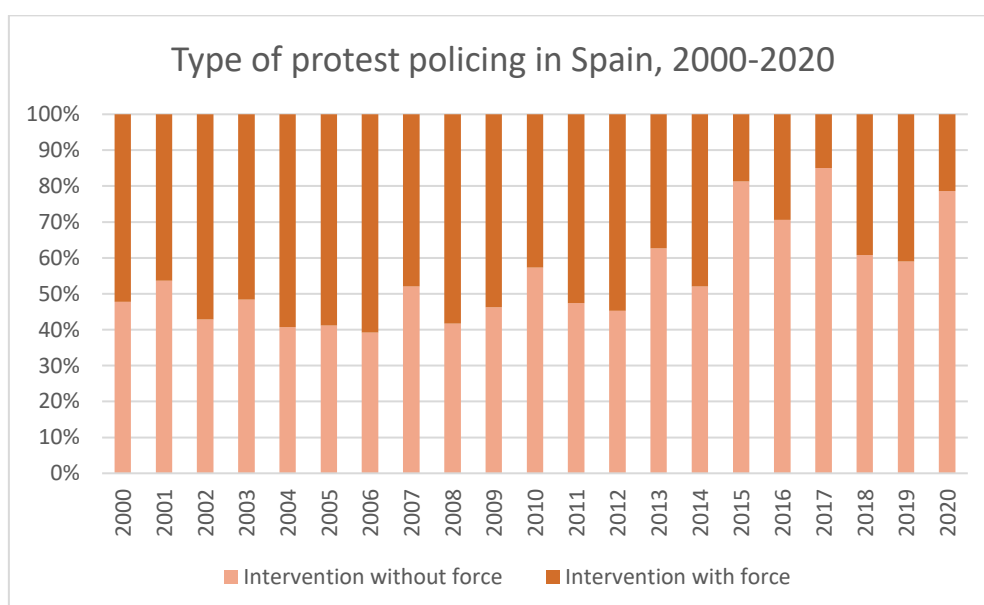
The Spanish case (figure 50) displays a completely opposite inclination. One can observe that forceful protest policing in the country fluctuates between 15% in 2017 and 61% in 2006. This means that the higher percentage of forceful protest policing is actually recorded in Portugal, which, nevertheless, also features the lowest share in a given year.

Figure 49. Type of protest policing in Portugal between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

Figure 50. Type of protest policing in Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

In any case, there are more years in Spain than in Portugal with over 50% of forceful protest policing (nine years – 2000, 2002 to 2006, 2008, 2009, 2011 and 2012 – against three years in Portugal). These nine years are concentrated in the first half of the series, as well as during the Great Recession. Once this is over, high intensity protest policing in Spain decreases and, from 2014 onwards, there is only one year during which the

Spanish police took a harder stance to protest policing than their Portuguese counterparts (2018, with police intervening with the use of force in Spain in 39% of the cases, against 25% in Portugal). In the remaining years, Portuguese police resorted to forceful protest policing more frequently than across the border – 50% against 48% in 2014, 50% against 19% in 2015, 60% against 29% in 2016, 25% against 15% in 2017, 67% against 41% in 2019, and, finally, 50% against 21% in 2020.

The depiction of protest policing in both countries so far is indicative of a higher normalisation of high intensity police intervention in popular mobilisation in Spain, as, particularly in the first half of the series, most years recorded a higher percentage of forceful police intervention. Intriguingly, though, the data is suggestive of a retraction in hard protest policing styles in that country from the end of the Great Recession, which stands in contrast with the overall picture of police control of protest in Portugal, which, although unevenly, tends to adopt higher intensity tactics precisely after the end of the highly participated anti-austerity protest cycle. This could signal a change in protest policing in the country, especially considering that those years are of less intense street politics. The same can be said of the Spanish case, given that the years featuring less high intensity protest policing are those with high mobilisation around particularly divisive claims, as they correspond to the peak of the Catalanian crisis.

One first hypothesis to explain this shift could relate to protesters' actions in the public sphere – any change in protesters' strategies translated, for example, in an escalation of protest repertoires in Portugal, contrasted by a de-escalation in the Spanish case, or a modification of targets or demands. These will be explored in the next sections.

However, other factors could also be of significance here – it could be argued that civil resistance to the *Ley de Seguridad Ciudadana* of 2015, as well as popular mobilisation against police violence in Spain (which is vastly absent in Portugal) could have affected protest policing in the Spanish case, pushing it towards a less intense style. In fact, this analysis of patterns of police intervention in protest events seems to indicate that the law actually did not impact protest policing, as there is no significant alteration to patterns of police intervention in protest events since its implementation – notwithstanding, as Simsa (2017, pp. 328-333) indicates, the astronomical rise in

administrative penalties that are, naturally, not captured by this dataset as they can occur independently of styles of protest policing.

In Portugal, two factors can be of importance – the first is the retreat of security forces from participating in popular mobilisation themselves, which could have diminished feelings of empathy towards protesters, and the perception that the goals being pursued on the streets were common goals that would, ultimately, benefit members of the Portuguese security forces as well. The second factor is the rise of the far-right party *Chega!* and their populist discourse about the country's police forces, often based on tropes normalising and supporting a more intense style of policing. *Chega!* has been vocal in supporting the unionising of members of the force in a new right-leaning professional organisation by the name *Movimento Zero* (Zero Movement) and has endorsed some of their protest events in the last years of the series (particularly in 2019)⁵³. This second interrelated factor seems to be closely tied to the rise of extreme-right sympathies among the police forces, which has been reported in recent media investigations⁵⁴, and had previously been mentioned by the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance of the Council of Europe in its 2018 report on Portugal.

The type of security actor which intervenes in protest policing is also of consequence. The Disdem database lists four possible actors in protest policing: police (as a proxy for regular police forces), riot police, the armed forces, and private security. For the purposes of this work, the actions of private security are not considered. Figure 51 displays the actors who engage in protest policing in both countries across the series.

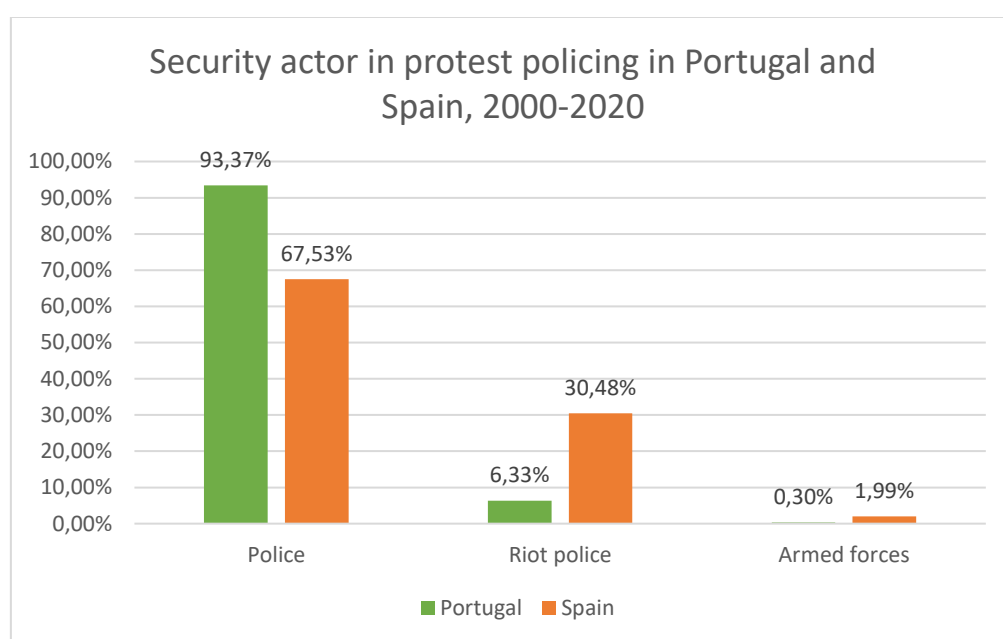
It is evident that it is mostly regular police forces that intervene in protest events in Portugal (93.4% of all protest events with protest policing), while riot police forces were

⁵³ A protest event on November 22nd, 2019, was notably described in the newspapers: some of the police officers protesting used Nazi salutes as they walked past the headquarters of the Socialist Party in Lisbon, while other symbols associated with the new transnational far-right were spotted throughout the demonstration. The event was not reported as illegal and did not feature police intervention (<https://www.dn.pt/edicao-do-dia/22-nov-2019/como-o-movimento-zero-capturou-o-protesto-dos-sindicatos-de-policias-11540373.html> and <https://www.publico.pt/2021/06/20/sociedade/noticia/manifestacao-movimento-zero-representacao-sindical-nao-apoiam-movimentos-rosto-1967266>).

⁵⁴ <https://setentaequatro.pt/investigacao-74/policias-sem-lei-zero-direita> (accessed on 30-12-2022) and <https://setentaequatro.pt/investigacao-74/policias-sem-lei-o-odio-de-591-agentes-de-autoridade> (accessed on 30-12-2022).

only present in 6.3% of occurrences, and the military is almost totally absent from the Portuguese protest sphere in a controlling role. The picture is quite different in the Spanish case, where, although regular police forces remain the most active security actor in protest control (67.5%), riot police are significantly more present (30.5%), and the army also acts in protest control (2% of protest events). In Spain, then, riot police and the armed forces are present in about a third of all protest events with protest policing (32.5%), in contrast to a much lower proportion (4.5%) in the Portuguese case.

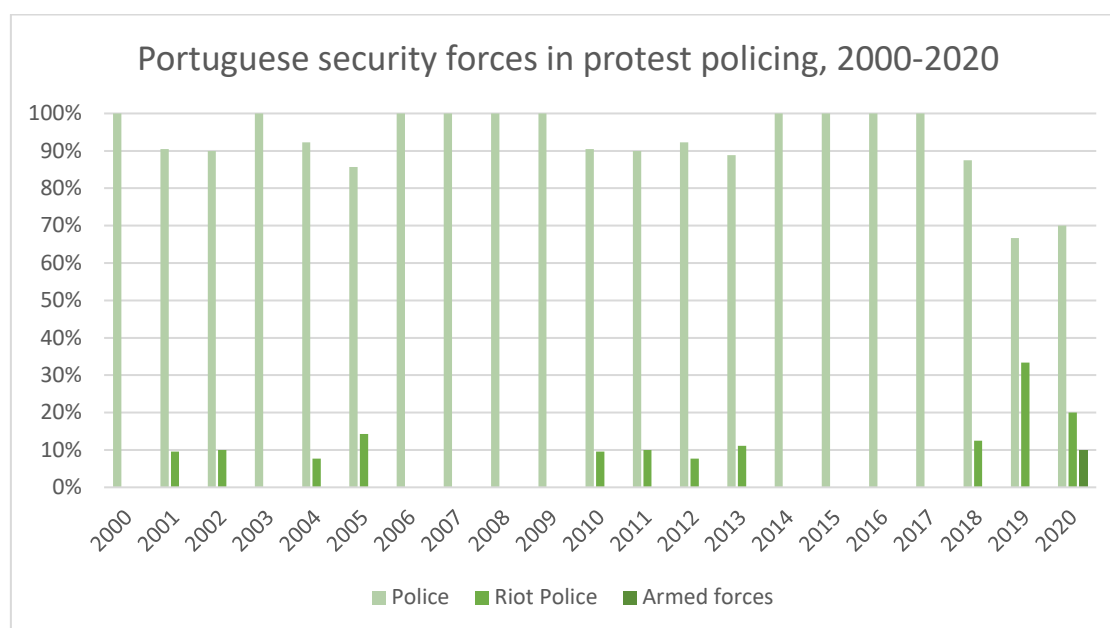
Figure 51. Security forces involved in protest policing in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

An exploration of the security actors which intervene in protest policing in each of the countries per year, however, is indicative of the same tendencies identified above. As per figure 52, riot police are more present in the Portuguese protest sphere towards the end of the series (2018 to 2020). Nonetheless, it is evident that riot police remain a rare sight in Portuguese protest, as they only appear in 2001-2002 (in 10% of events with protest policing), 2004-2005 (8% and 14%, respectively), during the anti-austerity protest cycle (10% in 2010 and 2011, 8% in 2012 and 11% in 2013) and from 2018 onwards (in 13% of occurrences of protest control in 2018, 33% in 2019 and 20% in 2020). In most years of the series, then, it is regular police forces that take action in protest policing.

Figure 52. Portuguese security forces in protest policing between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

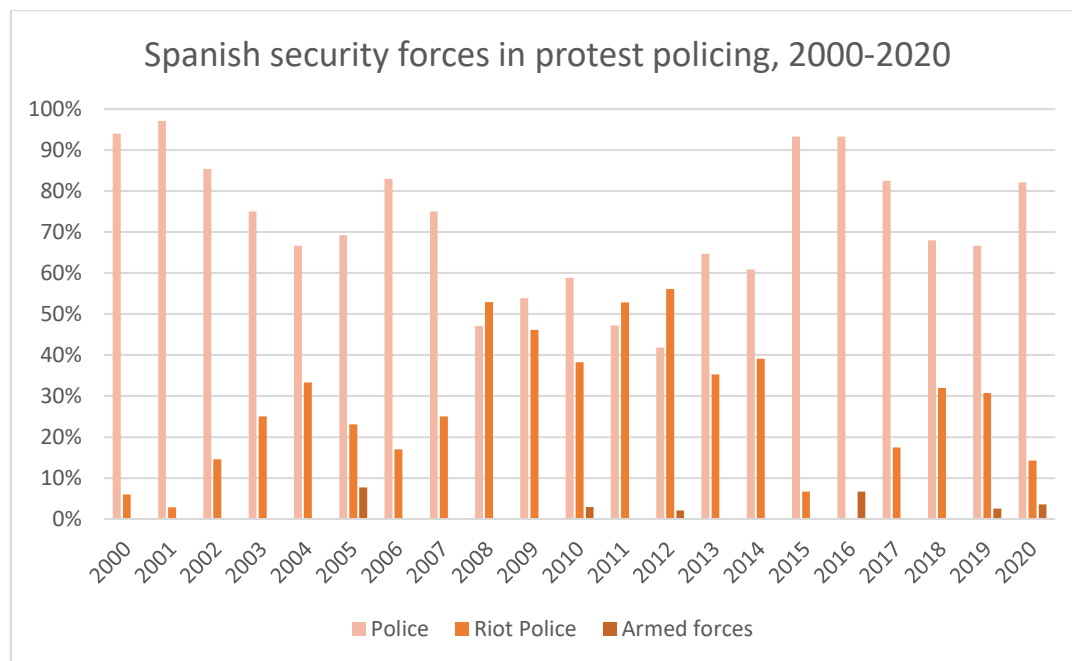
What is more, in a majority of instances when the riot police intervened in Portugal, the protesters were acting mostly driven by personal interest (protests against judicial decisions affecting them, protest related to loss of housing) or in relation to human rights (protests related to racism, pro and against marriage equality mobilisation). The exception would be the anti-austerity protest cycle when riot police took action at the end of some of the most participated protest events in the series.

Interestingly, in 2019, the year that riot police were more present in the Portuguese protest sphere, they intervened in a political protest – a demonstration convened by *Chega!* in support of the party and denying the existence of racism in Portugal, and the respective counter-protest, accusing the party of being a proponent of fascism. As for the armed forces, they are only present in one protest event across the series, due to the fact that it took place in a military base (asylum seekers protested against being transferred there for the Covid-19 quarantine) – inasmuch, then, armed forces remain absent from the Portuguese protest sphere.

In contrast, there is only one year in Spain where riot police are absent from protest policing – 2016 (figure 53). In that same year, though, the armed forces participated in protest policing in 6% of protest events with intervention from security forces. The

presence of riot police is significantly more conspicuous in the Spanish protest sphere, and that is particularly the case immediately before the Great Recession (present in 53% of protest events with protest policing in 2008 and 46% in 2009) and during the anti-austerity protest cycle. In fact, at the peak of this cycle, riot police were more active in protest policing than regular police forces (53% in 2011 and 56% in 2012 – the year in which their presence in the protest sphere was more ubiquitous), and they were still rather prominent in the following years (35% in 2013 and 39% in 2014).

Figure 53. Spanish security forces in protest policing between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

Although their presence declines in the following years, riot police again become more active in protest policing at the height of independentist protest in Catalonia (32% and 31% in 2018 and 2019, respectively), particularly after the arrest of Catalanian pro-independence leaders. In these years, the presence of riot police in the streets where protesters gathered happens almost exclusively in political protest – vastly in connection to independentist demonstrations, but also, and somewhat parallel to the Portuguese case, in protest events either in support or in opposition of Vox. Remarkably, between 2003 and 2005, when riot police were also quite active in protest policing in Spain (25% in 2003, 33% in 2004 and 23% in 2005), they mostly intervened in labour related protest – and were also present in protest related to Basque independentist claims.

Riot police, in both countries, appear to take action in explicitly (but not exclusively) political protests, be it around divisive claims, such as in Spain, or around claims that are, on the surface, more consensual, such as civil rights in Portugal. In Spain, in particular, this police corps intervenes in protest that puts the central government in check – not only around austerity (2008 to 2012) or independentist claims (2018 and 2019), but also during contestation of the Spanish government's support for the invasion of Iraq in 2003 or in contesting the initial narrative transmitted by the PP government relating to the 11-M bombings in 2004. This finds no equivalence in the Portuguese case, where riot police mostly do not intervene in protest events targeting the national government (the exception, again, is the anti-austerity protest cycle).

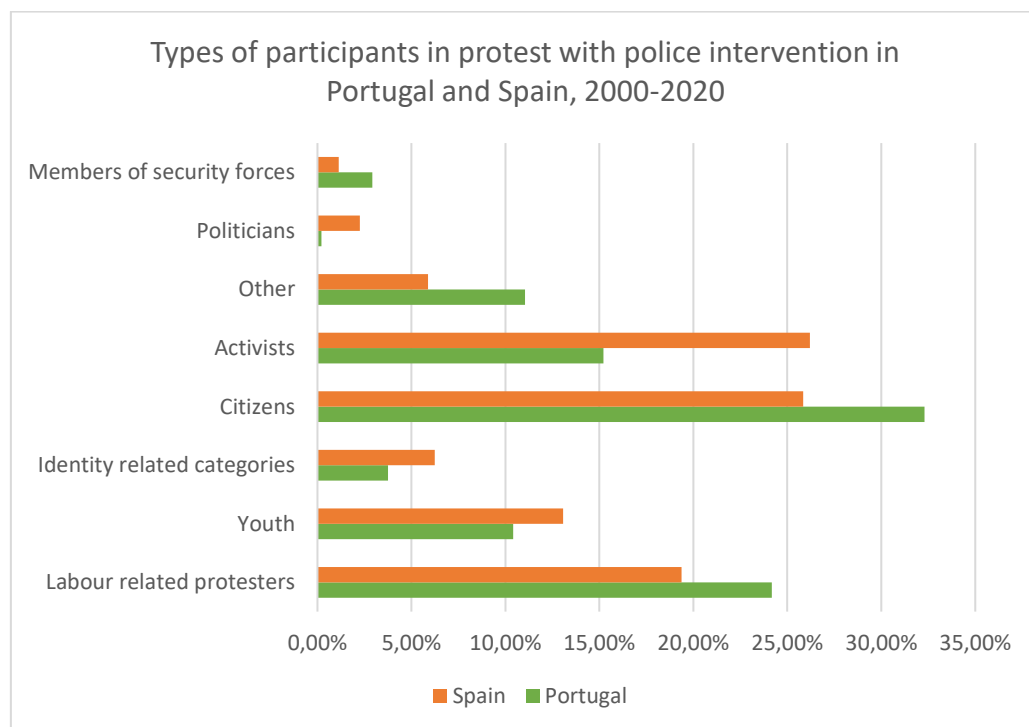
The presence of Spanish armed forces in the country's protest sphere is also more pervasive than in the Portuguese case, as they take action in protest events in six years during the series (2005, present in 8% of protest events with protest policing, 2010 with 3%, 2012 with 2%, 2016 with 7%, and 2019 and 2020, with 3% and 4%, respectively). Remarkably, up until 2012, the military intervened exclusively in labour related protests – in particular those in economic sectors considered as essential, such as goods distribution and aviation (notably, the same claims in Portugal, and considering that truck drivers protest events took place in both countries simultaneously, do not see the army, or even riot police interfering). From then onwards, though, their presence in protest policing occurred mostly in popular mobilisation in connection to sovereignty.

If the sight of police action in protest events can be perceived as a proxy for the illegality of that protest, this effect can be amplified by visions of riot police and the military interfering in popular mobilisation in the minds of the Spanish public. What is more, the fact that the Spanish protest sphere is the loci of protest policing by security forces that are ready for battle sends a clear message to protesters and protest organisers: that the possibility of combat in street politics exists, and this can have an important dissuading effect that is not present in Portugal. The impact of the more common presence of security forces prepared for conflict in the Spanish protest sphere, thus, can be a securitisation practice. Coupled with the approval and implementation of the Citizen

Security Law of 2015, these can be considered as two securitisation arms pulling in the same direction, with the central government as the head.

Considering participants in protest events with protest policing in both countries (figure 54) one sees that, in the Portuguese case, it is regular citizens (33.3%) who are more present in dissent with police intervention, followed by labour related protesters (24.2%) – both typologies are more important here than in Spain (25.9% and 19.4%, respectively). There is, then, an inversion, as, considering the totality of protest events in the series, labour related protesters are the most common typology of protesters in Portugal, followed by regular citizens.

Figure 54. Typology of participants in protest with police intervention in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

The third most important category of participants in popular mobilisation with protest policing in the country is activists (15.2%), which is the typology of protesters that are more active in street politics with protest policing in Spain (26.2%). As in Portugal, this is also an inversion, as both citizens and labour related protesters – the two most important categories of protesters in Spain – are less present in protest events with protest policing than activists. Youth is also more present in protest events with police

control in Spain (13.1%) than in Portugal (10.4%), and so are identity-related categories of protest participants (6.2%, vs. 3.8%). Politicians, too, are more commonly seen as active protesters in Spain (2.3%) than in Portugal (almost absent, at 0.2%), while, here, members of the security forces are more present in protest with protest policing (2.9%) than their Spanish counterparts (1.1%). Finally, other protesters take part in protest with police intervention in 11% of the Portuguese occurrences and in 5.9% of the Spanish ones.

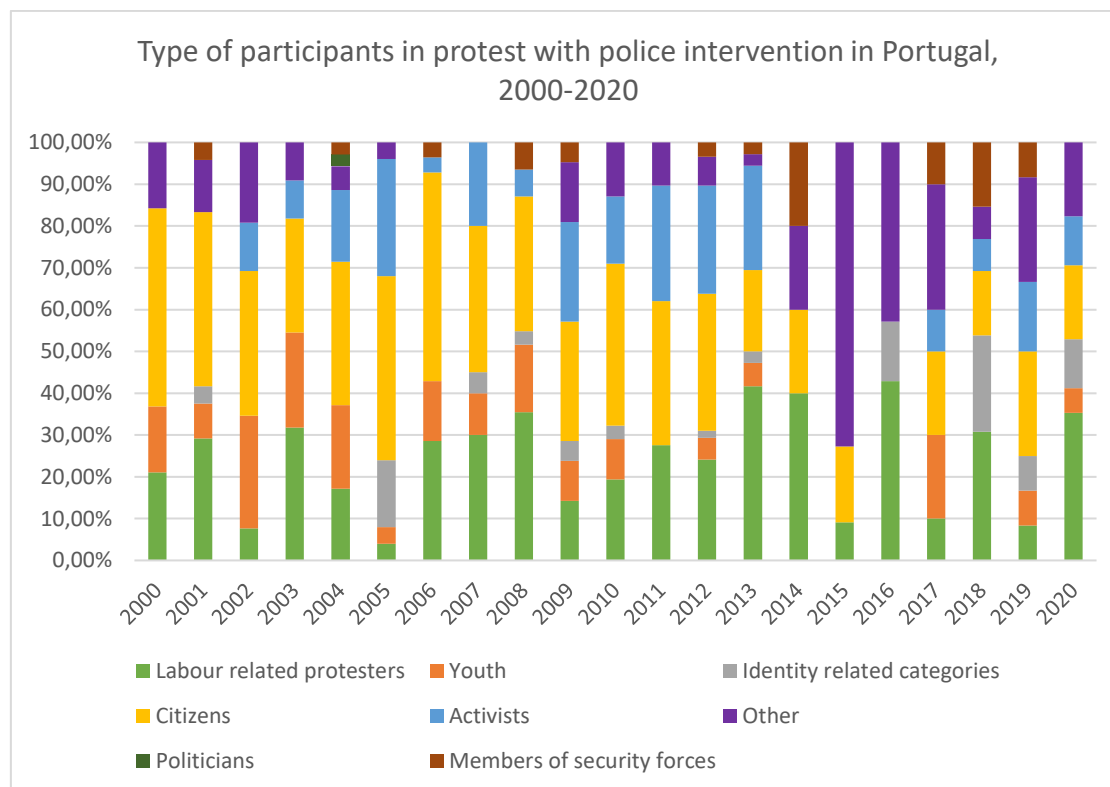
Considering the Portuguese case in isolation (figure 55), one observes that citizens are significantly more present in protest events with protest policing in the first half of the series, peaking in 2006 (when they were the object of police intervention in 50% of the cases). Other years when citizen protesters were particularly subjected to police action were 2000 and 2001 (47.4% and 41.7%, correspondingly), and 2005 (44%). During anti-austerity mobilisation, they were present in protest events with protest policing in about one third of all occurrences (38.7% in 2010, 34.5% in 2011 and 37.8% in 2012), while, from then on, citizens became less prominent, being present in around 20% of occurrences – their presence declining already in 2013 to 19.4%, reaching 0% in 2006, and rising again in the final years of the series (between 15.4% in 2018 and 23.1% in 2019).

The presence of labour related protesters in street politics with protest policing is scattered throughout the series, oscillating between 42.9% in 2016 and 4% in 2005. However, this type of protester is particularly subjected to police intervention from the sunset of the Great Recession, as it is a most present typology in most years from 2013 onwards (41.7% in 2013, 40% in 2014, 42.9% in 2016, 30.8% in 2018 and 35.3% in 2020), when the protest policing grows in prevalence and intensity.

Youth is the second most important typology of participants in protest events subjected to protest policing in a few years at the beginning of the series – 2002 (26.9%), 2003 (22.7%) and 2004 (20%) – as previously mentioned, these were years of particular mobilisation from pupils and university students in the country, contesting both an alteration in the curricula and a severe increase in tuition fees at public universities.

Young people are again present in protest events with protest policing at the end of the series, this time in relation to environmental claims (20% in 2017 and 15.4% in 2019).

Figure 55. Typology of participants in protest with police intervention in Portugal between 2000 and 2020.



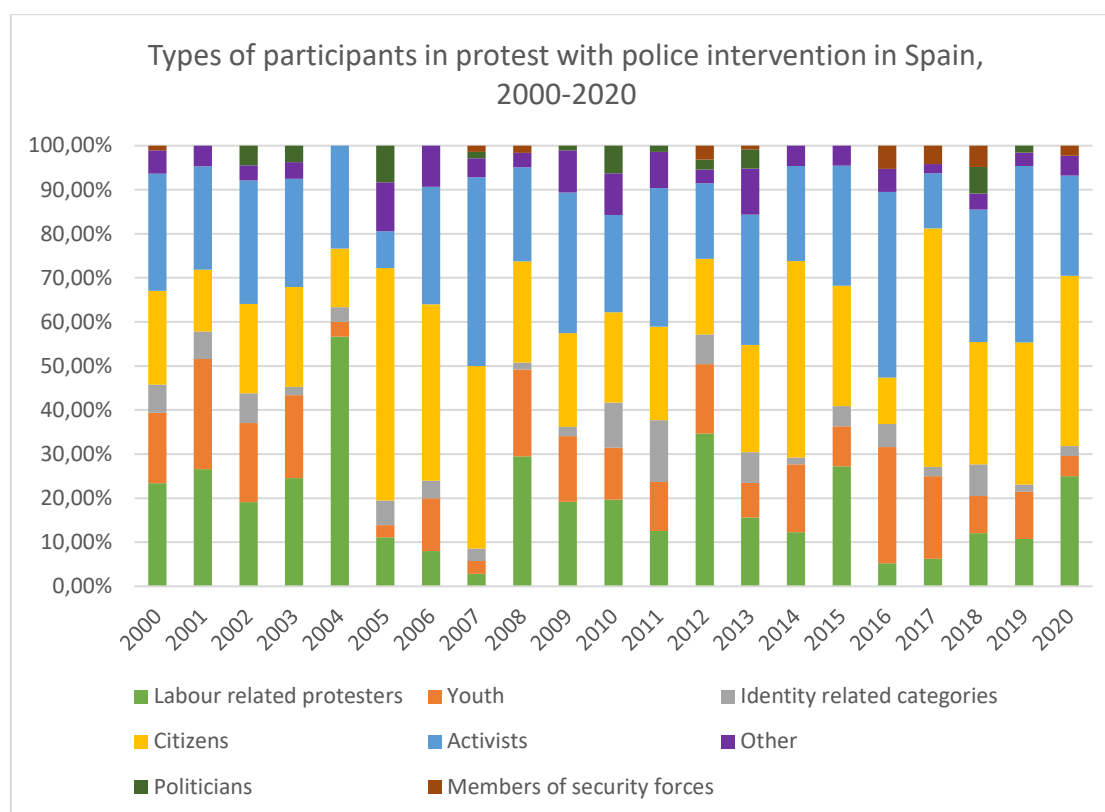
Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

In contrast, Portuguese activists are more present in protest events with protest policing precisely during the anti-austerity protest cycle (27.6% in 2011, 25.9% in 2012 and 25% in 2013), and noticeably absent immediately after (no activists in protest events with protest policing between 2014 and 2016). However, it is 2005 that features the highest percentage of activists in protest events subject to police intervention – 28%. Finally, and despite the fact that members of the security forces were more active in the general protest sphere overall in the first half of the series, we see that their presence in protest events with protest policing is actually more significant in the last years of the series (20% of all participants in protest events in which the police intervened in 2014, 10% in 2017, 15.4% in 2018 and 7.7% in 2019).

In Spain (figure 56), activists appear in protest events with protest policing across the series, constituting between 8.3% of participants in those occurrences in 2005 and

42.1% in 2016. They are more commonly present also in 2009 (31.9%), 2011 (31.4%), 2013 (29.6%), 2018 (30.1%) and 2019 (40%). Compared with the Portuguese case, then, it appears that activists were not as prominent in these protest events during the anti-austerity protest cycle.

Figure 56. Typology of participants in protest with police intervention in Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

Spanish citizens' attendance in protest events with protest policing is, too, pervasive across the series, but they are, notwithstanding, more concentrated between 2005 and 2007 (52.8% in 2005, 40% in 2006, and 41.4% in 2007) and at the end of the series (2017 to 2020 – 54.2%, 27.7%, 32.2%, and 38.6%) – in fact, combined, activists and citizens are present on over 50% of protest events with protest policing from the sunset of the anti-austerity protest cycle, and that is also the case in the years preceding the financial crisis (between 2005 and 2007, they total 61.1% in the first year, 66.7% in the second and 84.3% in the last).

Considering labour related protesters, one finds a higher propensity of labour related protesters in instances of popular mobilisation with protest policing particularly in 2004, with 56.7%, 2008, with 29.1%, and 2012, with 34.7%, and they are relatively absent in 2006-2007 (11.1% and 8%) and in 2016-2017 (5.3% and 6.3%).

As for Spanish youth, they are more active participants in street politics that attract police control in the first four years of the series (16% in 2000, 25% in 2001, and 18% in 2002, and 18.9% in 2003) – as in the Portuguese case, this corresponds to resistance to educational policy in Spain, here relating to changes in access to university. Young people are also seen in protest events with protest policing relating to explicitly political motivations – either, and most significantly, in relation to independentist claims, protesting the involvement of Spain in the Iraq war, or the inaction of both central and regional government during the Prestige environmental disaster. Education was, in addition, a central concern for youthful protesters targeted by police intervention between 2008 (19.7%) and 2009 (14.9%), particularly resistance to the adoption of the Bologna process, but they continued their participation in explicitly political protest – mainly in connection to sovereignty claims and, perhaps announcing their participation in the anti-austerity protest cycle, denouncing the precarisation of labour and living conditions. In 2012 (15.8%) and 2014 (15.4%), claims related to anti-austerity – particularly resisting cuts to public education services – were the central concern of young people participating in popular mobilisation with police control, but these were often coupled with reactions to protest policing experienced precisely during this protest cycle, expressed in claims against police violence.

Youth was again present in protest events with protest policing as part of the independentist mobilisation (26.6% in 2016 and 18.8% in 2017). In those years, it is precisely in relation to sovereignty and independentist claims that politicians take part in protest subject to protest control in the country – 6% in 2018 and a much lower proportion (1.5%) in the following year. Prior to that, politicians engaged in anti-austerity mobilisation that attracted police intervention (particularly in 2010 – 6.3% – and in 2013 – 4.4%), but also in 2005 (the highest proportion recorded, at 8.3%), and in 2002 (4.5%), mostly related to ETA violence and the illegalisation of *Herri Batasuna*.

Other protesters are not particularly common in popular mobilisation with protest policing in Spain with the exception of the anti-austerity protest cycle (9.6% in 2009, 9.5% in 2010, 8.2% in 2011 and 10.4% in 2013), but that is not the case in Portugal, where this umbrella typology of protesters is present in those events specifically at the earlier stages of anti-austerity mobilisation (14.3% in 2009, 12.9% in 2010, 10.3% in 2011), but also at the beginning of the series (15.8% in 2000, 12.5% in 2001 and 19.2% in 2002) – these are mainly self-employed people and small business owners protesting about laws affecting their professional activities. Lastly, Spanish security forces were present around the same time as their Portuguese counterparts in protest events with protest policing (2016 – 5.6%; 2017 – 4.2% and 2018 – 4.8%) and, not unlikely the neighbouring country, they were mostly protesting about labour rights.

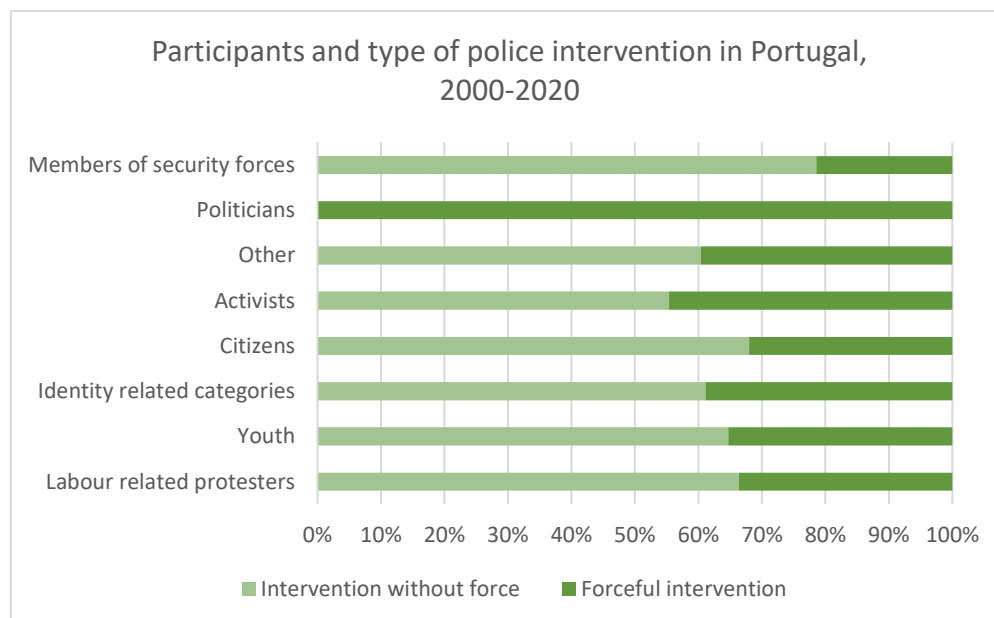
One can also relate the type of protest participants with the type of police intervention in both countries. On the Portuguese side (figure 57), and with the exception of politicians, who are exclusively present in protest events with forceful protest policing (bearing in mind, however, that this is the category of participants with lower presence in street politics with police intervention overall), all typologies of protesters experience mostly low intensity protest policing. Nevertheless, the presence of activists in the protest sphere seems more prone to high intensity protest policing (44.6%), followed by other protesters (39.6%) and by identity related categories (38.9%) – the importance of migrants and ethnic minorities here may clarify this tendency.

It is also evident that when Portuguese members of the security forces join popular mobilisation, they undergo the least forceful protest policing in the series (21.4%). Other categories – labour related protesters (33.6%), youth (35.2%), and citizens (32%) – experience forceful protest policing in about one third of the protest events with police control in which they take part.

In Spain (figure 58), three categories of protesters are more frequently subjected to forceful protest policing – politicians (52.6%), youth (51.4%) and activists (50.8%). As in the Portuguese case, it is members of security forces that experience less forceful protest policing (31.6%), followed by other protesters (38.4%). Labour related protesters

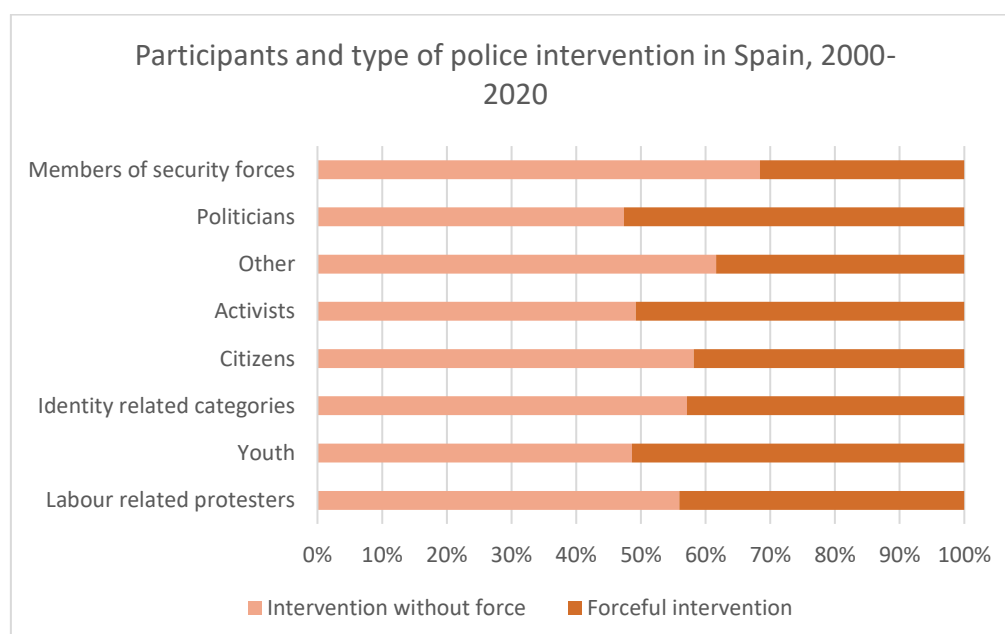
(44.1%), identity related protesters (42.9%), and citizens (41.8%) undergo forceful police intervention in over two fifths of the protest events they participate in.

Figure 57. Typology of participants and type of protest policing in Portugal between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

Figure 58. Typology of participants and type of protest policing in Portugal between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

Overall, then, and with the exception of politicians, all categories of protesters see a higher propensity for high intensity protest policing in Spain than in Portugal – which is not surprising, given the highest engagement of militarised actors in protest policing in the first country. In common, activists seem to be present in protest events with high intensity protest policing across the border, but, on the Spanish side, young people and workers seem to be on the receiving end of more intense police control. This is significant, particularly for young protesters, as these experiences can impact their future expectations of what popular mobilisation should be, and how it should be received not only by security actors, but also by the wider public. Finally, and perhaps relating to class solidarity, it is precisely members of the security forces that are subjected to the lowest proportion of forceful protest policing when they take to the streets to demonstrate.

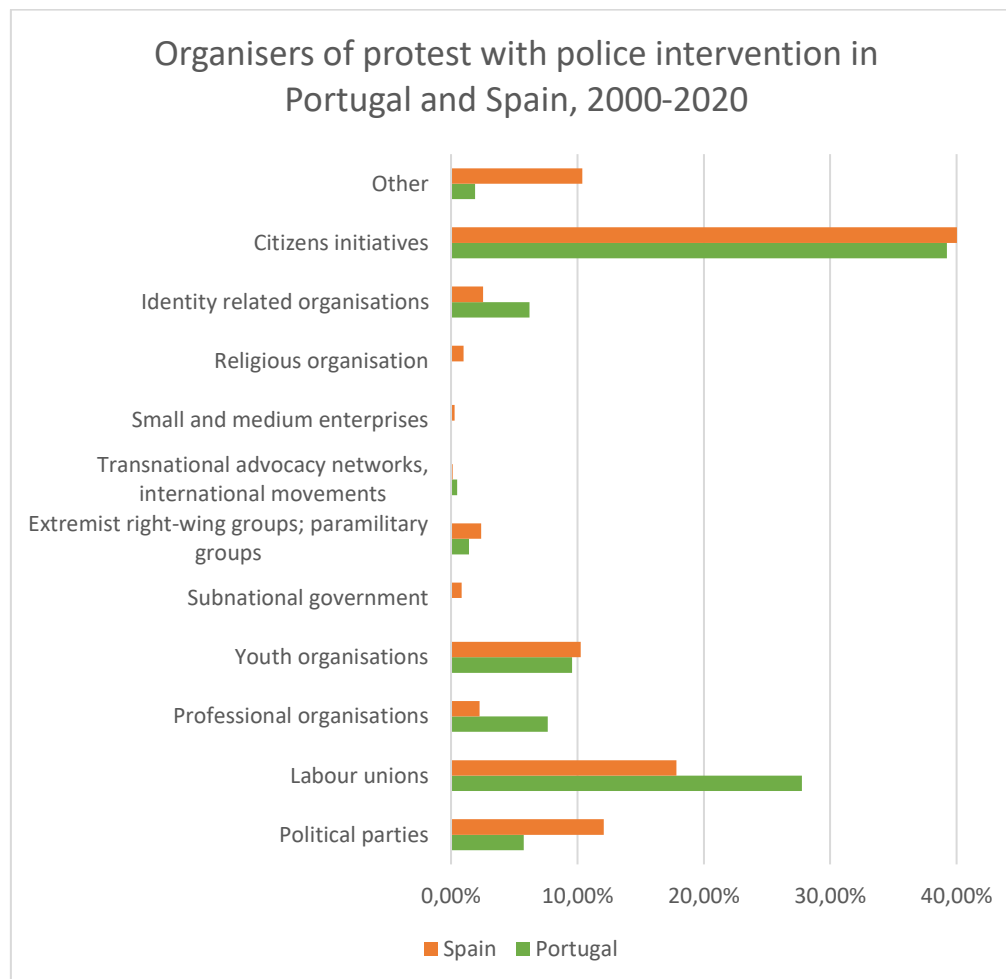
In terms of the organisational dynamics of popular mobilisation with protest policing (figure 59), one sees that, in both countries, it is citizens initiatives that are more active in organising protest that is the object of police intervention (39.2% in Portugal and 40% in Spain). The second organiser is labour unions, although more prominently in Portugal (27.8%) than in Spain (17.8%), reflecting each country's organisational landscape. It is worth noticing, though, that labour union-led protest in Portugal (the most important organiser in the country) is not proportionally subjected to protest policing, as it is the second organiser of protest, citizen initiatives, which call for popular mobilisation with the highest proportion of police control. This discrepancy is not found in the Spanish case.

Youth organisations are the third organiser whose events are subjected to protest policing in Portugal (9.6%) – the ratio is slightly higher in Spain (10.3%), where they are the fifth most visible organiser of dissent with police control, after other organisations (10.4%, and 1.9% in Portugal), and political parties (to which I will return). In both countries, protest policing of events called by youth groups is higher than their share in protest organising.

In Portugal, professional organisations, reflecting the presence of self-employed people and small business owners in the protest sphere, are also important (7.7%, against 2.2%

in Spain). Identity related organisations, too, are the object of more frequent protest policing in Portugal than in the neighbouring country (6.2% vs. 3.5%). It would, thus, appear that new typologies of organisations beyond the traditional protest organiser – labour unions – are more prevalent in popular mobilisation with protest policing in the smaller country. Nonetheless, there appears to be a remarkable similarity across the border in terms of the organisational dynamics of protest events that are subject to police control – particularly considering citizens initiatives and youth organisations, and, to a certain extent, labour unions.

Figure 59. Organisers of protest with police intervention in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.

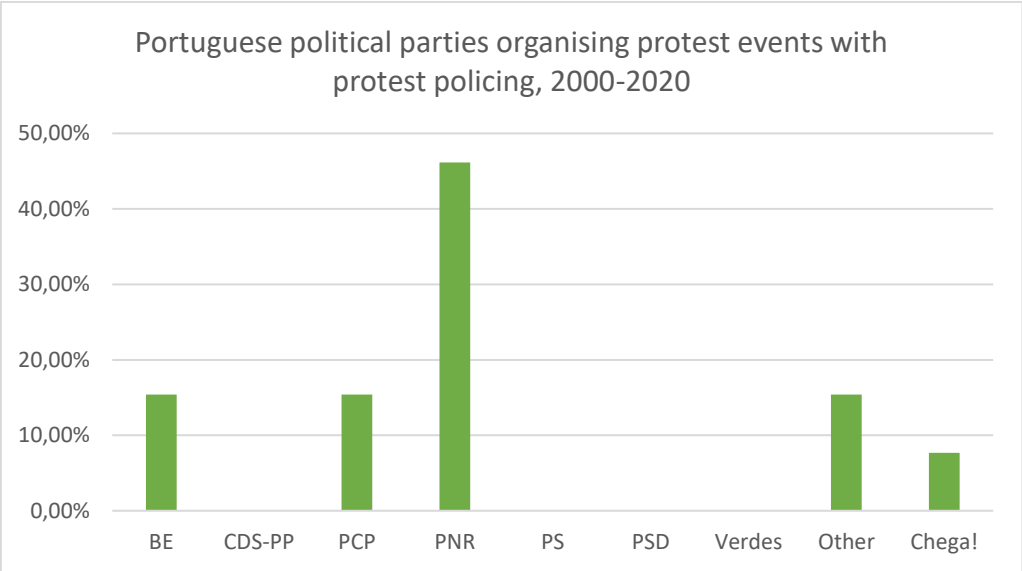


Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

This similarity is inexistent when considering political parties – the third most important organiser of protest with protest policing in Spain (12.1%), and responsible for 5.7% of events in the same circumstances in the neighbouring country. In order to shed light on

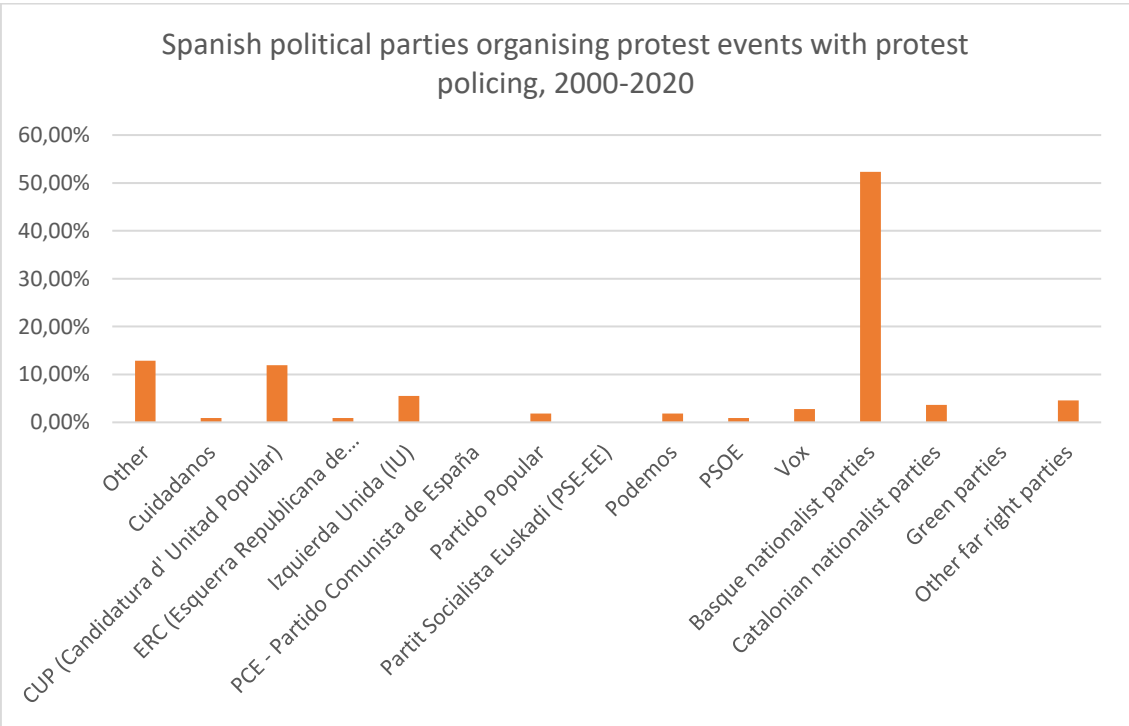
this, an exploration of the parties that are responsible for protest events that trigger police control is offered.

Figure 60. Political parties that organised protest with police intervention in Portugal between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

Figure 61. Political parties that organised protest with police intervention in Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

In Portugal (figure 60), it is clearly parties on the far right (PNR, with 46.2%, *Chega!* with 7.7% and *Frente Nacional* – National Front, the other political party featured here, with 15.4%) that organise most dissent that is subject to protest policing: considered together, these political actors are the organisers of over two thirds of protest events called by political parties that result in police intervention (69.3%). Mainstream parties of the centre-left and centre-right do not experience protest policing in any of the protest events they convene, while those parties further to the left – the BE and the PCP – organise, mostly as part of coalitions, the remaining third of occurrences of street politics with police intervention (15.4% each).

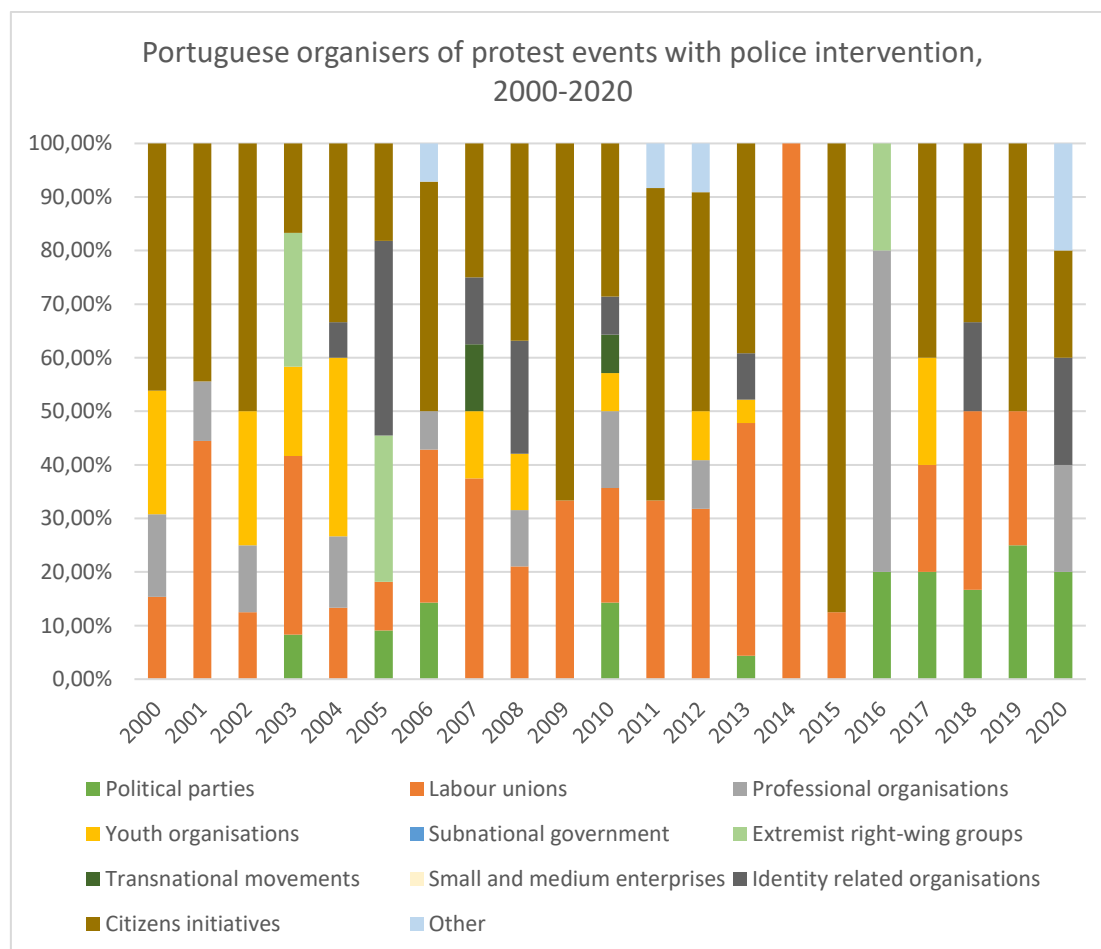
In the Spanish case (figure 61), the clear outlier are Basque nationalist parties, which organise 52.3% of all protest events convened by political parties that experienced protest policing. Other nationalist parties follow – CUP (11.9%) and other Catalan nationalist parties (3.7%), plus the category other (12.8%) is mostly populated by this type of electoral organisations. Together, they call 80% of protest events organised by political parties that is the object of police control. In contrast with the Portuguese case, far-right parties do not convene a significant proportion of protest events that result in police intervention: other far-right parties account for 4.6% of these protest events and Vox for 2.8%. Parties on the further left are also mostly absent, and so are mainstream parties.

Considering the annual breakdown of protest organisers that see their events obstructed by police forces, and for the Portuguese case (figure 62), it is citizens initiatives that emerge as the type of organisational actor that more often calls for popular mobilisation that is subject to protest policing in most years – in the first three years of the series (46.2% in 2000, 44.4% in 2001 and 50% in 2003), before and during the peak of the anti-austerity protest cycle (66.7% in 2009 and 28.6% the year after, 58.3% in 2011, 40.9% in 2012 and 39.1% in 2013), and again at the end of the series (40% in 2017 and 50% in 2019). It is, however, in 2015, that this type of organisation calls for the highest percentage of protest events with police intervention (87.5%).

Instances of popular mobilisation convened by labour unions become a more frequent target of protest policing pre and during the anti-austerity protest cycle – in particular

in 2013 (43.5%) and 2014 (100%), when the newly formed social movements devoted to contesting austerity were already demobilising and this traditional protest actor was, again, taking central stage in organising dissent. Prior to that, however, the year with the second highest proportion of police intervention in protest events organised by the Portuguese labour movement was 2001 (44%).

Figure 62. Organisers of protest with police intervention in Portugal between 2000 and 2020.

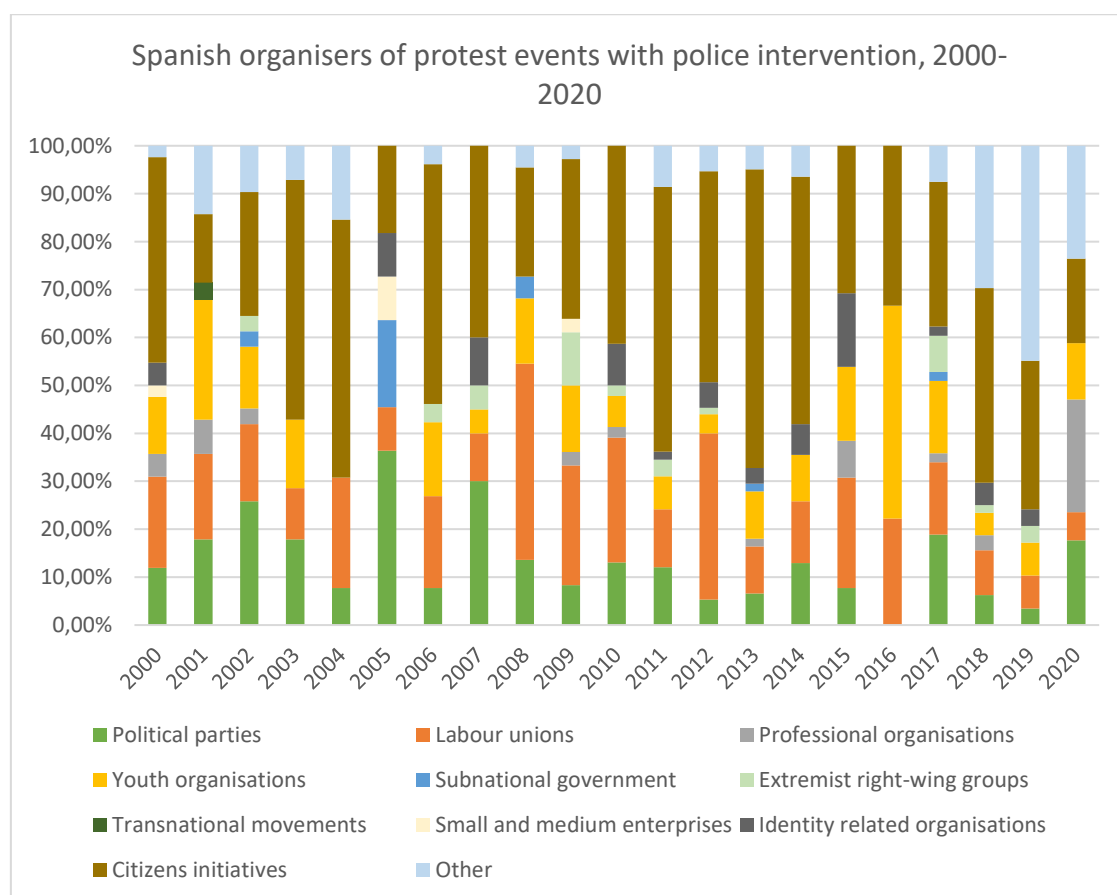


Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

The third category of mobiliser of protest in Portugal – youth organisations – and in line with their presence in the Portuguese protest sphere – only see protest policing in the first few years of the series (16.7% in 2003 and 33% the next year) and again in 2017 (20%). As for political parties, one clear trend emerges – a higher propensity for police intervention in protest organised by this type of organisation at the end of the series – between 16.7% in 2018 and 25% in 2019, corresponding to a renewed vigour of far-right protest activity in the country.

In Spain (figure 63), it is also citizens initiatives that are responsible for protest events that attract police intervention in most years of the series, except 2001 (14.3%), 2005 (18.2%), 2008 (22.7%), 2016 (33.3%), 2019 (31%), and 2020 (17.7%). In six years, events mobilised by these initiatives account for half or more of occurrences of protest policing (2003 and 2006, with 50%, 2004, with 53.9%, 2011 with 55.7%, 2013, with 62.3%, the highest value recorded, and 2014, with 61.6%). It is not surprising that three of these years are part of the anti-austerity protest cycle – and, in the remaining years of the cycle, police intervention in events convened by citizens initiatives was still quite significant (41.3% in 2010 and 44% in 2012). The other years – 2003 and 2004 – are those of extensive contestation to Aznar’s PP government in relation to the invasion of Iraq and to the Prestige environmental disaster, in which citizens initiatives took central stage.

Figure 63. Organisers of protest with police intervention in Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

As for labour unions, their leadership of protest events with protest policing is scattered across the series, with a slightly higher prevalence at the beginning of the financial crisis (40.9% in 2008, 25% in 2009, and 26.1% in 2010), and a retreat at the end of the series (6.3% in 2018 and 3.5% in 2019). Youth organisations, and although there seems to be a higher propensity for police to take action in protest events convened by these groups immediately after the anti-austerity protest cycle – and particularly in 2016, with 44.4%, relating to protest events convened by youth around independentist claims – are, too, present across the series (i.e., 25% in 2001, 15.6% in 2006, 15.4% in 2014, and 15.1% in 2017).

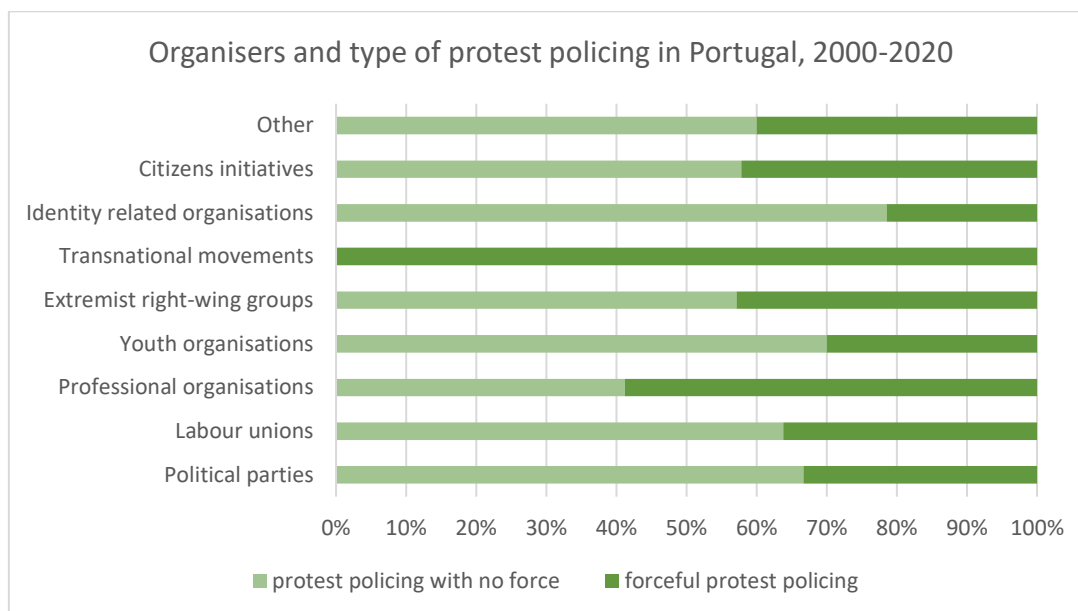
Spanish political parties appear more prominently in the organisation of protest events that are subjected to protest policing at the beginning of the series, peaking in 2002 (25.6%) and 2005 (36.4%) – in both years, one actor emerges: *Batasuna*, resisting its illegalisation. Basque nationalist parties are also the political actors organising most dissent with police intervention in 2007 (30%). As expected, in those years closer to the end of the period under analysis, Catalanian political parties take central stage, although they share it with both *Vox* and *Ciudadanos* (18.9% in 2017 and 17.7% in 2020).

Finally, other organisations are more visible in organising dissent which attracts police intervention in Spain in the last years of the series – 2018 (29.7%), 2019 (44.8%), and 2020 (23.5%): the vast majority of these events were organised by one collective actor: CDR – *Comités de Defensa del Referendum* / *Comitès de Defensa de la República* (Committees in Defence of the Referendum / Committees in Defence of the Republic) in Catalonia.

Types of protest organisers and types of protest policing in both countries are also analysed. In Portugal (figure 64), there are two types of organisations that convene protest events that mostly (or exclusively) experience high intensity protest policing: transnational movements (100%) and professional organisations (58.2%). However, neither is particularly active in convening protest overall. The organisation that takes central stage in calling for dissent in the country – labour unions – sees forceful protest policing in over one third of protest events with protest policing (36.2%). Citizen initiatives, the second most important organiser, experience a higher percentage of

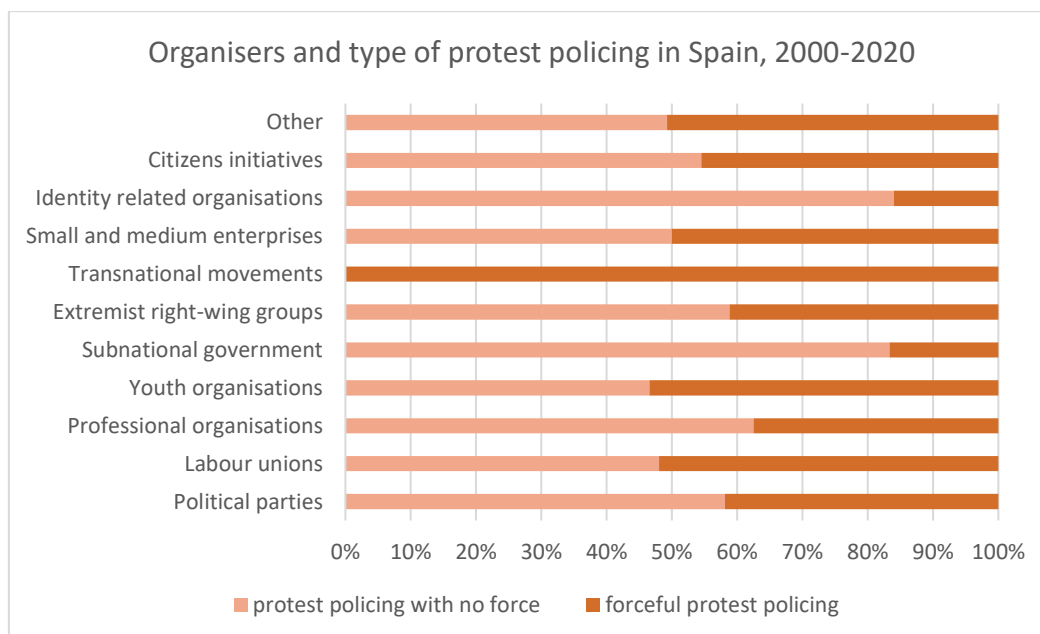
forceful protest policing at 42.2%, which, coincidentally, is a similar proportion of that faced by extremist right wing groups – 42.8%. As for popular mobilisation convened by youth organisations, it is mostly subjected to low intensity protest policing (70%), as is that arranged by identity related organisations (78.6%).

Figure 64. Typology of organisers of in protest with protest policing in Portugal.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

Figure 65. Typology of organisers of in protest with protest policing in Spain.

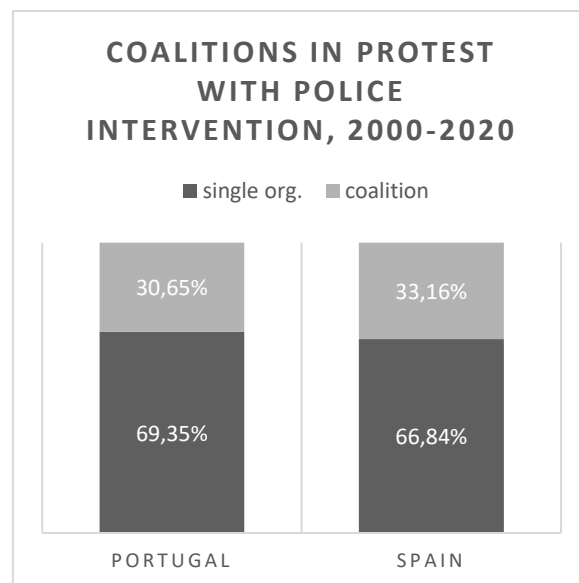


Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

Similarly, in Spain (figure 65), transnational movements experience exclusively forceful protest policing (100%) in the protest events they mobilise. The other types of organisations that call for protest events that are subject to mostly high intensity protest policing are, unlike in the Portuguese case, youth organisations (53.4%), labour unions (52%) and other organisations – which include a variety of pro-independentist groups (50.7%). Small and medium enterprises see the same proportion of high and low intensity protest policing (50%).

As in Portugal, extremist right wing groups do not experience a higher proportion of forceful police intervention (41.2%) in the protest events they convene, and it is identity related organisations that see the least forceful protest policing in their instances of street mobilisation (16%), followed by subnational government (16.7%) (no instance of police intervention in protest events organised by local government was found in the Portuguese case).

Figure 66. Coalitions in protest with police intervention in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.

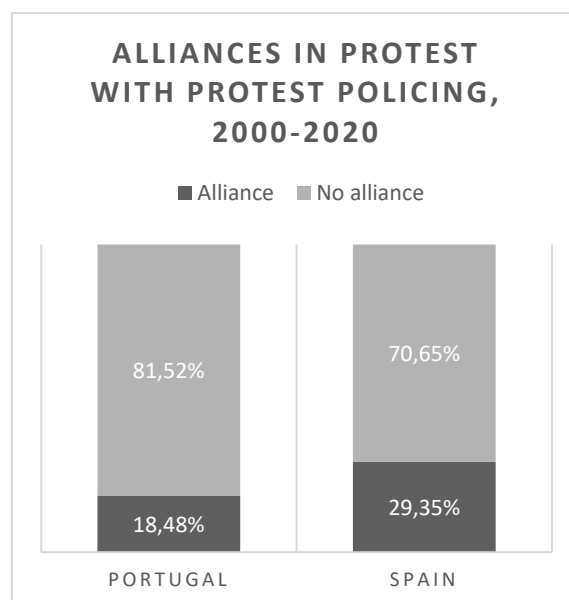


Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

I now turn to the last organisational aspect of protest and its relation to protest policing – the existence of coalitions and alliances. Both countries see a similar percentage of coalitions in protest events with police intervention (figure 66) – 30.7% in Portugal and 33.2% in Spain. In terms of alliances (figure 55), though, these are considerably more

prevalent in Spanish mobilisation with protest policing (29.4%) than in Portuguese (18.5%).

Figure 67. Presence of allies in protest with police intervention in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.

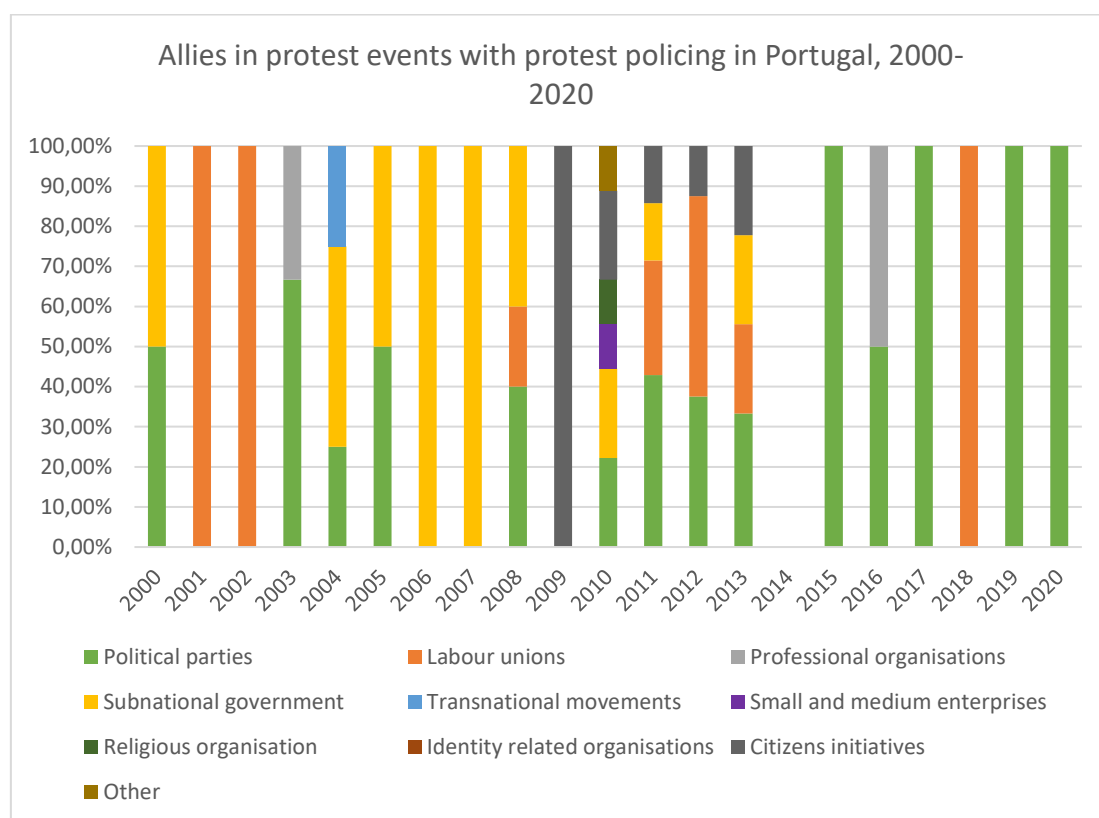


Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

In Portugal (figure 68), one clear trend emerges – the presence of political parties as allies in protest events that are subject to protest policing. This type of organisation is the most frequent actor stepping up as allies of street politics with police intervention in most years in the series – and, in some years, such as 2015, 2017, 2019 and 2020, the only organisation present. In contrast with organisational dynamics, though, here it is mostly parties on the further left of the political spectrum – BE (39.4%) and PCP (33.3%) – that emerge as the main allies in protest events with protest policing, with parties on the extreme right significantly less present (12.1%).

Subnational government, absent as the organiser of protest events with police intervention, is also an important ally, particularly in the first ten years of the series (50% in 2000, 2004, and 2005, and peaking in 2006 and 2007, with 100%), as that was a period of intense mobilisation against the extinction of state services at the local level. In turn, labour unions stand out as allies at the beginning of the series (2001 and 2002, at 100%) and again during the anti-austerity protest cycle (28.6% in 2011, 50% in 2012, and 22.2% in 2013), as well as in 2018 (100%).

Figure 68. Type of allies in protest with police intervention in Portugal between 2000 and 2020.

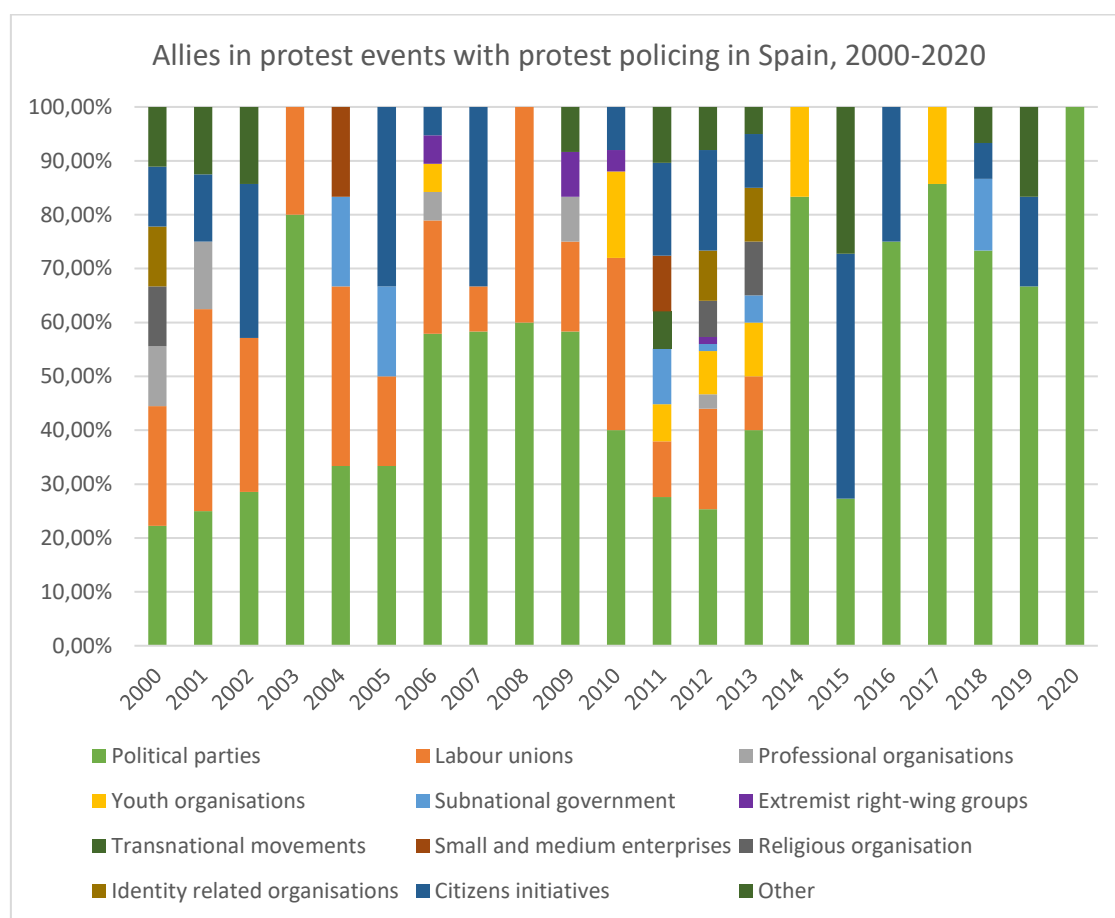


Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

In the Spanish case (figure 69), it is also political parties which emerge as the key allies in protest events with protest policing across the series (80% in 2003, 57.9% in 2006, 58.3% in 2007 and again in 2009, 60% on 2008, 83.3% in 2014, and over two thirds in the last five years considered here). It emerges, thus, that political parties are the main allies in protest events with police control except at the peak of the anti-austerity protest cycle, years that exhibit a significant degree of variety in terms of alliances on the streets, and at the very beginning of the series – it is, then, mainly independentist parties that act as allies in popular mobilisation with protest policing throughout the series.

One also finds labour unions acting as allies in protest events with protest policing up to 2013 – although more preponderantly at the beginning of the series (i.e., 37.5% in 2001, 33.3% in 2004, 40% in 2008 and 32% in 2010), and retreating since (0% from 2014 onwards). Citizen initiatives, though, act as allies throughout – peaking in 2015 (45.5%) and in 2005 and 2007 (33%).

Figure 69. Type of allies in protest with police intervention in Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

Some conclusions arise from the analysis of the organisational dynamics of protest events with protest policing in both countries: firstly, one sees that it is not the most common organiser of protest in Portugal – labour unions – that organise the higher proportion of protest events that are subjected to police intervention. In the Portuguese case, this can be associated with a very established protest sphere, where traditional actors are well-known labour unions which often resort to expected repertoires and express well-known messages and claims. The predictability of these actions is less likely to be considered as an eminent risk by police forces, and, additionally, the presence of those organisations in the public sphere has been consistently legitimised and reinforced by decades of protest – this is the case, for instances, of protest organised by the labour union CGTP and its many affiliates. This perceived legitimacy could act as a deterrent to police control, since police hierarchy could fear the negative impact such

actions could have on the police's public image, particularly considering the media-savviness of those organisations.

This could also be the case in the Spanish case: notwithstanding the existence of a more fragmented protest sphere here in comparison to Portugal, the labour movement can be said to benefit from reputational advantages connected to their past activism that may impact their lower propensity to experience protest policing in the protest events they convene.

On the other hand, citizen initiatives – which organise the highest proportion of protest events that are subjected to police intervention in both countries – are not as established, are often recently created, and exhibit considerably more variety. These factors, in combination, could affect police forces' perception of the protest events they organise as being potentially more prone to risk, which could increase their proclivity to actively control them. Simultaneously, negative reputational effects for the security forces may be perceived as lower, particularly taking into account that not all citizen initiatives may benefit from privileged access to the media, and some may have a less established image in public opinion. Similar arguments could also justify the comparable percentage of protest policing targeting youth-led protest events in both countries.

One also sees that the presence of political parties in organisational dynamics of protest is not matched by the presence of politicians – in other words, it appears that political parties are organising protest events that are subject to police intervention, but these events are not participated by politicians themselves, but, rather, by citizens and activists who identify with those parties. This is particularly visible in the Portuguese case. I posit that this is because participants in protest organised by far-right political parties are not described as politicians – even in those occasions where the leaders / founders of said parties are reported to be present in the protest event themselves. I consider that this could be revealing of the fact that the Portuguese media does not seem to consider them as part of the political establishment, thereby not nominating them as regular, professional, or, in other words, legitimate politicians. It may be the case that, with the arrival of *Chega!* at the national parliament, this tendency took a U-turn.

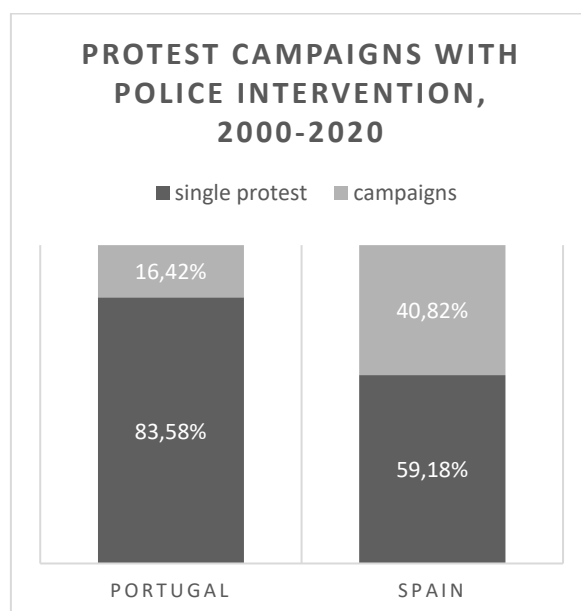
Finally, alliances remain rather sparse in those protest events, but, across the border, it is political parties that are more ubiquitous in those occurrences. This is not surprising, since, as established in the previous chapter, these are the organisations that more frequently act as allies in both protest spheres. Nonetheless, one must recall that alliances with protesters may, often, be instituted post-protest: established political actors such as political parties may be more inclined to declare their support for a protest event that is considered successful, its claims vastly accepted by that organisation and its electorate, and its repertoires causing little disruption. Police action, then, can also be a deterrence of alliances – or, at the very least, of explicit expression of support for protesters.

Turning now to what protesters actually do in the public sphere and its connection to protest policing, attention will be devoted, as previously, to repertoires of collective action, as well as to demands expressed in the shared public sphere, and to protest targets. To start, however, the focus is on the occurrence of protest policing in protest campaigns (figure 70). It would be expected that, since protest campaigns tend to be more disruptive in terms of occupation of the public sphere, there would be a higher proportion of protest policing – however, that does not seem to be the case, particularly in Portugal, where police intervention was recorded in less than 20% of all protest campaigns (16.4%). By contrast, Spanish protest campaigns are subject to some sort of police action in over 40% of the cases (40.8%).

Considering the entirety of repertoires of collective action employed in protest events with police control (figure 71), it is evident that, on the Portuguese side, it is demonstrations that see the most police intervention (38.8%), followed by marches (12.9%) – these two repertoires, which are also the most common in the country, account for over 50% of all police intervention. Three other repertoires are particularly subjected to protest policing – obstruction of streets and transport infrastructures (9.4%), occupations (7.8%) and symbolic performances (7%). Combined, these attract over three quarters of police intervention in protest events. Strikes, a repertoire that is frequent in the Portuguese protest sphere, are actually not often policed – at only 3.5%; in fact, this repertoire, which is less common in Spain, sees a higher proportion of police

intervention in this country (6.3%). In contrast, symbolic performances, more common in the latter country, see a higher proportion of protest police here (7%) than in Spain (4.1%).

Figure 70. Protest campaigns subjected to protest policing in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.

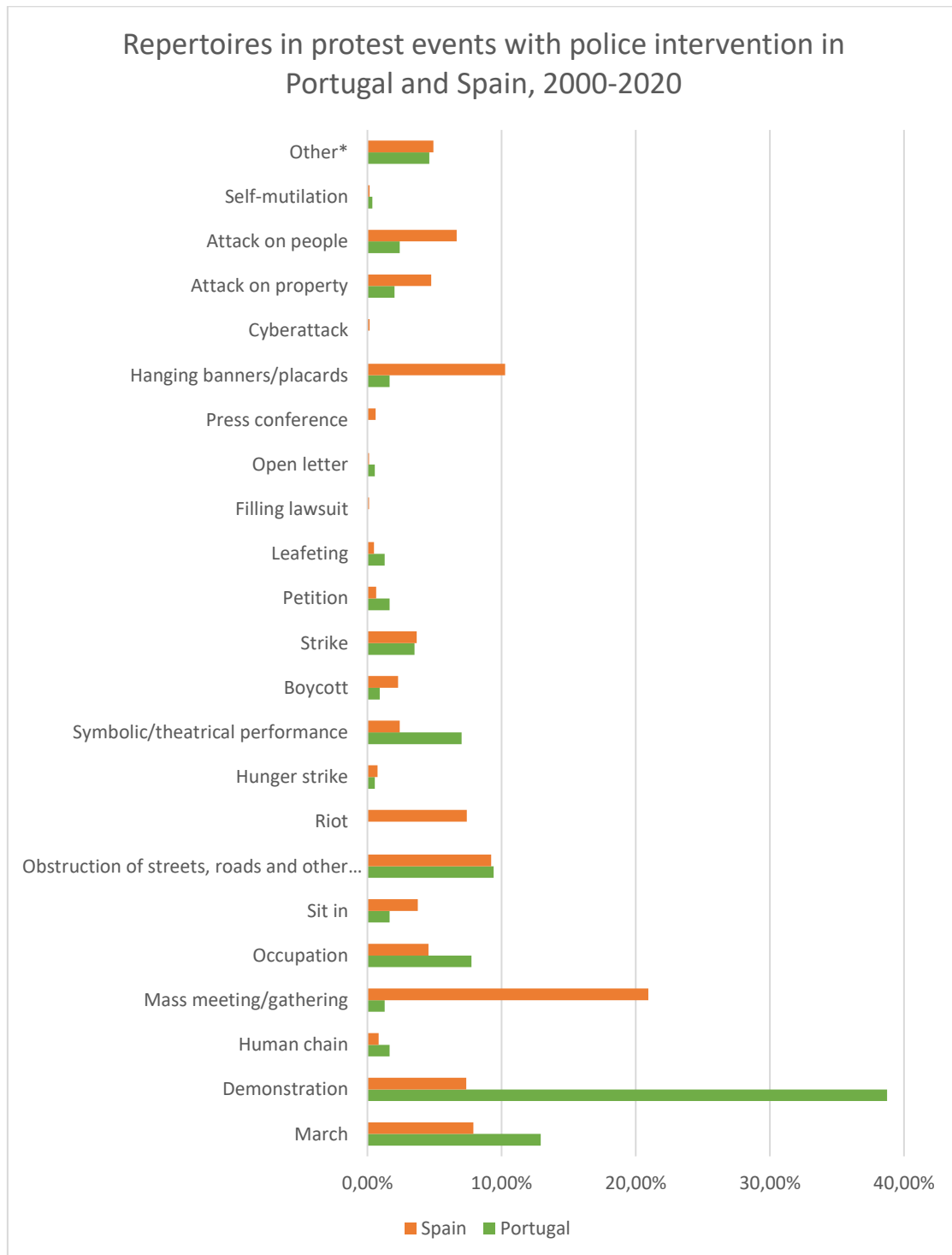


Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

Across the border, then, three protest repertoires attract similar levels of protest policing – roadblocks, strikes, and self-harm practices (0.4% in Portugal and 0.2% in Spain). The main contrasts lie in the protest policing of demonstrations – significantly more prevalent in Portugal – and of mass meetings and hanging banners – significantly more prevalent in Spain. These are, coincidentally, the most common protest repertoires in each country, which is indicative of police control in protest events that are, at face value, business as usual, and stands in line with the previous exploration of police intervention irrespectively of the reported illegality of protest events.

As previously, protest repertoires were grouped into three types, considering their impact – this is presented in figure 72. It is apparent that, in both countries, it is low impact repertoires that are mostly featured in protest events with protest policing – over two thirds in Portugal (69.7%) and over half in Spain (54.2%).

Figure 71. Repertoires in protest events with protest policing in Portugal between 2000 and 2020.

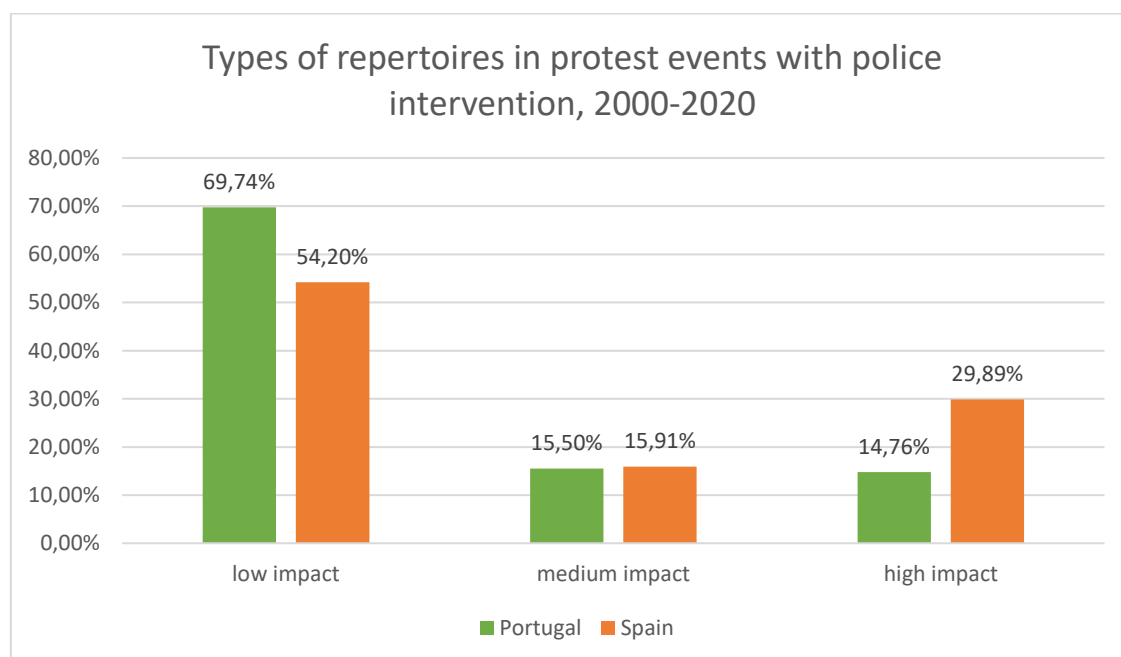


Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

High impact protest repertoires, more present in Spain than in Portugal, are also subjected to a higher proportion of protest policing in that country – 29.9% versus 14.8% – and average impact repertoires are, too, more frequently the object of police action

in Spain than in Portugal (15.9% and 15.5%, respectively). One would expect that high impact protest repertoires would be more often subjected to protest policing, and the Spanish case, where this is more ubiquitous, seems indeed to confirm that expectation.

Figure 72. Types of repertoires in protest events with protest policing in Portugal between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

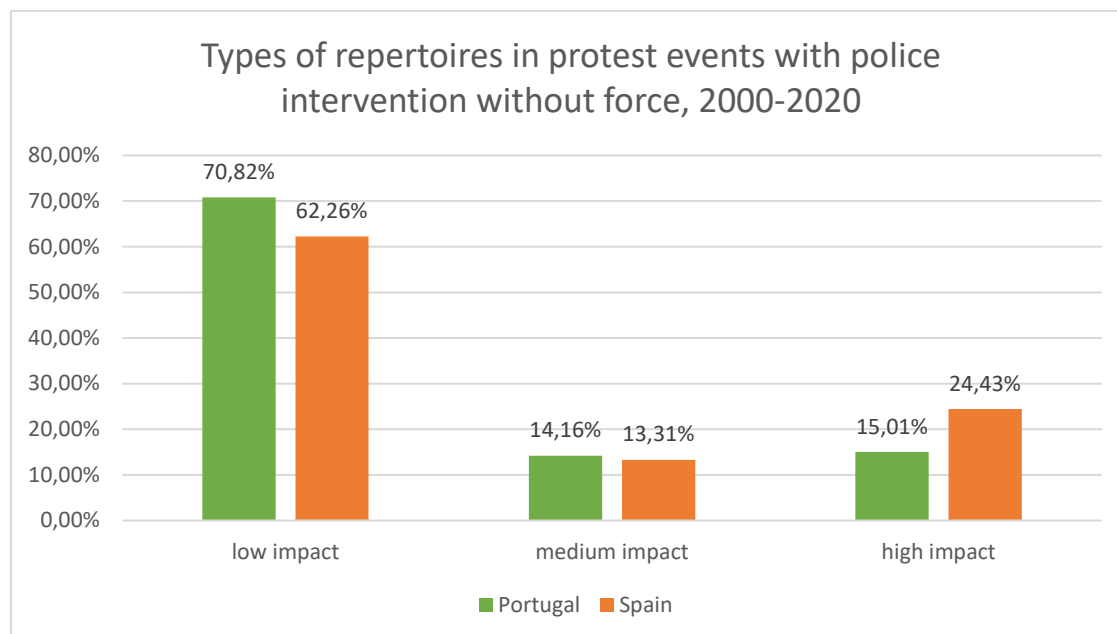
This can further be illuminated if one considers the types of police intervention alongside the typology of repertoires, which is offered in the following graphs – considering firstly protest policing without the use of force (figure 73) and, secondly, forceful protest policing (figure 74).

As expected, low impact protest repertoires, in both countries, are the object of mostly low intensity protest policing, but there are some variations: this is more frequent in Portugal (70.8%) than in Spain (62.3%), where the opposite emerges – high impact protest repertoires result in police intervention without force more frequently (24.4%) than in the Portuguese case (15.1%). In addition, medium impact protest repertoires are similarly policed across the border (14.2% in Portugal and 13.3% in Spain).

In the opposite direction, though, it becomes evident that low impact protest repertoires result in forceful police intervention significantly more frequently in Portugal than in Spain – 66.3% vs. 46.8%. Simultaneously, high impact protest repertoires result

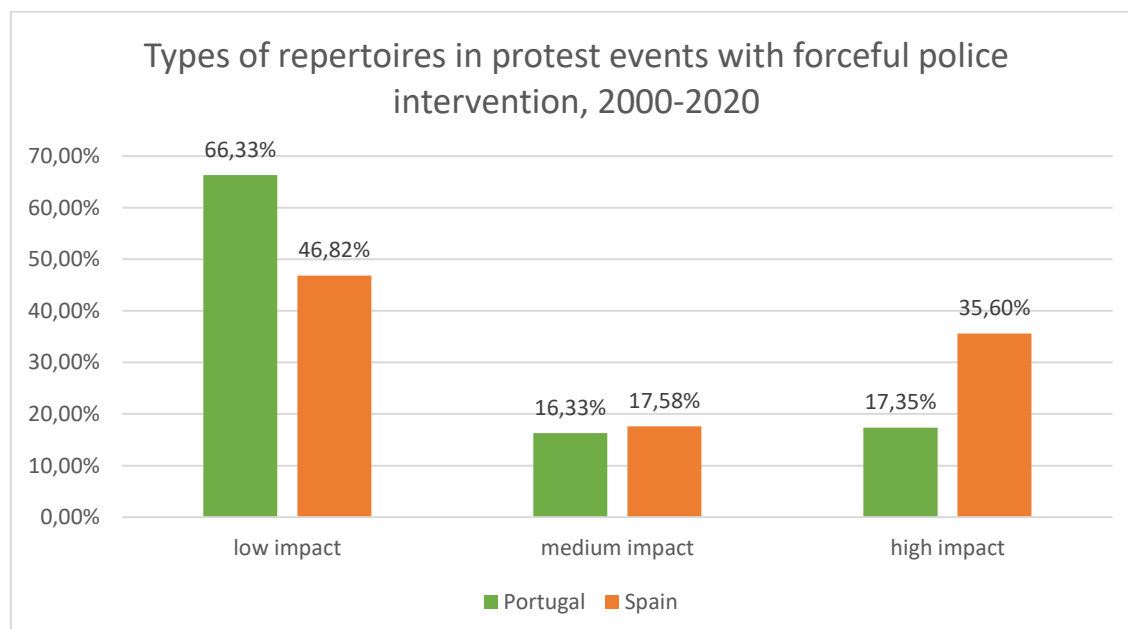
in forceful protest policing on fewer occasions in the first country (17.4%) than in the second (35.6%).

Figure 73. Types of repertoires in protest events with protest policing without force in Portugal between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

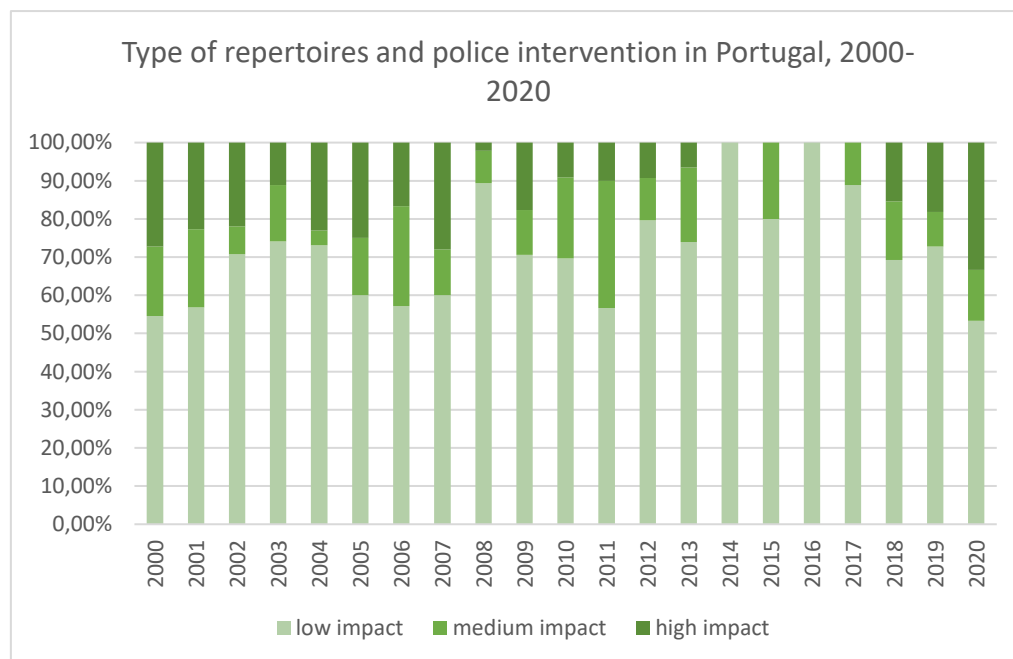
Figure 74. Types of repertoires in protest events with forceful protest policing in Portugal between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

Considering the yearly evolution of protest policing in each country by type of repertoires, one observes that, in the Portuguese case (figure 75), protest events with low impact repertoires feature a higher percentage of protest policing in every year of the series, although with important variations – 2000 and 2001 (54.6% and 58.2%, respectively), 2006 (57.1%), 2011 (56.7%), and 2020 (50.3%) record protest policing in protest events with this type of repertoires in a little over half of all occurrences with police control, while the following feature police intervention in instances of popular mobilisation with low impact repertoires in over 80% of the cases – 2008 (89.4%), 2014 and 2016 (100%), 2015 (80%), and 2017 (88.9%). In fact, from the peak of the anti-austerity protest cycle and until 2019, in at least two thirds of the occasions when police took action, this occurred in events featuring low impact protest repertoires (79.6% already in 2012).

Figure 75. Types of repertoires in protest events with protest policing in Portugal between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

Protest events featuring high impact repertoires are more frequently subjected to police intervention at the beginning and the end of the period considered – between 2000 and 2007, averaging at 22%, and after 2018 – with 2020 as the clear outlier, with police control in protest events with high impact repertoires in 33.3% of all instances. Before

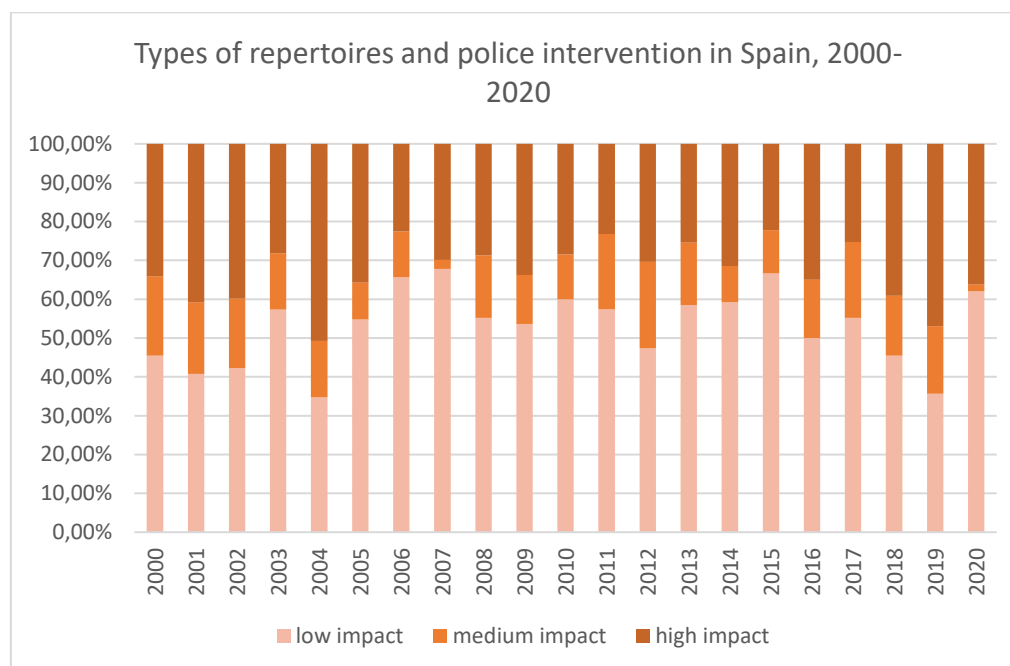
that, the years with a higher percentage of protest policing in protest events featuring this type of repertoires were 2008 (28%), 2000 (27.3%), and 2005 (25%). There are, then, only four years in which protest policing occurred in a quarter of protest events with high impact repertoires.

As per average impact repertoires, these were more prominent in protest events with police control precisely during the anti-austerity protest cycle – particularly in 2010 and 2011 (21.2% and 33.3%). 2006 also featured a higher proportion of police intervention in protest events with this type of repertoires (26.2%), as did 2001 (20.5%).

In Spain (figure 76), in line with the Portuguese case, low impact repertoires remain the most common type of repertoire in events featuring protest policing. However, the ratios are generally lower (never surpassing 70%) and, unlike in the neighbouring country, there are several years when that is not the case – between 2000 and 2002, in 2004, in 2012, and between 2018 and 2019. While in 2004, protest policing occurred mostly in protest events featuring high impact protest repertoires – 50.7%, the highest percentage recorded –, the other years record police intervention more frequently in protest events either with medium or high impact repertoires (over 50%, taken together), than in those featuring low impact protest tactics. It is the earlier five years of the series that feature the lowest proportion of police intervening in protest events with low impact repertoires (averaging at 44.1% between 2000 and 2004), and those closest to the end (45.5% in 2018 and 35.7% in 2019), while the higher proportions occur in 2006 (65.7%) and in 2007 (67.8%), 2015 (66.7%), and 2020 (62.1%).

As mentioned above, there is only one year – 2004 – when protest policing occurs in a majority of protest events featuring high impact protest repertoires, but other years also see a significant proportion of this: 2001, with 40.8%, 2002, with 39.8%, 2018, with 39.2%, and 2018, with 47%. Notwithstanding, a total of ten years in the series record protest policing occurring in over a third of protest events with this type of repertoire, and there aren't any years that record less than 20% of protest policing in connection to this type of protest tactics.

Figure 76. Types of repertoires in protest events with protest policing in Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

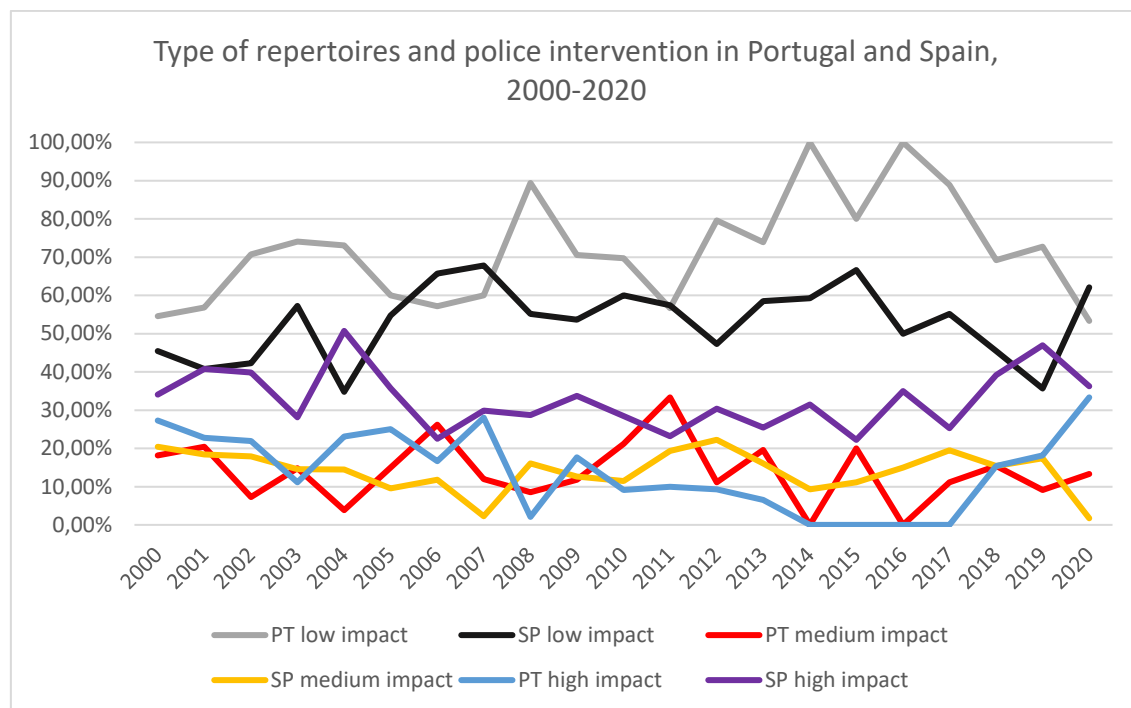
Protest policing occurs in over two thirds of protest events with low intensity protest repertoires solely in 2007 (67.8%) and 2015 (66.7%), while, in seven years in the series, this sinks below 50% – this is particularly low in 2004 when only a little over one third of protest policing occurred in protest events with low impact repertoires (34.8%) and in 2009 (35.7%). Coincidentally, these are also the two years featuring the occurrence of protest policing in protest events featuring high impact protest repertoires (50.7% in 2004 and 47% in 2019).

As with the Portuguese case, medium impact repertoires (the least common) are less subjected to protest policing throughout the series – and particularly low in 2007 (2.3%) and 2020 (1.7%). It is precisely during the anti-austerity protest cycle that these are more prevalent (19.4% in 2011 and 22.3% in 2012), as in the first three years of the series (averaging at 18.9%), and towards the end (19.5% in 2017, 15.4% in 2018 and 17.4% in 2019). This evolution is somewhat mirrored across the border.

Figure 77 summarises this section – it clearly demonstrates the prevalence of protest policing in Portugal in protest events with low impact repertoires, which stands ahead of the Spanish case in almost every year considered – and particularly in 2004 (73.1% vs.

34.8%), 2008 (89.4% vs. 55.2%), 2012 (79.6% vs. 47.3%), 2014 (100% vs 59.3%), and 2016 (100% vs 50%).

Figure 77. Comparison of types of repertoires in protest events with protest policing in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

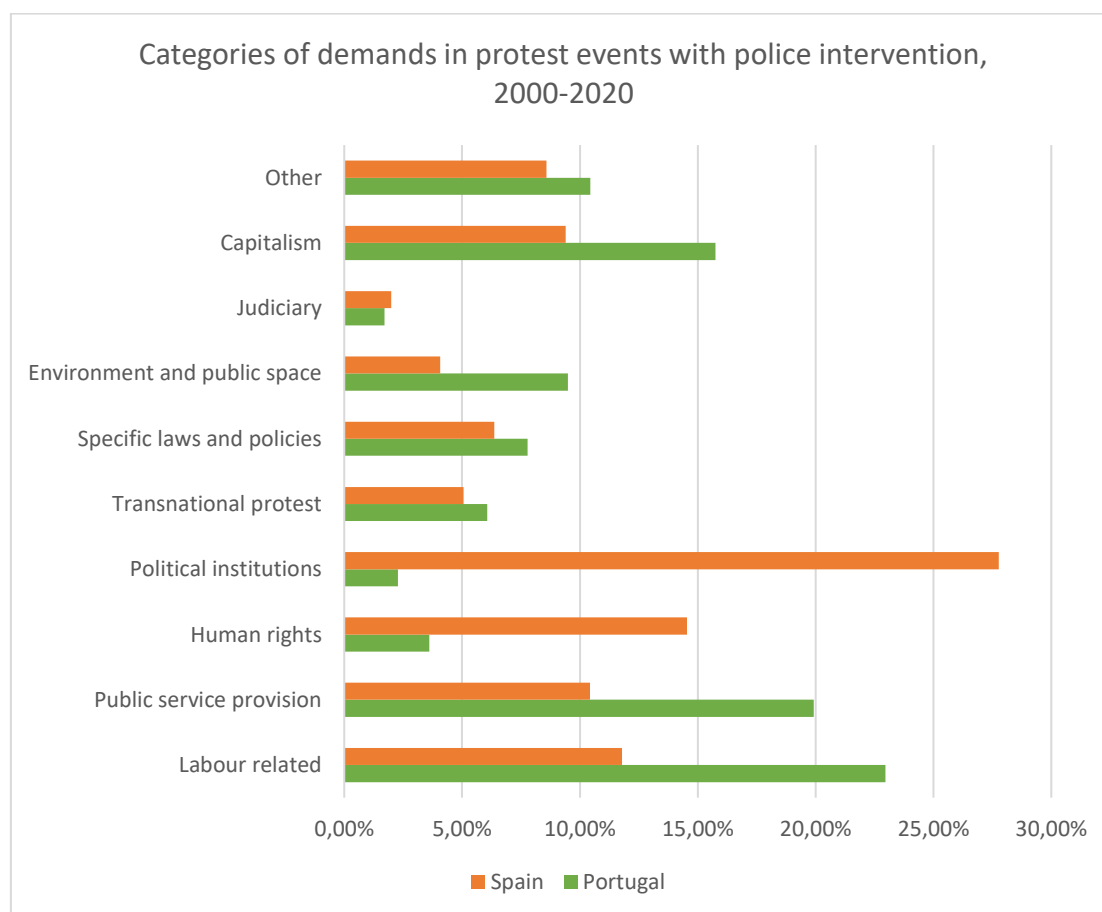
There are, however, a few years with Spanish police intervention in a higher percentage of protest events with low impact protest repertoires – 2006 (65.7% vs. 57.1%) and 2007 (67.2% vs. 60%), 2011 (57.4% vs. 56.7%), and 2020 (62.1% vs. 53.3%). There aren't any years in the series with a higher proportion of protest policing in protest events with high impact repertoires in Portugal than in Spain – and the variation is particularly high between 2003 (11.1% vs 28.1%) and 2004 (23% vs. 50.7%), in 2008 (2.1% vs. 28.7%), and between 2010 and 2019, when the proportion of protest policing in Spain in protest events with high impact repertoires was always at least twice as high as in the Portuguese case. Two years show more convergence, namely 2007 (29% in Portugal and 29.9% in Spain and 2020 (33.3% in Portugal and 36.2% in Spain).

Interestingly, and in both countries, it is not during the anti-austerity protest cycle that protest policing is more prevalent in protest events with high impact repertoires, despite the enhanced public visibility those obtained in the media. It is possible to say, however,

that average impact protest repertoires – which include strategies of occupation of public and private spaces, as well as strikes – do feature more frequently in protest events with police intervention during those years, particularly in 2010 (21.2%) and 2011 (33.3%) in Portugal, and 2011 (19.4%) and 2012 (22.3%) in Spain.

This work now turns to the demands uttered in protest events with protest policing. Demands were, once again, grouped into ten categories (figure 78). It becomes apparent that claims uttered in the Portuguese protest sphere in relation to labour are those that are more present in protest events with protest policing (23%) – but these are also significant in Spain (11.8%).

Figure 78. Types of demands uttered in protest events with protest policing in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

The second most repeated claim in protest events with protest policing in Portugal relates to public services (19.9%), a demand that is less prevalent in Spain (10.4%), followed by resistance to capitalism – 15.6%, against 9.4% in the other side of the

border. One can, thus, say that capitalism seems to be the underlying principle shaping the three most common demands in Portugal in popular mobilisation with police intervention, shaping the evolution of labour rights and of public service provision. Together, these three categories of demands account for 58.5% of all claims uttered in protest events with police control.

Other demands are also relevant in protest events with protest policing in the country – namely those related to the environment and the organisation of the public space (9.5% and 4.1% in Spain), as well as other, general claims (10.4%, against 8.6% in the Spanish case). Interestingly, transnational claims are more often subjected to protest policing here than in Spain (6.1% vs. 5.1%), where they are generally more frequent – this remains, however, close across the border. Similar, too, is resistance to specific laws and policies, a demand present in 7.8% of protest events with police intervention in Portugal, and in 6.4% in Spain.

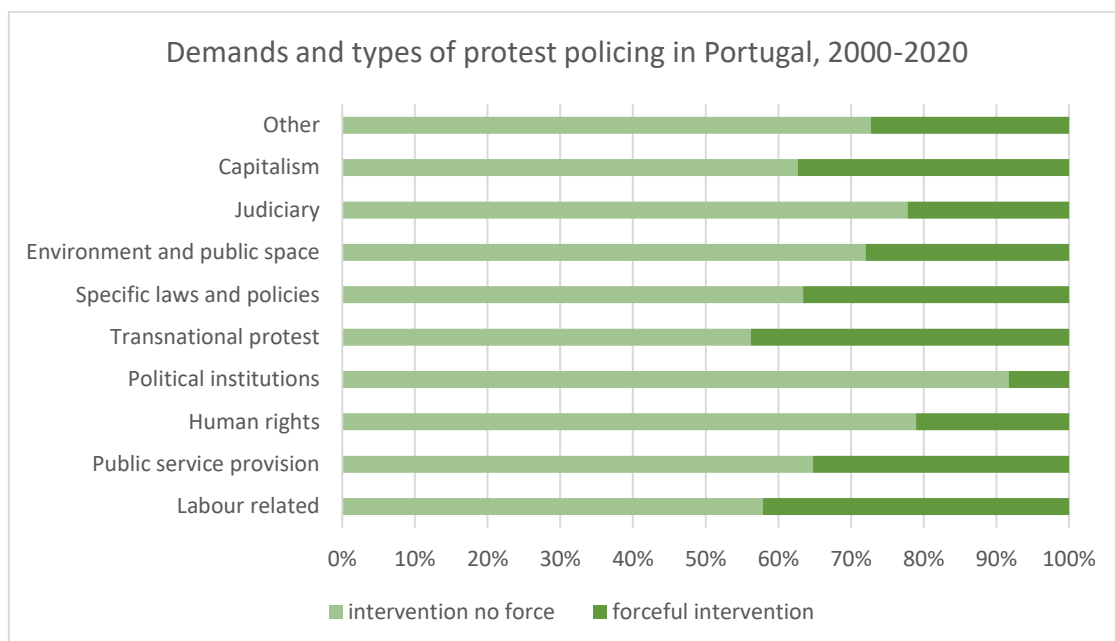
In Spain, it is claims relating to political institutions that are the most common in protest events with police intervention (27.8%) – and very low in the Portuguese case (2.3%). These are followed by those relating to Human Rights (14.5%, against 3.6% in Portugal), and by labour related claims and complaints about public service provision. The only other type of claim that sees a higher proportion of protest policing in Spain than in Portugal is those about the judiciary system – itself an actor with a potential securitising agency: 2% in Spain, and 1.7% in Portugal.

Considering the types of demands and types of police protesting in the Portuguese case (figure 79), it emerges that protest featuring explicitly political demands is subjected to least intensive protest policing (8.3% of forceful police intervention against 91.7% of intervention with no force), followed by protest relating to human rights (21.1% of forceful protest policing, vs. 79.9% of police intervention with no force). These are, coincidentally, the two types of demands that are more common in protest events with protest policing in the neighbouring country.

Although there is not a particular type of demand that sees more high intensity protest policing in Portugal, there are five categories of claims that are the object of forceful police intervention in over a third of occurrences: transnational claims, which feature

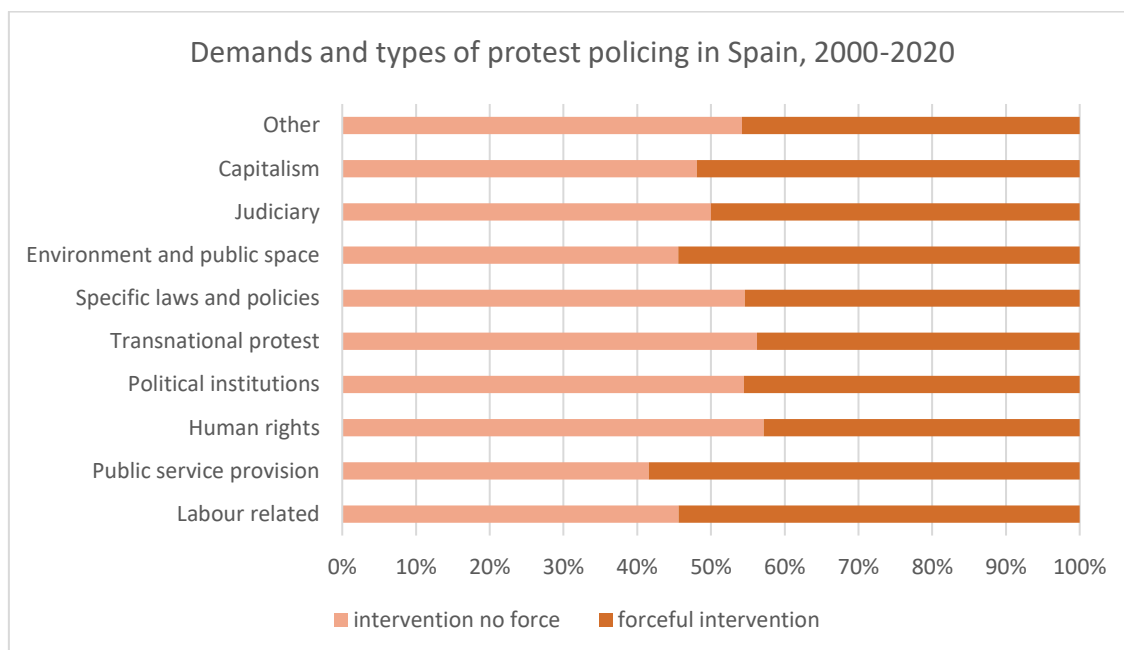
the higher percentage of high intensity protest policing at 42.8%, labour related demands (42.2%), contention to capitalism (37.4%), contestation to specific laws and policies (36.6%) and concerns related to public service provision (35.2%).

Figure 79. Types of demands and types of protest policing in Portugal between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

Figure 80. Types of demands and types of protest policing in Spain between 2000 and 2020.



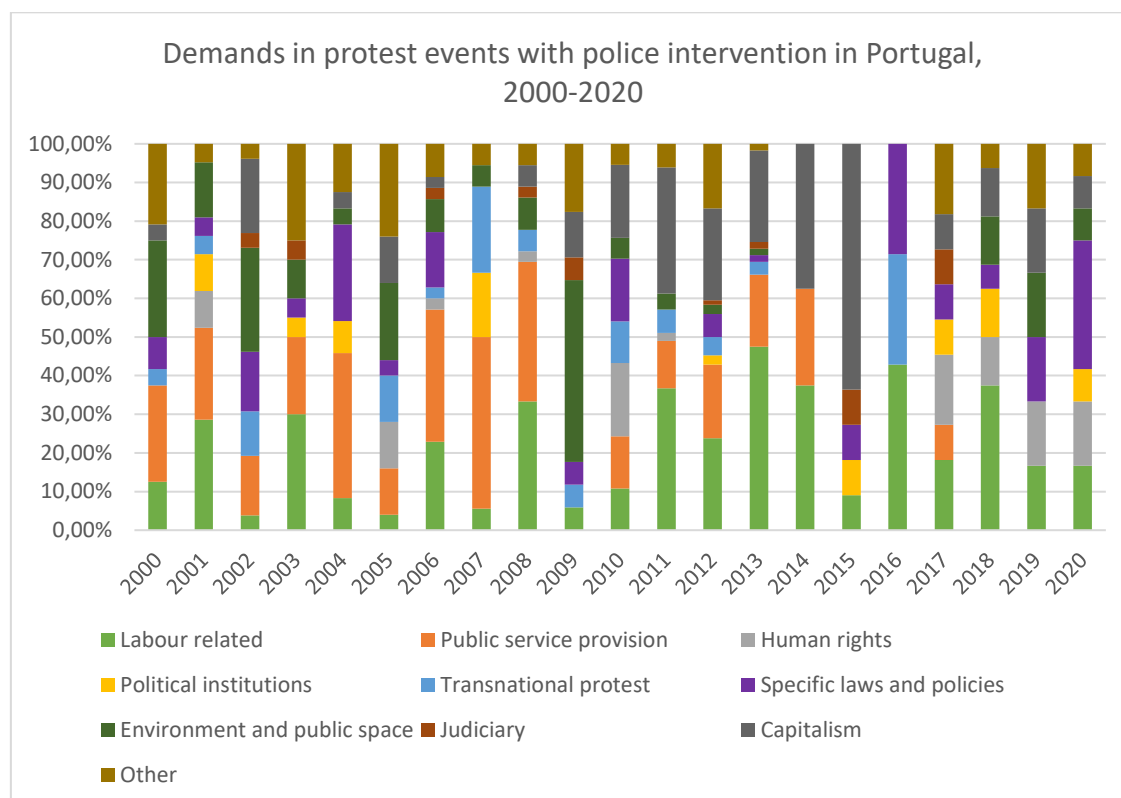
Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

As for Spain (figure 80), there are four types of claims uttered in the protest sphere that are subjected to forceful protest policing in over half of the events with police intervention – these are, first of all, demands related to cuts to public services, with 58.4% of high intensity protest policing, claims related to the environment and the shared public space (54.4%), labour related demands (54.1%), and contestation to capitalism (51.9%). Claims about the judiciary system are subjected to the same proportion of forceful police intervention and intervention without the use of force (50%). In this country, then, the two categories of claims that are more frequent in protest events with protest policing – those concerning political institutions and human rights – are mainly the object of police intervention without the use of force (45.3% and 42.8%, respectively). It is, nonetheless, worth noticing that all categories of claims uttered in the Spanish protest scene feature a higher percentage of forceful protest policing than in Portugal.

Detailing the yearly evolution of protest policing in Portugal and type of claims uttered (figure 81), one sees that labour related protest is particularly subjected to police intervention in the anti-austerity protest cycle (36.7% in 2011, 23.8% in 2012), rising at the end of the cycle (47.5% in 2013 and 37.5% in 2014), and remaining important until the end of the series (42.9% in 2016 and 37.5% in 2017). Prior to that, only 2008 saw labour related claims being uttered in a third of the events subjected to protest policing (33.3%).

Unsurprisingly, contestation to capitalism is also particularly prominent in protest events with police intervention precisely during the anti-austerity moment (32.7% in 2011, 23.8% in 2012 and 23.7% in 2013), but it remains very prevalent in its aftermath – 37.5% in 2014 and 63.6% in 2015, when it is the most important claim in protest events with protest policing. Interestingly, in the same years, explicitly political claims are mostly absent from protest events with police intervention (2.4% in 2012 and 9.1% in 2015) – these are more present in two of the last years of the series (9.1% in 2017 and 12.5% in 2018), as well as in a few years in the first half, peaking in 2007 (16.7%). This is, as shown below, a significant difference between the two cases.

Figure 81. Types of demands in protest with protest policing in Portugal between 2000 and 2020.



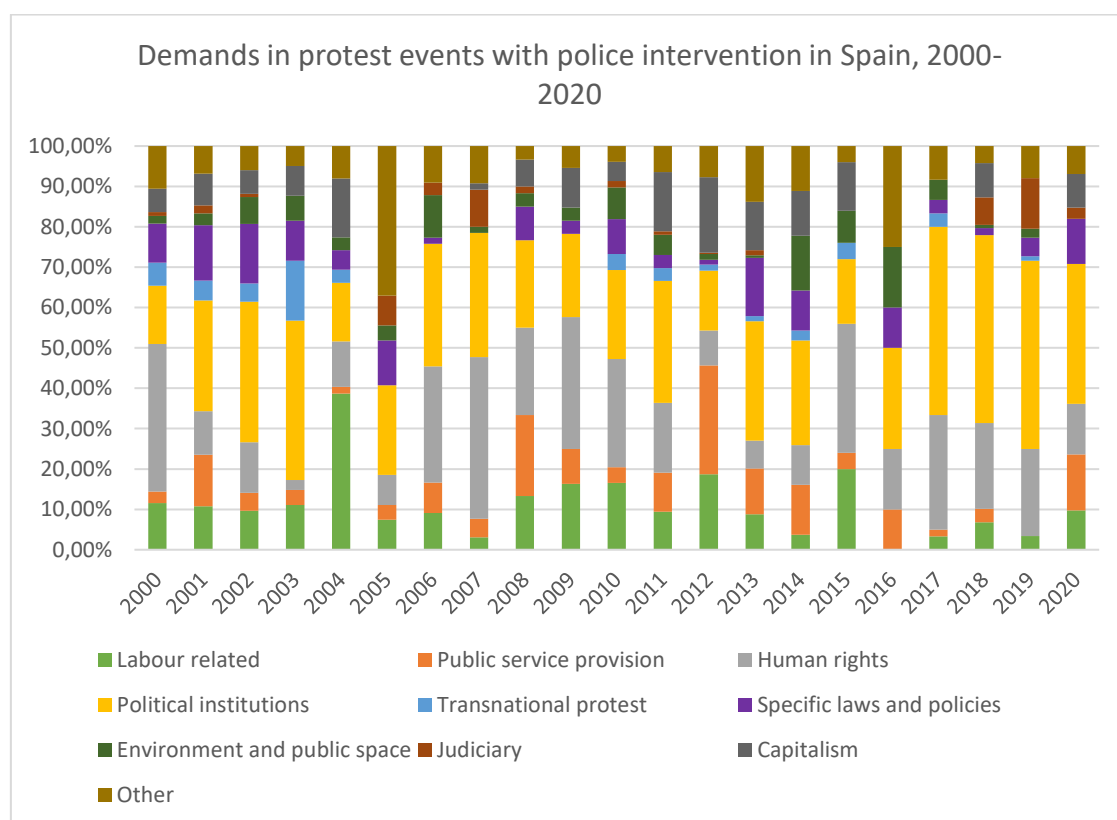
Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

Reactions to cuts to public services are present from the beginning of the series, when they are particularly important in 2004 (37.5%) and between 2006 and 2008 (34.3%, 44.4%, and 36.1%), but they are still uttered in protest events with police intervention during anti-austerity mobilisation, although at lower ratios (19.1% in 2012, 18.6% in 2013, and 25% in the following year). Finally, Human Rights claims emerged as a more common utterance in protest events with protest policing towards the end of the series – averaging at 16% between 2017 and 2020, and the opposite can be said of claims relating to the environment and public space, that are more commonly uttered in protest events with protest policing in the earlier years considered (25% in 2000, 26.9% in 2002, and 20% in 2005); it is, however, 2009 that witnesses a higher proportion of these type of demands in protest with police control, at 47.1%.

The Spanish case (figure 82) displays two clear trends – firstly, demands targeting political institutions are the most common in protest events with protest policing in the country, emerging as the most important claim in thirteen of the twenty-one years

considered here (2001 to 2003, 2006, 2008 – along with human rights, 2011, 2013, 2014, and from 2016 – with other demands – to 2020), and peaking at the end of the series – over 46% between 2017 and 2019, and 34.7% in 2020. Secondly, claims relating to Human Rights are also conspicuous throughout the series – and are the most common claim in protest events with protest police in most of the remaining years (2000, 2007 to 2010, and 2015).

Figure 82. Types of demands in protest with protest policing in Spain between 2000 and 2020.



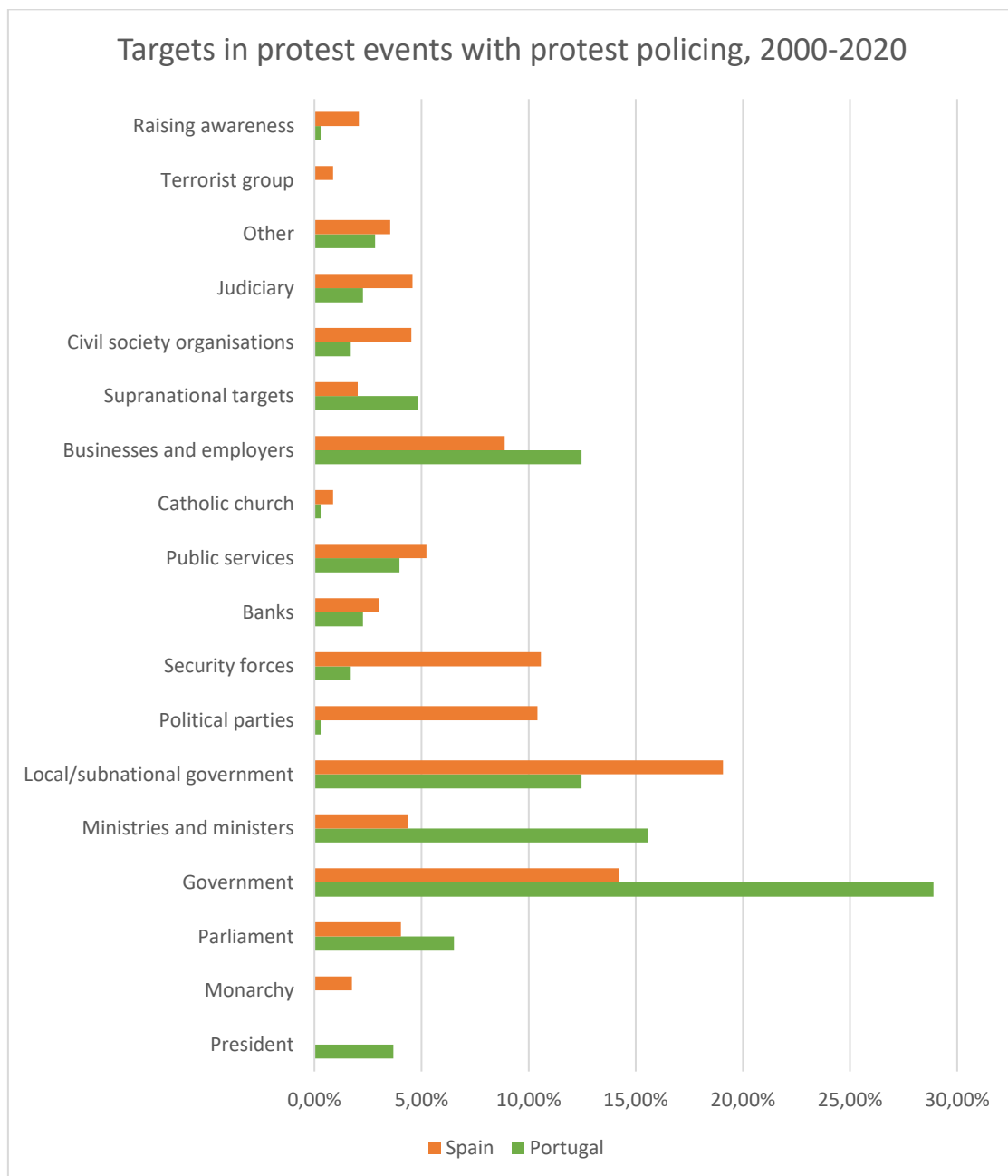
Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

Although labour related claims and those concerning public service provision are present across the series, they are much less prominent than in the Portuguese case (the first peaking in 2004, at 38.7%, and the second in 2012, at 27%). Nonetheless, and considered together, there is a higher prevalence of this type of claims during the financial crisis and Great Recession, and so is the case with contestation to capitalism (14.7% in 2011 and 18.9% in 2012).

This analysis is completed with a probe of the targets of popular mobilisation which are subjected to protest policing (figure 83). In Portugal, the most common targets of

protest with police control are, unsurprisingly, the national government (28.9%) and its ministries (15.6%). Subnational government emerges as the third most common aim of protest with police intervention, along with businesses and employers (12.5%). The Parliament, as the centre of governance, is also an important target in these protest events (6.5% - against 3% in the neighbouring country, where direct demonstrations are forbidden).

Figure 83. Targets of protest with protest policing in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

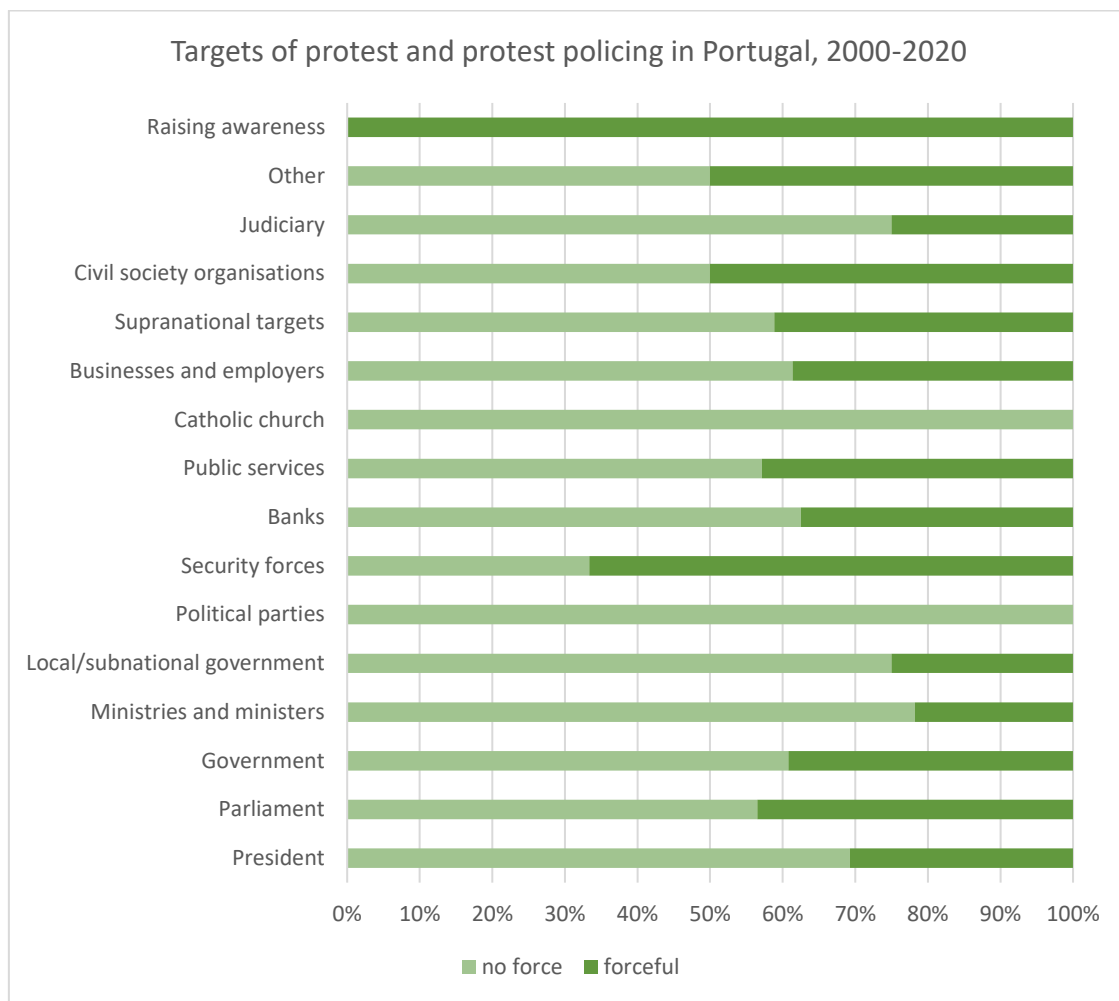
Spain offers a more complex picture – here it is protest targeting local government that is more often subjected to protest policing (19.1%), followed by protest aiming at the central government (14.2%). The third actor of formal politics that is targeted in protest events with police control is political parties and politicians in 10.4% of all protest events with protest policing (and insignificant in Portugal, at 0.3%).

Other important differences emerge: security forces themselves are often the aim of protesters in instances of popular mobilisation with police intervention in Spain – 10.6% (and 1.7% in Portugal) – and protest against the judiciary is also more common in the first country – 4.6% against 2.3%. Supranational targets, however, are more often at the receiving end of dissent that features police control in Portugal (4.8%) than in Spain (2%), and, on the opposite side, civil society organisations see protest policing in protest events targeting them more frequently in Spain (4.5%) than in Portugal (1.7%). Naturally, the monarch / monarchy is the target of protest events with police intervention in Spain, although at a low ratio (1.7%).

Despite these variations, there are similarities across the border – protest events targeting employers are subjected to protest policing in 8.8% of the occurrences in Spain, a close proportion to the one found in the Portuguese case, those aiming at public services see the incidence of police control in 5.2% of the cases in Spain, and 3.9% in Portugal, and banks are featured in 3% of events with protest policing in Spain and 2.3% in Portugal.

To finalise this chapter, an analysis of the targets of protest and the type of police intervention per country is presented. In Portugal (figure 84), apart from protest aiming at raising awareness, which, on the one occasion featured, is subjected to forceful protest policing, there are three other targets of protest events with a higher ratio of forceful protest policing – security forces (66.7%), civil society organisations and other targets (50%). The remaining targets are the object of mostly low intensity police intervention – and the Catholic Church and political parties have no instances of forceful protest policing recorded. Instances of popular mobilisation targeting ministries (21.8%), the judiciary and subnational government (25%), as well as the President (30.8%) record less than a third of high intensity protest policing.

Figure 84. Targets of protest and types of protest policing in Portugal between 2000 and 2020.



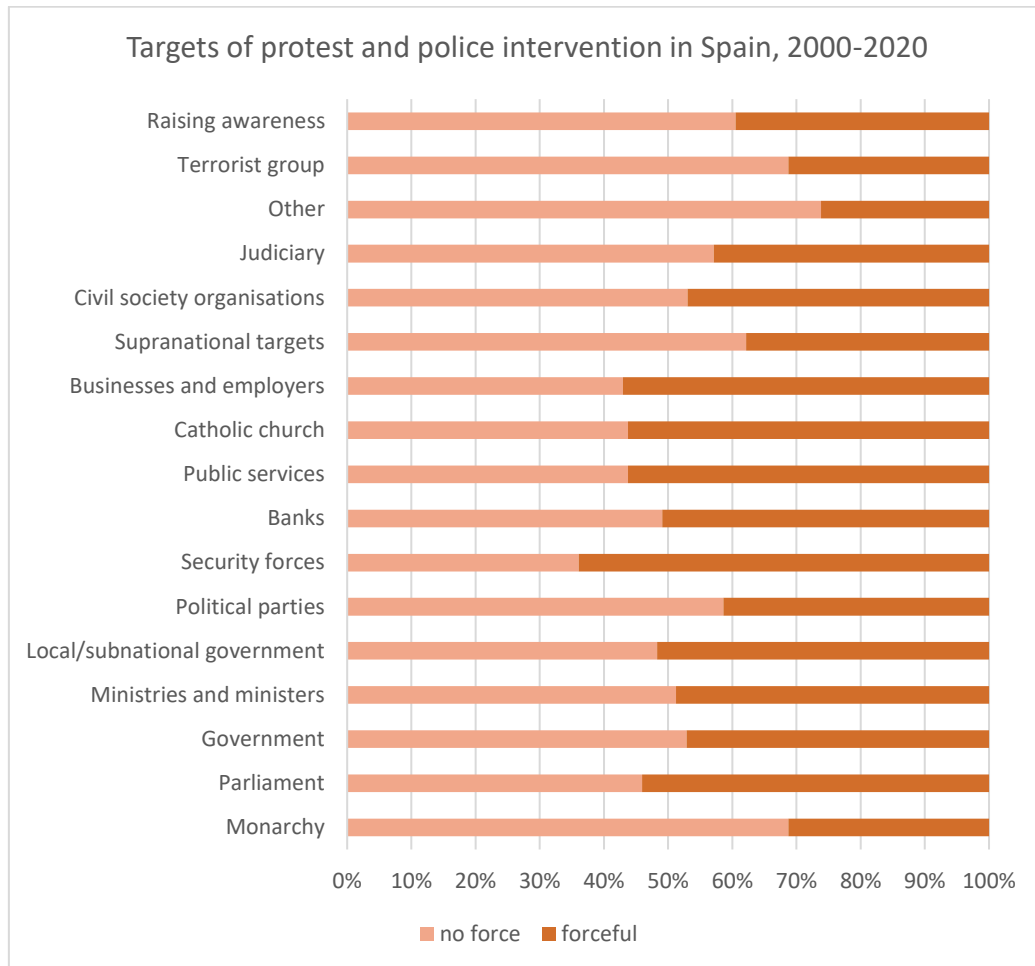
Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

In the Spanish case (figure 85), it is also security forces that are the target of dissent that more often features forceful protest policing (63.9%). This is followed by businesses and employers (57.1%), and by the Catholic Church and public services (56.3%). Protest events aimed at the Parliaments (both central and regionals) that feature police intervention are also more prone to high intensity protest policing (54.1%), and so are subnational governments (51.7%). Finally, those instances of popular mobilisation targeting banks also feature more forceful police intervention (50.9%). One sees, then, that there is a variety of protest targets with higher proportions of forceful protest policing in the country.

Here, and not considering other targets of protest, only two targets of protest feature less than a third of forceful protest policing: protest targeting the monarch/y and against

terrorism (31.3%), while popular mobilisation against supranational targets (37.8%) and aiming at raising awareness (39.5%) also experiences a lower percentage of forceful police intervention.

Figure 85. Targets of protest and types of protest policing in Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an in-depth analysis of protest policing in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2022. Several aspects emerge that will guide this investigation. In common:

- Reported illegality of instances of popular mobilisation does not appear particularly connected to protest policing in both cases.

- Protest policing also appears somewhat independent of what protesters actually do in the public sphere, as this probe demonstrated that, across the border, it is mainly low impact protest repertoires that are more often the object of protest policing.
- Despite that, and as expected, higher prevalence of popular mobilisation corresponds to more instances of protest policing – it appears, then, that it is the frequency and the repetitiveness of dissent that triggers more police control.
- Activists are the most common protest actors, and citizen initiatives are the most common organisational actor subjected to protest policing.
- There seems to be a higher proportion of protest policing during the anti-austerity protest cycle across the border.
- Institutions and actors of formal politics are the main targets of protest with police intervention in both countries (although with variations).

Other aspects emerge as significantly different across the cases:

- There is a higher proportion of police control of protest in Spain than in Portugal, and also a higher proportion of protest policing when security forces are ready for conflict (riot police and armed forces). This is coupled with a higher percentage of high intensity protest policing.
- There is, nonetheless, an increase in protest policing in Portugal after the anti-austerity protest cycle, coupled with an increase in its intensity, that found no correspondence in Spain.
- Youth-led protest is more often the object of police control in Spain than in Portugal, and it is also more prone to high intensity protest policing.
- Demands that feature in protest events with police intervention vary across the border: in Portugal, these relate mostly to capitalist developments and are expressed mainly in economic terms, while, in Spain, these are mostly inherently political.
- Security forces and political parties in Spain are often targeted in protest with protest policing.

This chapter was meant to serve as an entry point to the qualitative probe. In the next one, the first part of the qualitative part of this analysis is featured, through an exploration of direct reactions to protest.

Chapter 5. Legitimacy and Politicisation Frames on Protest in Portugal and Spain

“«Isto é... protesto, não é bandalheira.»” [“This... is protest, not debauchery”].⁵⁵

“La 'huelga de multas' agrava la siniestralidad” [“Fines strike increases accidents”].⁵⁶

In 2015, Portuguese policemen protested for better working conditions and a recruitment push, by refusing to pass fines to drivers who failed to meet certain traffic rules. Drivers were, instead, stopped, informed of their wrong-doing, and told to correct future behaviour. The government – the protest target – reacted by stating there were ongoing negotiations, the results of which would likely put an end to the protest event. It was silent about the consequences of the strike and did not comment on the protest repertoire. Rather, it was protesters themselves who announced road safety was not at stake, because *“«This... is protest, not debauchery»”⁵⁷*.

The same protest repertoire was employed in Spain in 2010 by members of *Guardia Civil*, who, too, stated that citizens’ safety was not at risk. This was, however, not the only message, and certainly not the strongest. The Traffic Department warned that the strike had increased the number of traffic accidents, including the number of deaths on the road, and was affecting the policing by consensus agreement between the police and the polity – *“The fact that they give out fewer fines is affecting the accident rate and road safety... and public opinion «will question the objectivity of police agents»”⁵⁸*. A

⁵⁵ *Diário de Notícias*, “Polícias em protesto deixam passar condutores sem cinto e ao telefone”, published on August 25th, 2015 (my translation).

⁵⁶ *El País*, “Tráfico denuncia que la 'huelga de multas' afecta a la seguridad vial”, published on August 8th, 2010 (my translation).

⁵⁷ *Diário de Notícias*, “Polícias em protesto deixam passar condutores sem cinto e ao telefone”, published on August 25th, 2015; *Diário de Notícias*, “Estatuto dá até 1500 polícias luz verde para a pré-reforma”, published on August 28th, 2015.

⁵⁸ *«el hecho de que pongan menos multas está afectando a la siniestralidad y a la seguridad en las carreteras... e la opinión pública "pondrá en duda la objetividad de los agentes a la hora de sancionar”»*,

parallel news article reported that the Supreme Court had decided that the protest repertoire was illegal and constituted a serious risk for the citizenry⁵⁹.

These are similar protest events, convened by similar organisations (police forces labour unions), with similar participants, using the same repertoire and targeting the same political actors. But these are two very different stories. One is a story of a legitimate protest event, with an acceptable protest repertoire and demands deemed as justified, signalling a continuation of negotiations. The other is a story of an illegitimate attack on the citizenry's safety by those very people who are responsible for guaranteeing it.

This chapter is dedicated to these stories. It is concerned with the discourse on protest in the Iberian Peninsula between 2000 and 2020, seeking to uncover dynamics of frame construction and their implications for the shared understanding of protest as legitimate – or, on the contrary, as illegitimate and a-/anti-political – political action.

It starts with a quantitative probe of those protest events featuring a reaction – considering both direct responses to popular mobilisation by protest targets and reactions by any other vested actor in each country's protest sphere (mainly those engaged in formal politics, but also those representing economic or socio-political interests), pulled from two variables from the Disdem dataset: 'Targets' reactions to protest' and 'Other reactions'. It then proceeds to identify and analyse frames and framing processes extracted from those reactions, and their evolution across the two case studies.

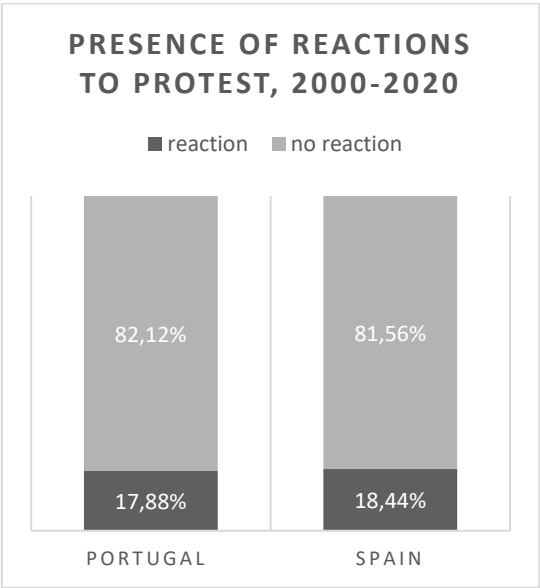
Figure 86 provides general information on the presence of reactions to street politics across Portugal and Spain. In both cases, over 80% of all protest events do not elicit a reaction, be it by the target of protest or by any interested party. It is in Spain that we see a higher proportion of protest events that trigger a reaction (18.4%), but the difference is only half a percentage point, as, in Portugal, 17.9% of protest events also elate a reaction.

El País, "Tráfico denuncia que la 'huelga de multas' afecta a la seguridad vial", published on August 8th, 2010 (my translation).

⁵⁹ *El País*, "El Supremo ratifica la sanción a un agente que anunció una huelga de celo", published on August 8th, 2010.

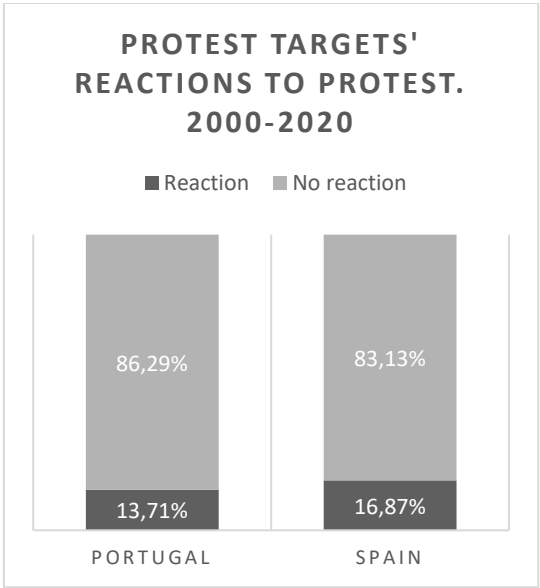
Considering protest direct targets in isolation (figure 87), one observes that it is again in Spain that these more often react to protest (16.9%), against 13.7% in the Portuguese case. This is indicative that more vested actors in Portugal find it is their legitimate place to react to protest than in the neighbouring country.

Figure 86. Presence of reactions to protest events in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

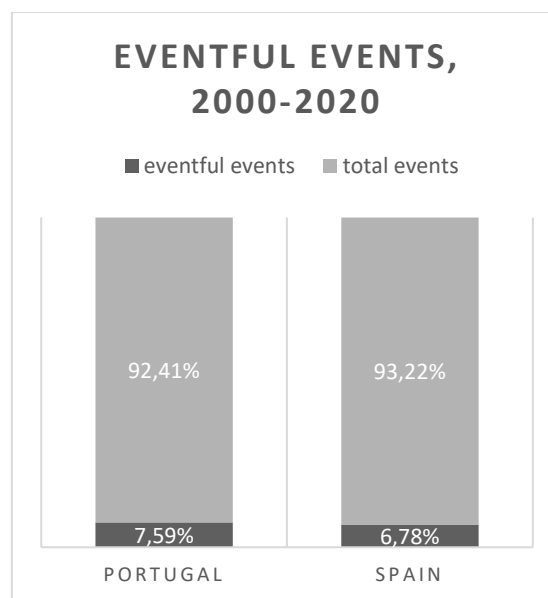
Figure 87. Direct targets' reaction to protest events in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration.

Once these events were identified, a close reading of the corresponding newspaper articles was conducted in order to retrieve what was actually said and by whom about a determined protest event, which was manually annotated. This allowed for the identification of eventful protest events, which became the focus of the qualitative probe (see chapter 1). 259 such protest events were identified for the Portuguese case, representing 37.9% of all protest events that featured a reaction in the country, and 8% of the total protest events between 2000 and 2020. For Spain, 324 eventful events were found, which constitute 35.3% of those instances of popular mobilisation featuring a reaction, and 6.8% of all protest events recorded in the series (figure 88).

Figure 88: Eventful protest events in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020.



Source: Disdem and own data collection; own elaboration

Critical Frame Analysis applied to the totality of the eventful events allowed for the identification of the master frames on protest in both countries, their constitutive frames and subframes, and their operationalisation in the media sphere. Three master frames were revealed: firstly, legitimacy, intrinsically linked to the second master frame – politicisation. Both are fundamentally connected to the third master frame – that of security. This chapter features the results of the analysis centred on the first two master frames (the third master frame, security, is the focus of chapter 6).

The close reading and annotation revealed that master frames should be considered in binomial terms – legitimacy / illegitimacy and politicisation / depoliticisation (as well as

security / insecurity). Notwithstanding the variations in the (il)legitimacy and the (de)politicisation master frames, they are shaped, in combination, by five frames. These are:

- Democracy,
- Remembrance,
- Relationship to formal politics,
- Rights, and
- Citizenship and Political Community (or CPC, for short).

The Democracy frame captures one essential contrast: whether protest is considered a democratic practice, or, on the contrary, described as a threat to democracy. It also grasps if protest is defined as belonging or being excluded from the shared public sphere, and whether it is seen as reinforcing or threatening the rule of law or constitutional order (including the perceived legality or illegality of the protest event).

The Remembrance frame is concerned with the democratic transition – it seizes those utterances portraying protest events as a celebration / continuation of the democratic tradition inaugurated by the Portuguese Revolution or the Spanish Transition, and, in contrast, those describing popular mobilisation as a taint on the democratic legacy. Depictions of protest events in which the memory of the transition is invoked to either legitimise or delegitimise the presence of protesters in the shared public sphere are also included here.

The Relationship to Formal Politics frame entails considerations of popular mobilisation as a true avenue of political engagement, with potential impacts for electoral politics, or, on the contrary, those occasions when protest is described as having no bearing in or being secondary – or even a hindrance – to formal political participation.

The Rights frame emerged from reactions to protest events that defined them as an intrinsic citizenship or democratic right, with the added potential to enhance other rights (housing, education, but also fundamental rights such as freedom of expression or freedom of assembly), or, in contrast, as an abuse of the right to protest, that could, inclusively, hinder the citizenry from accessing other legitimate rights.

Finally, the Citizenship and Political Community frame discusses those reactions to protest events that include a value judgement on protesters, their actions, and the effects of popular mobilisation as either positive or negative. This relates to accounts of protesters as either good or bad citizens (including the identification of discursive mechanisms or tropes being employed by vested actors to purportedly construct protesters as 'others', thus placing them outside of the political community). This frame is also concerned with the perceived effects or consequences of popular mobilisation, based on the binomial benefit / detriment, capturing if the protest event is seen as advancing the wellbeing of the whole political community (beyond the rights narrative), or, by contrast, potentially causing it harm. The appropriateness of the protest event is also considered – whether it is termed as fair, timely, necessary, or justified, or, contrastively, as unfair, untimely, unnecessary, or unjustified. Finally, this frame also informs on the representativeness of popular mobilisation – the protest event is framed as consensual or representative of the political community, or, rather, perceived as partisan, non-representative or divisive.

Positive and negative values were assigned to each of the subframes that compose the five frames, which allowed for their positioning in relation to the two master frames. These are detailed below and in table 4.

- Democracy:
 - Protest as a democratic practice (+)
 - Protest as a threat to democracy (-)
 - Protest belongs in the public sphere (+)
 - Protest has no place in the public sphere (-)
 - Protest reinforces the rule of law (+)
 - Protest poses a threat to the rule of law (-)
 - Protest reinforces the constitution (+)
 - Protest poses a threat to the constitution (-)
 - Protest is legal (+)
 - Protest is illegal (-).

- Remembrance:
 - Protest honours the (collective memory of the) democratic transition (+)
 - Protest taints the (collective memory of the) democratic transition (-).

- Relation to Formal Politics:
 - Street politics shapes electoral politics (+)
 - Electoral politics trumps street politics (-).

- Rights:
 - Protest is a right (+)
 - Protest is an abuse of the right to protest (-)
 - Protest enhances other rights (+)
 - Protest curtails other rights (-).

- Citizenship and Political Community:
 - In terms of citizenship practices:
 - The good citizen (+)
 - The bad citizen (-)
 - In terms of effects on the political community:
 - Protest is beneficial for the political community (+)
 - Protest is detrimental to the political community (-)
 - In terms of appropriateness:
 - Protest as fair, timely, necessary, justified (+)
 - Protest as unfair, untimely, unnecessary, unjustified (-)
 - In terms of representativeness:
 - Protest as representative / consensual (+)
 - Protest as partisan / divisive (-).

In addition, one other frame with a negative value emerged from the close reading and annotation of the articles: the Non-protest. This captures the instances when an instance of popular mobilisation is not considered as a 'real', 'genuine', or 'significant' protest event, but, rather, as something completely different – these include:

- The protest is personal, not political – the protesters' claims are seen as personal and therefore have no place in the shared public sphere,
- The invisible protest – the target or vested actor does not acknowledge, refuses to see, or purposely renders the protest invisible,
- Business as usual – the target acknowledges the existence of the protest event, but states it bears no effect either on the target's actions or on the political community,
- The party / celebration or the farce – the protest event is considered a joyful get-together or a ridiculous spectacle devoid of political significance,
- The violence – the protest event is described as a violent affair. This is particularly relevant in those occurrences when no violence actually occurs or when the protest event is made invisible by violence (the instance of popular mobilisation is described majorly or exclusively in terms of any episodes of violence led by a minority of protesters when it is otherwise stated that it was mostly a peaceful event),
- The threat – the protest event is framed as a threat, as blackmail, or an unacceptable form of pressure, and
- The crime – the protest event becomes exclusively a case for the police and the judiciary.

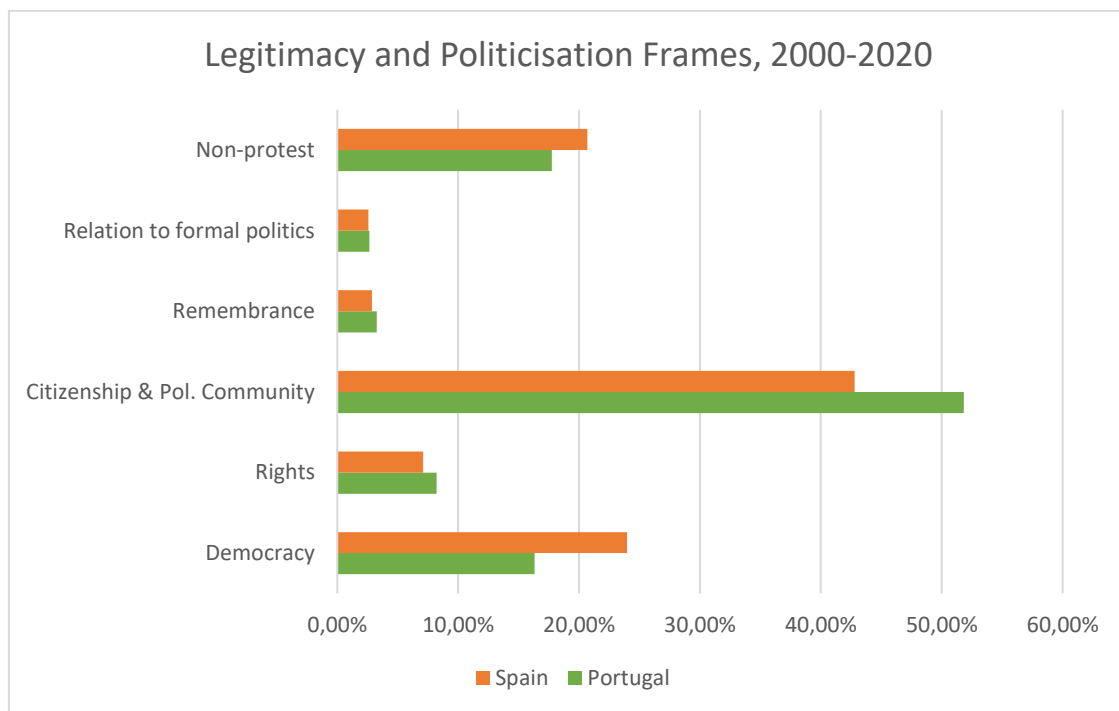
Table 4. Positive (+) and Negative (-) frames and master frames.

Master frames	Legitimacy (+)	Illegitimacy (-)	Politicisation (+)	Depoliticisation (-)
Frames	Democracy (+)	Democracy (-)	Democracy (+)	Democracy (-)
	Remembrance (+)	Remembrance (-)	Remembrance (+)	Remembrance (-)
			Relation to formal politics (+)	Relation to formal politics (-)
	Citizenship and Political Belonging (+)	Citizenship and Political Belonging (-)	Citizenship and Political Community (+)	Citizenship and Political Community (-)
	Rights (+)	Rights (-)		
		The non-protest (-)		The non-protest (-)

Own elaboration.

Table 4 provides a systematisation of this information and elucidates that frames and master frames are interrelated and mutually constituted and constitutive. Different frames can occur simultaneously in one protest event, and, at times, contradictory frames emerge from the same newspaper article, invoked by different actors, or, even by the same actor. The next sections take stock of this, but, firstly, a birds-eye view of the use of frames is offered (figure 89). As with the PEA, the approach taken was to “*turn words into numbers*” (Franzosi, 2004, in Hutter, 2014, p. 335) to facilitate the interpretation of the data.

Figure 89. Legitimacy and politicisation frames on protest in Portugal and Spain, 2000-2020.

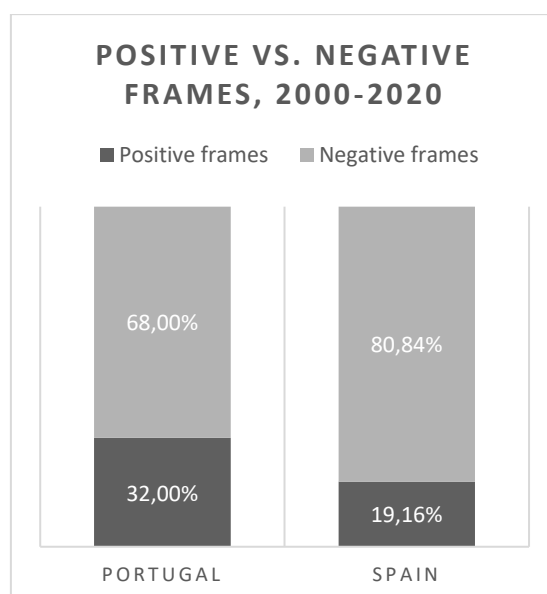


Own elaboration.

Across the border, the most common is the Citizenship and Political Community frame, which represents over 50% of the total legitimacy and politicisation frames in Portugal (51.8%) and over 40% in Spain (42.8%). In this country, the Democracy frame is the second most common, occurring in almost one fourth of occasions (24%, against 16.3% in Portugal), and the Non-Protest frame takes third place, at 20.7% – still more important than in Portugal, where it is the second most important frame (17.8%). The Rights frame is negligibly more common in Portugal (8.2%) than in Spain (7.1%), and the same can be said of the Remembrance frame (3.3% vs. 2.9%), while the Relation to Formal Politics frame is similarly present across the border (2.7% in Portugal and 2.6% in Spain).

The overall picture that emerges considering the general framing of protest is rather balanced, but this is disturbed once the frame values are considered (figure 90). Although the frames across the border are mostly negative, they are significantly more so in Spain (80.8%, against 19.2% of positive frames) than in Portugal (68% vs. 32%).

Figure 90. Legitimacy and politicisation positive vs. negative frames on protest in Portugal and Spain, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

This is reinforced when considering the yearly evolution of positive and negative frames in Portugal (figure 91) in comparison to Spain (figure 92). Positive frames oscillate between 20 and 40 percent of the total frames on protest in the first country in most years – on the lower end, the exceptions are 2016 (18.2%) and 2018 (15%, the lowest proportion in the series), while, on the positive side, 2012 (47.2%) stands out (the other years with positive frame representing over 40% of the total frames are 2006 – 44.4%, 2019 – 42.1%, and 2017 – 41.7%).

On the negative side, 2003 (20.3%) and 2004 (24.4%) are marked with demonstrations by students against rising tuition costs which, significantly, constitute the first instance of police intervention in university protest since the Portuguese Revolution – a red line that, in the words of the University of Coimbra rector, was not to be crossed, but was eventually resorted to due to repetitive mobilisation and the choice of repertoire, which included locking down faculties and the rectory, actions described as illegal, violent, and anti-democratic (*“What I said was that I wouldn’t call the police to solve an internal*

problem of the university. And I did not”; “I continue to say that [the protest] is illegal, illegitimate... I don't want to call the police because I understand that I shouldn't react with violence”; “The rector requested police intervention because «We cannot agree with the anti-democratic actions of the students»”⁶⁰). These years also featured national health system workers’ strikes that were described by protest targets as particularly harmful to the political community (“The prime minister considers the protest as unfair as it was harmful to the poor”; “the [hospital] director accused some doctors... of benefiting from the strike. «Patients with more economic resources go to private practices. And those who have private practices are the doctors who are not in the hospital because they are on strike». The most affected are the patients with less resources”⁶¹).

2016 and 2018 are marked by dockers’ strikes that were also described as harmful to the political community – mainly due to the impact on the country’s economic activity (“The Association of Portugal’s Freight Companies fears that the national economy will be affected”), but also as violent – despite the fact that no violence actually occurred (“Administrations refuse to negotiate during the strike: «we cannot negotiate in this context of strike and violence»”⁶²), and 2016 features taxi drivers mobilisations against ride hailing services that were described as causing chaos across the two major cities in

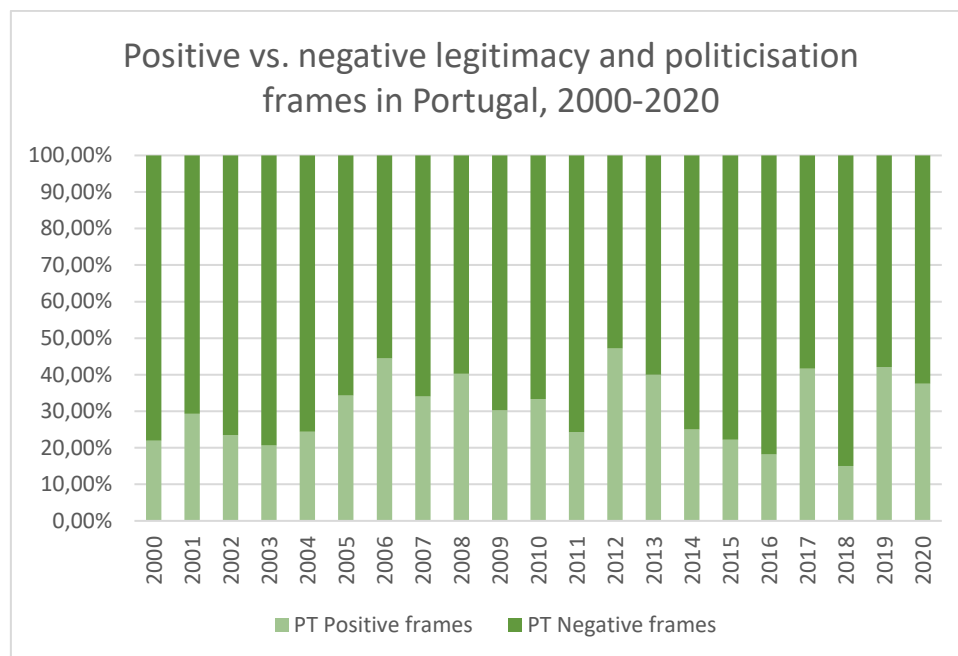
⁶⁰ «“O que eu disse é que não chamaria a polícia para resolver um problema interno da universidade. E não chamei.”», *Público*, “Greve causa conflito entre estudantes e o reitor da Universidade de Coimbra”, published on March 15th, 2003; «“Continuo a dizer que [o protesto] é ilegal, ilegítimo... Não quero chamar a polícia porque entendo que não devo reagir com violência”», *Público*, “Professores da Universidade de Coimbra movem queixas-crime contra estudantes”, published on November 11th, 2003; «Reitor pediu a presença da polícia porque “não podemos pactuar com a intervenção anti-democrática dos alunos”», *Público*, “Estudantes de Coimbra encerram Reitoria e Faculdade de Direito”, published on November 3rd, 2003 (my translation).

⁶¹ «Primeiro ministro considerou “injusta” a ação por prejudicar os pobres», *Diário de Notícias*, “Médicos indicam 90% de adesão”, published on January 30th, 2003; «Diretor acusou alguns clínicos... de beneficiarem com a greve. “Os doentes com mais recursos económicos vão às consultas privadas. E quem faz a atividade privada são os médicos que não estão no hospital porque estão em greve”. Os mais prejudicados são os doentes com menos recursos”», *Público*, “Administrador do hospital de São Bernardo acusa médicos de beneficiarem com a greve”, published on April 30th, 2004 (my translation).

⁶² «Associação dos Transitários de Portugal teme que seja a própria economia nacional a ser afectada... Administrações não aceitam reunir-se durante a greve: “não podemos reunir-nos neste quadro de greve e de violência”», *Público*, “Protesto em Setúbal já está a desviar navios para Leixões”, published on November 15th, 2018 (my translation).

the country – and that despite the fact that the protest itself was deemed as justified by the Minister of the Environment⁶³.

Figure 91. Legitimacy and politicisation positive vs. negative frames on protest in Portugal, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

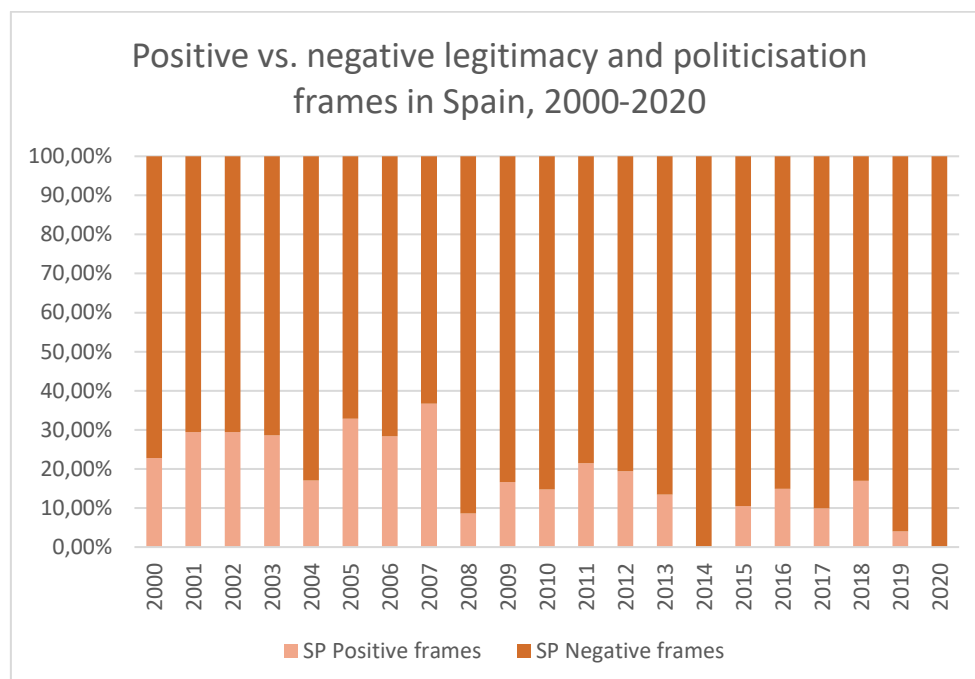
It is worth noticing that it is 2012, the height of the anti-austerity protest cycle and the year with more protest events in the country, that records a more balanced division between positive (47.2%) and negative frames (52.8%), which is indicative of the existence of a variety of actors in the Portuguese media sphere at that time framing popular mobilisation, both positively and negatively.

That is evidently not the case in Spain, where the beginning of the financial crisis of 2008 corresponds to a sharp decline in the proportion of positive frames – from then on, negative frames represent over 80% of the discourse on protest every year, with two years – 2014 and 2020 – not featuring any positive frames. As frames serve the purpose of signifying what can be said about any given subject, this is an important development that does not correspond to any significant change in protest policing or in the proportion of protest being reported as illegal (see chapters 3 and 4). It does correspond, however, to the emergence of new protest movements and repertoires – “*Acampadas*”

⁶³ *Diário de Notícias*, “Taxistas organizam megaprotesto contra Uber e lançam caos em Lisboa”, published on April 28th, 2015.

and “*Rodea al Congreso*” [protest at the parliaments] protest events, but also “*escraches*”, a protest repertoire that involves a group of citizens and activists seeking a politician to directly enquire about their standing on determined policies, often outside their offices, but, at times, outside their family homes, as well as the hanging of banners outside their residences, which, as indicated below, were mostly negatively framed.

Figure 92. Legitimacy and politicisation positive vs. negative frames on protest in Spain, 2000-2020.



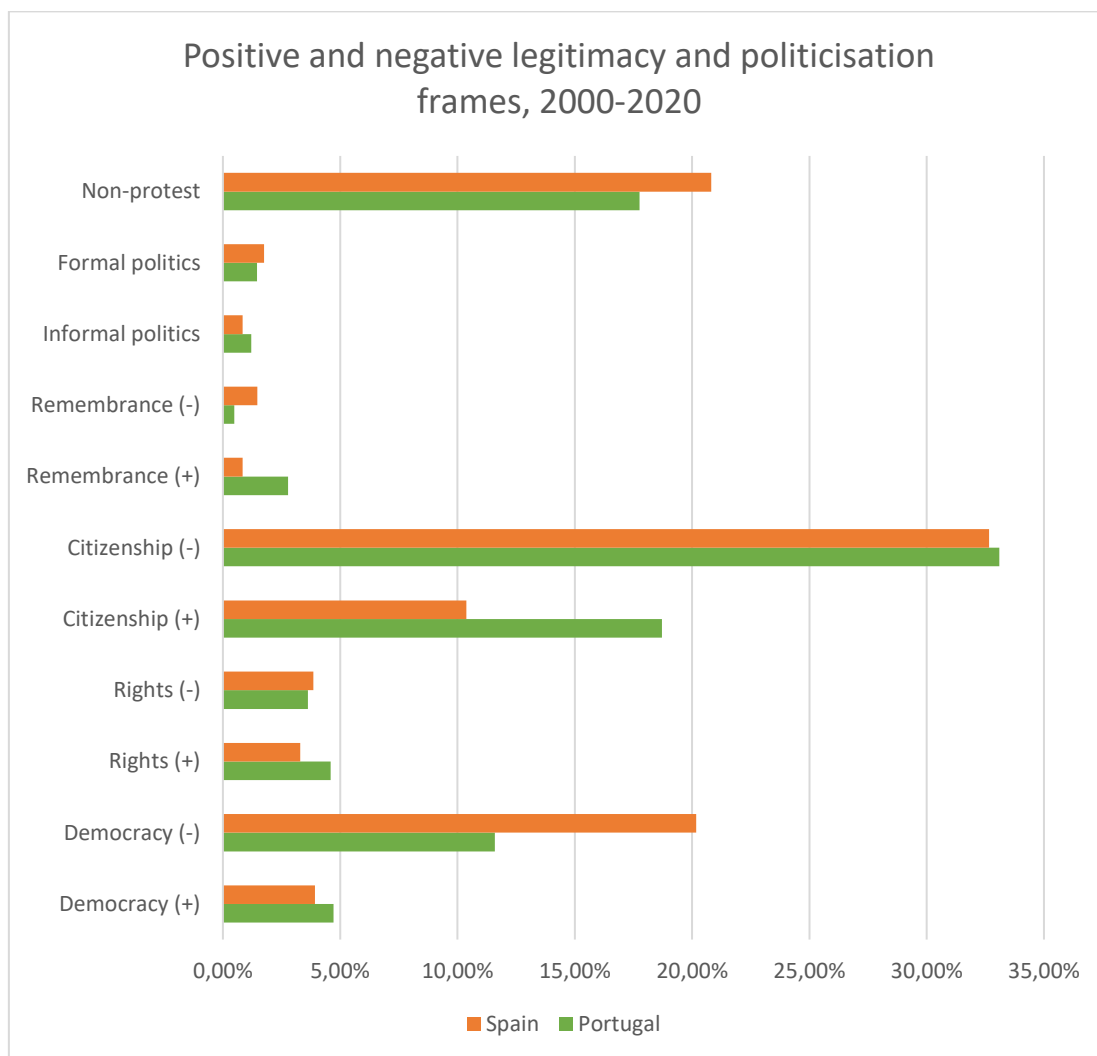
Own elaboration.

The exception would be 2011, which features 78.5% of negative frames, and corresponds to the height of popular mobilisation in the series. During this year, the relatively higher proportion of positive frames corresponds to the arrival of new protest actors, the “*Indignados*” and the *15-M* movement, whose framing in print media was not exclusively negative – at least in one of the media outlets, as will be demonstrated here.

2005 to 2007 are the clear outliers in positive framing of protest in Spain (32.8%, 28.3%, and 36.7%), and the fact that these years feature highly participated demonstrations called by or supported by PP is not incidental. This will be explored in detail in the following sections, but, for now, the discourse on a demonstration called to reject the reduction of prison terms given to ETA members constitutes a good example: “*the*

«positive» slogan with which PP's president tried to summon «good Spaniards» and voters of all parties» to participate in the march... [The protest] «will be “positive”, “moderate” and “open to all Spaniards who feel like democrats and abide by the law”»⁶⁴.

Figure 93. Legitimacy and politicisation frames with negative and positive values in Portugal and Spain, 2000-2022.



Own elaboration.

Considering each frame's positive and negative values (figure 93), we see that the negative Citizenship frame is the most prevalent across the series and across the border (33.1% in Portugal and 32.7% in Spain), and the Non-protest frame is, too, similarly

⁶⁴ «el eslogan “en positivo” con que el presidente del PP, Mariano Rajoy, ha intentado convocar a “los españoles de bien” y a los votantes de todos los partidos... [la protesta] será “en positivo”, “moderada” y “abierto a todos los españoles que se sientan demócratas y cumplan la ley”», *El Mundo*, “Decenas de miles de españoles se concentran en 65 ciudades como preludio de la marcha contra Zapatero”, published on March 10th, 2007 (my translation).

appealed to in both countries – 20.8% in Spain, where it is the second most important frame, and 17.8% in Portugal (the third most present frame).

Two clear differences emerge – the higher prevalence of the negative Democracy frame in Spain (20.2%, against 11.6% in Portugal) – occurring simultaneously with the higher incidence of the corresponding positive frame in Portugal (4.7%, vs. 3.9% in the Spanish side of the border) – and the higher proportion of the positive Citizenship and Political Community frame in Portugal: 18.7%, and just over 10% (10.4%) in Spain. It is also in Portugal that the positive Remembrance frame is more powerful (2.9%, and less than 1% in Spain – 0.8%), and that street politics is (marginally) more frequently framed as a true avenue of political participation (1.2% against 0.8% in the second country). Concurrently, the corresponding negative frames are more pervasive in Spain – 1.5% against 0.5% in Portugal for the negative Remembrance frame and 1.8% vs. 1.5% for the primacy of electoral politics over street politics.

Similarly, the positive Rights frame is also more salient in Portugal (4.6% and 3.3% in Spain), and the corresponding negative frame is, again, more present in the Spanish case, although, in this case, the values are very close – 3.9% vs. 3.6%. Positive framing of protest is, then, more important in Portugal than in Spain, that being the case for all five frames connected to legitimacy and politicisation. This should, however, not obscure the fact that, with the exception of the Remembrance and the Rights frames in Portugal, negative frames are overall more salient across the border.

The following sections will elucidate how each of the frames is manifested, and their consequences for each country's understanding of protest as an avenue of political participation.

5.1. The Democracy Frame

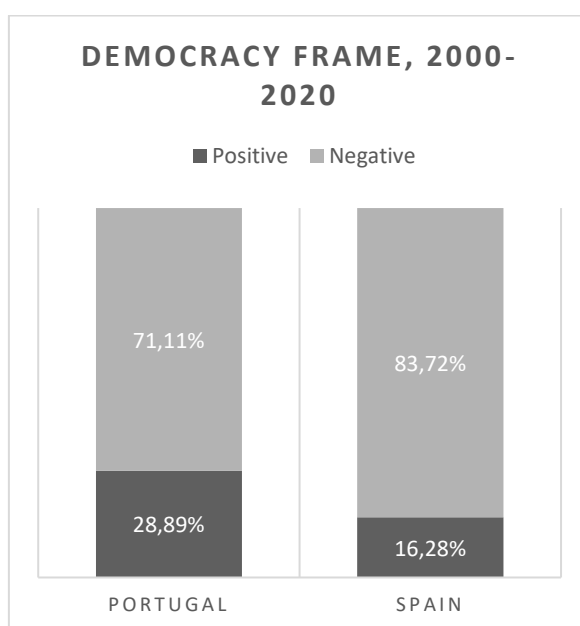
In this section, each of the components of the Democracy frame is studied individually, considering its use and by whom, its evolution across the series, and who this frame concerns (the type of protesters, organisers, repertoires, and demands). A similar

approach is applied to the analysis of the remaining frames. The implications to the master frames are discussed in the final section of the chapter.

As hinted above and represented in figure 95, the negative Democracy frame is more important in both countries (71.1% in Portugal and 83.7% in Spain), but it is significantly less so in Portugal (where the positive Democracy frame occurs in 28.9% of occasions) than in the neighbouring country (16.2%) (figure 94).

The components of the positive Democracy frame are represented in figure 95, which depicts that protest is more often described as a democratic practice in Portugal (59%) than in Spain (42.9%) – this is the more prevalent positive subframe in both countries, but it is expressed differently across the border.

Figure 94. Positive and negative values of the Democracy frame in Portugal and Spain, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

In the Portuguese case, the framing of protest as a democratic practice is mainly the work of protest organisers – in particular labour unions – and serves to legitimise the protest and the protesters' demands, as well as functioning as a way of speaking to power. Examples include:

- CGTP's assessment of the 2002 general strike: "*«an unequivocal democratic victory»*"⁶⁵,
- CGTP's evaluation of a mass teachers' demonstration in 2008: "*«If the government is unable to interpret the signs, then it is democracy that is at stake»*"⁶⁶.

In Spain, the democratic practice subframe is used in a similar way – that was the case during the general strike of 2002 when the leaders of labour unions stated that the "*«general strike was a success and that the government should take note of it»*"⁶⁷, but other political actors' reactions to protest are also located here:

- During a highly participated demonstration against the stationing of a British nuclear submarine in Gibraltar, the local mayor (elected by the PSOE) argued: "*«The Popular Party believes that it is a demonstration against them, when in reality it is a demonstration of the people»*"⁶⁸,
- At the end of 2007 a march against the sentence mitigation of an ETA prisoner, the leader of the PP – the protest organiser and main party in the opposition – stated his satisfaction for the "*«civic, democratic, and peaceful movement»*"⁶⁹ expressed on the streets against the government,
- And on the first enactment of popular referendums in Catalonia in 2009, *Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya* (CDC) described the consultations as an "*«example of radical democracy»*"⁷⁰.

⁶⁵ "*«uma inequívoca vitória da democracia»*", *Diário de Notícias*, "Milhões param contra o pacote", published on December 11th, 2002 (my translation).

⁶⁶ "*«Se o governo não souber interpretar os sinais, então é a democracia que está em causa»*", *Diário de Notícias*, "Professores já ameaçam Sócrates", published on March 9th, 2008 (my translation).

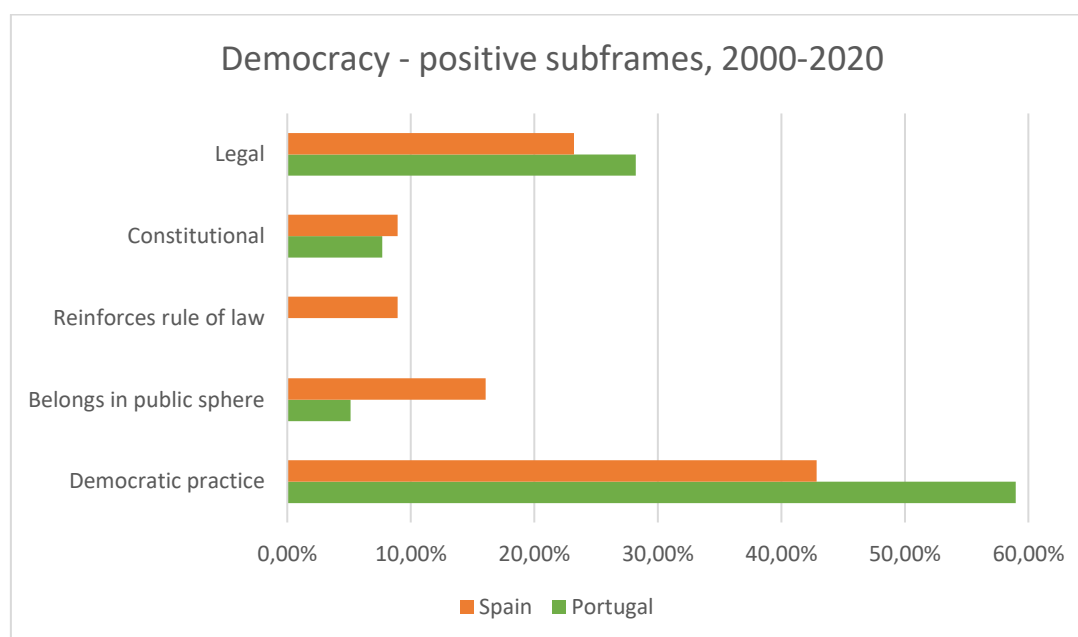
⁶⁷ "*«Méndez y Fidalgo aseguran que la huelga general fue un éxito y sirve de "toque de atención al Gobierno"»*", *El Mundo*, "Los sindicatos exigen, exultantes, la retirada del 'decretazo'", published on June 21st, 2002 (my translation).

⁶⁸ "*«El Partido Popular cree que es una manifestación contra ellos, cuando en realidad es una manifestación del pueblo»*", *El Mundo*, "Decenas de miles de personas se manifiestan contra la presencia del Títere en Gibraltar", published on January 21st, 2001 (my translation).

⁶⁹ "*«el líder de los populares... se mostró satisfecho por el "movimiento cívico, democrático y sereno"»*". *El País*, "Blanco: «Se manifestaron la mitad de los que han muerto en la guerra de Irak»", published on March 12th, 2007 (my translation).

⁷⁰ "*«CDC calificó los referendos de "ejemplo de radicalidad democrática"»*", *El Mundo*, "La farsa no triunfa pero da alas al separatismo", published on December 14th, 2009 (my translation).

Figure 95. Democracy frame – positive subframes in Portugal and Spain, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

In Portugal, then, protest is described as a democratic practice mostly by civil society organisations that see protest as a way to influence formal politics – the positive reference to democracy serves as a reminder to those occupying the seat of power that the voice of the people expressed through popular mobilisation should be heard as an expression of real democracy, and therefore taken into account in shaping policy. In Spain, although this is also the case, protest is described as a democratic practice mostly by actors engaged in formal politics when they find themselves in the opposition, and, therefore, the subframe becomes another weapon in partisan combat.

This subframe also includes instances where protest is labelled as a sign of a healthy democracy – for example, in 2001 in Portugal, in a protest event targeting a PS mayor who threatened to call for police intervention (*“if someone offends my honour, I will have to ask PSP to identify the person”*), the prime minister, also a Socialist, interfered:

“Considering it normal to have expressions of dissatisfaction and discontent in a democracy and in an area where there are serious social problems, [António] Guterres recalled that, half a dozen years ago, politicians were afraid to face expressions of discontent and said «I don't want a country where the prime minister puts the riot police

*on the streets to avoid contact with people [and] people should learn a lesson in respect and democratic humility»*⁷¹.

This statement, which also features a partisan attack on PSD, referring to its aversion to street politics exhibited in the 1990s, is indicative of the acceptance of protest not only as a genuine voice to power, inclusively by those members of the political community with lower political capital, but also as a sign of a healthy democracy. The reference to protest policing is also significant – protest policing is seen as a barrier between the citizenry and those in formal politics, and should, for that reason, be limited.

This should not obscure that protest can also be described as a democratic practice when it is not, as a strategy to legitimise actions or ideological positions that may not be consensually democratic. In Portugal, for example, ecologists demanding an end to transgenic crops were assaulted by other demonstrators during a farmers' protest in 2006 – the organisers, the biggest farmer association in the country, justified the assault on these terms: *“If they come here with radicalisms, it is normal that those who are open to all types of crops feel attacked... we must be democrats»*⁷². The next year, activists who destroyed a crop of transgenic corn claimed that they were trying to *“restore the democratic, moral, and ecological order»*⁷³.

In Spain, resistance to the law forbidding smoking in closed spaces was framed as a democratic practice in rather extreme terms: the Valladolid (PP) mayor quoted Martin Niemöller's famous statement *“First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist... Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me—and there was no one left to*

⁷¹ *“se alguém ofendesse a sua honra, teria de pedir à PSP que identificasse a pessoa”*», *Público*, “Judas «sem condições» para se recandidatar a Cascais”, published on February 11th, 2001; *«Considerando normal em democracia e numa zona onde existem graves problemas sociais haver manifestações de satisfação e de descontentamento, Guterres lembrou que há meia dúzia de anos os políticos tinham medo de enfrentar manifestações de desagrado e disse “Não quero um País onde o primeiro ministro põe o Corpo de Intervenção nas ruas para evitar o contato com as pessoas... se deve retirar uma lição de respeito e humildade democrática”*», *Diário de Notícias*, “Marcha anti-Judas em Cascais”, published on February 11th, 2001 (my translation).

⁷² *“se vêm para aqui com radicalismos, é normal que quem é aberto a todos os tipos de cultura de sinta agredido... temos de ser democratas”*», *Diário de Notícias*, “Activistas contra transgénicos agredidos”, published on June 4th, 2006 (my translation).

⁷³ *“restabelecer a ordem ecológica, moral e democrática”*», *Diário de Notícias*, “Activistas ‘ceifam’ campo de milho transgénico em protesto”, published on June 4th, 2006 (my translation).

speak for me»” to add “*«Here we begin to denounce smokers... So have begun very terrible things in the history of humanity»*”⁷⁴. The same could be said about the aforementioned CDC statements on the referendums in Catalonia, which, as outlined below, were also framed as a threat to democracy.

Another way to describe protest as intrinsically democratic is to state its rightful place in the shared public sphere – a positive subframe that is notably less frequent in Portugal (5.1%) than in Spain (16.1%). In this country, these are mostly instances when the citizenry decides that protest events belong in the public sphere – *El País* publishes the results of a survey on the public perception of the 15-M movement, entitled “*15-M holds on to citizen support*”, which states: “*The sustained current of sympathy buries the idea that incidents linked to the movement affect it. Nor has the storyline trying to label its participants as anti-system marginals stuck*”⁷⁵. This is an interesting statement, as it is posited as a counter-frame to a narrative about the movement to which the media outlet did not (fully) subscribe, and this counter-frame is reinforced by the power of independent, academic expertise, which produced the survey. On another occasion, during a miners’ protest campaign which featured high impact repertoires over an extensive period, a miner’s march was received in Madrid with cheers (“*Several thousand citizens cheered the arrival of the demonstrators*”⁷⁶).

There are, however, instances in Spain where the protest is said to belong in the public sphere because it was given permission by those holding political power – on a protest against PP government’ support to the invasion of Iraq, the protest target states: “*«We have allowed people opposed to the war and to PP to enter the premises. We let them read a statement, hang banners for us*”⁷⁷. The opposition also plays the same role,

⁷⁴ “*«Aquí empezamos por denunciar a los fumadores... Así empezaron cosas muy terribles de la historia de la humanidad»*”, *El Mundo*, “De la Riva carga contra Pajín otra vez y la compara con el nazismo”, published on January 5th, 2011 (my translation).

⁷⁵ “*Esa corriente sostenida de simpatía sepulta la idea de que los incidentes vinculados al movimiento pudieran afectarle. Tampoco ha prendido la versión que pretendía tachar a los participantes de antisistema marginales*”, *El País*, “El 15-M mantiene su apoyo ciudadano”, published on June 26th, 2011 (my translation).

⁷⁶ “*Varios miles de ciudadanos jalearon la llegada de los manifestantes*”, *El Mundo*, “Los mineros pisan Madrid: «Si esto no se arregla: ¡Guerra, guerra, guerra!»”, published on July 11th, 2012 (my translation).

⁷⁷ “*«Hemos permitido que personas contrarias a la guerra y al PP entraran en el local. Les dejamos que leyeran un comunicado, nos colgaran pancartas»*”, *El País*, “Un grupo de manifestantes golpea en Reus al candidato del PP a la alcaldía de Barcelona”, published on March 26th, 2002 (my translation).

legitimising the presence of a protest event in the shared public sphere – on the same miners’ protest, the leader of the PSOE in the capital declared his pride for the miners, whom he considered “*an example for the whole country*”⁷⁸.

In Portugal, it is protesters and protest organisers claiming the right to be in the public sphere on the few occasions when this frame appears – an example can be found on a coordinated sit-in at different ministries at the end of the anti-austerity protest cycle: CGTP, the organiser, when asked if they were expecting police intervention to remove them from the premises, staked their claim to their rightful belonging in public institutions, arguing there would be no police intervention, as it was the protesters’ right to enter and remain at the premises⁷⁹.

Positive references to the rule of law (8.9% in Spain and absent in Portugal), the constitution (8.9% in Spain and 7.7% in Portugal) and the legality of protest (23.2% in Spain and 28.2% in Portugal – the second most salient subframe) also constitute discursive strategies employed to ensure that protest is perceived as intrinsically democratic. This includes instances of Spanish protesters describing their grievances as a defence of the rule of law, against a protest target that, by implication, is acting against it – in a demonstration of clients affected by bank fraud, they said to be “*Defending consumers and the rule of law*”⁸⁰, and *Panrico* workers on hunger strike described the company’s actions as “*disobedience to the fundamental principles of the rule of law*”⁸¹, hence locating their protest, by contrast, well within its realm. PP’s President’s aforementioned statement is also indicative of protest being described as reinforcing the rule of law, against a government which was, by implication, challenging it – and this is repeated during demonstrations for the unity of Spain during the Catalanian crisis: the

⁷⁸ «Gómez se mostró “orgulloso” de la actitud de los mineros al considerarlos “un ejemplo para todo el país al defender el pan de sus hijos”», *El Mundo*, “Los mineros pisan Madrid: «Si esto no se arregla: ¡Guerra, guerra, guerra!»”, published on July 11th, 2012 (my translation).

⁷⁹ «“Então não é um direito entrar e pedir reuniões com ministros?”», *Público*, “PSP nega reforço nos ministérios e garante que ocupação era ‘expectável’”, published on November 28th, 2013.

⁸⁰ «“Por la defensa de los consumidores y el Estado de derecho”», *El Mundo*, “El Gobierno delegará en las autonomías el control del negocio de bienes tangibles”, published on February 6th, 2007 (my translation).

⁸¹ «El sindicato añade que Panrico persiste en su desobediencia a los principios fundamentales vinculados a un Estado de Derecho», *El Mundo*, “Panrico despide a 12 miembros del comité de empresa de Madrid en huelga de hambre”, published on November 4th, 2006 (my translation).

cover of *El País* on October 9th 2017 reads “Almost one million citizens... marched through Barcelona in defence of the unity of Spain, tolerance and the rule of law”⁸².

Instances of protest being described as constitutional or actively defending the constitution occur in Portugal when the constitution is invoked to defend the right to protest (one example is a 2002 stock exchange traders strike, when the Finance Minister stated: “In a free country, where strike is a constitutional right, I will not lament the strike”⁸³) or when demands uttered in popular mobilisation relate to constitutional rights – a protest against the demolition of irregular constructions housing mostly migrants from the Portuguese speaking African countries was described as both constitutional and belonging in the public sphere – article 65 of the Constitution (right to appropriate housing) is fully quoted in the newspaper article as the justification for the demonstration, which is considered by the president of the Portuguese architects professional organisation, who participated in the demonstration, as a response to a civic emergency that should not occur in a democracy (“«when I saw the images of the demolition... I thought I was seeing something from the dictatorship... the resolution of these cases is a civic emergency»”⁸⁴).

In addition, when members of the armed forces won the judicial battle for the right to demonstrate, which the hierarchy had vehemently opposed, the celebratory demonstration was described in these terms: “Military hierarchy lose war against constitution... yesterday, the court recognised the right of military citizens to participate in demonstrations, in the name of the Constitution and against the hierarchy”⁸⁵.

⁸² «Casi un millón de ciudadanos... desfiló por Barcelona en defensa de la unidad de España, de la tolerancia y del Estado de derecho», *El País*, “Masiva manifestación en Barcelona por la unidad, el pluralismo y la democracia constitucional”, published on October 9th, 2017 (my translation).

⁸³ «“Num país livre, em que a greve é um direito constitucional, não vou lamentar a greve”», *Público*, “Greve na bolsa põe em causa imagem do mercado nacional”, published on July 13th, 2002 (my translation).

⁸⁴ «“quando vi as imagens da demolição... pensei que estava a ver uma coisa do tempo da ditadura”... Apoiada no artigo 65 da Constituição: “Todos têm direito para si e para a sua família a uma habitação de dimensão adequada”», *Público*, “Manifestantes concentram pelo direito constitucional à habitação”, published on March 8th, 2006; «“resolução destas casos como uma emergência cívica”», *Diário de Notícias*, “Moradores de barracas exigem realojamento”, published on March 8th, 2006 (my translation).

⁸⁵ «Chefias militares perdem Guerra contra a constituição ... um feito histórico: o tribunal reconheceu ontem aos cidadãos militares o direito de participar em manifestações, em nome da Constituição e contra o parecer das chefias», *Diário de Notícias*, “Chefias militares perdem Guerra contra a constituição”, published on July 13th, 2007 (my translation).

Protest is also described as abiding by the constitution in Spain, with nuances that are not found in the Portuguese case – for example, the central government decision not to dissolve the “*Acampada 15-M*” on the eve of the 2011 municipal and regional elections was described in these terms in *El Mundo*: “*the government’s path is based on one theory: the right of assembly, included... in the Constitution, must be protected above all other rights...*”⁸⁶. This utterance suggests that the government was choosing to respect the constitutional right to assembly over a judgement issued by the electoral court recommending the dissolution of the protest camp (for it would interfere both with election reflection day and the election day itself), and it was doing so for fear of being punished in the ballot box if it was to order police intervention to remove the demonstration from the shared public sphere – a conduct of which the media outlet disapproved.

This subframe also occurs at times when the demands uttered in protest events are not democratic – for instance, local authorities justified allowing a 2001 anti-migration protest on the basis of the constitution (“*The regional authority authorised the act in accordance with current legislation, which protects the constitutional rights of association, assembly and demonstration*”), but the opposition framed the same protest event as unconstitutional (and harmful to the political community, illegal, and undemocratic) – “*the minister allowed a «clearly racist, and, therefore, contrary to the Constitution and the penal code» demonstration... «The PP authorizes Nazi, xenophobic, racist, and fascist demonstrations that clearly incite violence and are outside democracy and the Constitution»*”⁸⁷.

This is indicative of contestation over the narrative of the same protest event, with different frames, invoked by different actors, wrestling to become the prominent frame

⁸⁶ «*los caminos del gobierno confluyen en una teoría: el derecho de reunión, recogido en ... la Constitución, debe ser protegido por encima de lo demás*», *El Mundo*, “*Rubalcaba decide desobedecer*”, published on May 21st, 2011 (my translation).

⁸⁷ «*Autoridad regional autorizó al acto de conformidad con la legalidad vigente, que ampara los derechos constitucionales de asociación, reunión e manifestación... Ministro ha permitido una manifestación “claramente racista y, por tanto, contraria a la Constitución Y al código penal”... “desde la propia administración del PP se autoricen concentraciones nazis, xenófobas, racistas y fascistas que incitan claramente a la violencia y están al margen de la democracia y la Constitución*», *El País*, “*La oposición critica con dureza a Rajoy por permitir una manifestación xenófoba*”, published on August 3rd, 2001 (my translation).

accepted by the general public, or by specific audiences seen as partisan and thereby more receptive to each of these contrasting messages. This signifying struggle appears to be more pervasive in Spain than in Portugal and is, again, indicative of the discourse on protest becoming an instrument of Spanish partisan politics.

In addition, contestation about the meaning of the rule of law or the constitution can be found in protest events against house repossessions that occurred during the Great Recession – while the Spanish banking association assessment of those protest events asserted their non-compliance with the rule of law (“*«Foreclosures of mortgaged assets are carried out through judicial decisions and we understand that, in a State governed by the rule law, judicial decisions must be complied with»*”), the *Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca* (PAH – Platform of People Affected by Mortgages), the protest organisers, replied: “*«What is illegal is leaving families homeless... Doing so violates article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and article 47 of the Constitution, which recognises the right to decent housing»*”⁸⁸, thereby stating the protest was in line with the constitution and well within the realm of legality.

In fact, the legality of a protest event is often declared in response to an utterance that frames it as illegal, and it is in these instances that this frame is more common in Portugal:

- During a miners’ strike, management (the protest target) considered the protest as “*completely opposed to the law*”, while the miners argued that picketing was a legal activity (and that protest policing took away that right⁸⁹),

⁸⁸ “*«Las ejecuciones de los bienes hipotecados se realizan mediante resoluciones judiciales y entendemos que en un Estado de derecho las resoluciones judiciales deben cumplirse... Lo que es ilegal es que se deje a familias sin techo... Al hacerlo se está vulnerando el artículo 25 de la Declaración Universal de los Derechos Humanos, el artículo 11 del Pacto Internacional de Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales, y el artículo 47 de la Constitución, que reconoce el derecho a una vivienda digna»*”, *El País*, “Que el ‘crash’ inmobiliario no arruine al vulnerable”, published on June 26th, 2011 (my translation).

⁸⁹ “*«Administração considera “totalmente contrária à lei” a atuação dos grevistas»*, *Público*, “Mineiros persistem na greve”, published on December 22nd, 2000 (my translation).

- After police intervention and the arrest of one of the participants in an otherwise peaceful march, the organisers claimed: *“the purpose of the protest was to scrupulously comply with traffic rules”*⁹⁰.

But there are also instances of the legality of the protest being referred to for different purposes – for example, in a case of contested protest policing, with elements of the GNR visiting a labour union prior to a teachers’ demonstration, an action that was vastly condemned by the union and by all leftists political parties in the opposition, the PS government was quick to establish that the legality of the protest was not at stake⁹¹, and the party, referring to a bridge toll protest that was reminiscent of the wave of contestation their main opposer, PSD, suffered in the 1990s (see chapter 2), declared: *“«PS will support any protest actions, provided they are legal»”*⁹². In both these cases, the legality of the protest event becomes a weapon in party politics, and that is also common in Spain, as elicited by the abovementioned anti-migration protest, with government and opposition diverging on the legality of the protest event – this occurs, additionally, on a sit-in against the demolition of a Valencia neighbourhood ordered by the PP-led local government, with PSOE supporting protesters, advising them to remain calm and confident, as *“the courts considered them to be on the right”*⁹³.

In Spain, then, there is higher contestation on the legality of determined instances of popular mobilisation – this is found in a number of protest events in the Basque Country which were authorised by local authorities but framed as illegal by parties in the opposition, and, at times, by the central government. An example is a 2005 march for the rights of ETA prisoners and the independence of the Basque Country – the government, the PP, and the regional Socialist Party (PSE - *Partido Socialista de Euskadi*) argued that the protest was illegal and should not have been authorised, while PNV (*Partido Nacionalista Vasco* - Basque Nationalist Party) defended the legality of the

⁹⁰ «*“o objetivo do protesto era cumprir escrupulosamente as regras de trânsito”*», *Diário de Notícias*, “Viagem anti-portagens no IC1 registou grande adesão”, published on April 28th, 2004 (my translation).

⁹¹ «*“Em todo o caso, ninguém questiona a legalidade da manifestação”*», *Público*, “Ninguém assume ter dado ordens aos agentes da PSD da Covilhã”, published on October 10th, 2007.

⁹² «*O PS apoiará “todo este tipo de ações desde que sejam legais”*», *Público*, “Um cheirinho a buzinao desfilou pela CREL”, published on January 7th, 2003 (my translation).

⁹³ «*La ministra de la cultura... pidió a los vecinos tranquilidad. “Que tengan confianza, pues los tribunales están dándoles la razón”*», *El País*, “Barberá desata otra batalla campal en el Cabanyal con un nuevo derribo”, published on April 9th, 2010 (my translation).

protest⁹⁴. This is repeated in other protests for the rights of ETA prisoners throughout the series, with the demand itself being considered legal, but the use of photos or names of ETA prisoners constituting a crime of apology of terrorism.

Further, during the anti-austerity protest cycle, a discussion emerged in the country between legality and legitimacy. A clear case of this dichotomy is the aforementioned “Acampada” of 2011, with protesters asserting the legitimacy of their presence in the shared public sphere – *El Mundo*’s cover of May 20th, 2011, is elucidating in this regard: “*The Electoral Board prohibits concentrations on the day of reflection. The campers... maintain the... protest because «national sovereignty resides here and not in Congress»*”⁹⁵, and so are protesters’ declarations: “*«We have never fought for the legality of this protest, but for its legitimacy»*”⁹⁶.

Illegality is the most common negative Democracy frame across the border (figure 96) – and more so in Portugal (41.7% vs. 38.5% in Spain). Although this subframe is present in factually illegal protest, that should not occult the fact that protest can be described as illegal when there is no element of illegality taking place, or an illegal episode in an otherwise legal protest event can be amplified, becoming its main signifier.

In Portugal, protest is framed as illegal around two main circumstances: failure to meet minimum services during a strike (it was this that caused the PS government to consider military intervention to guarantee essential supplies during a dangerous loads truck drivers’ strike in 2019 – the government decree reads “*the armed forces are required to... replace... drivers, in a situation of strike and of non-compliance with the minimum services*”⁹⁷), or the protest repertoire is described as illegal – in particular, the use of a lock and chain to close access to a building (a medium impact repertoire, as per chapter 3) is often framed in those terms. Such was the case of the 2003-4 students’ protest

⁹⁴ ⁹⁴ *El País*, “El Gobierno afirma que el Ejecutivo vasco debía haber prohibido la marcha”, published on August 27th, 2005.

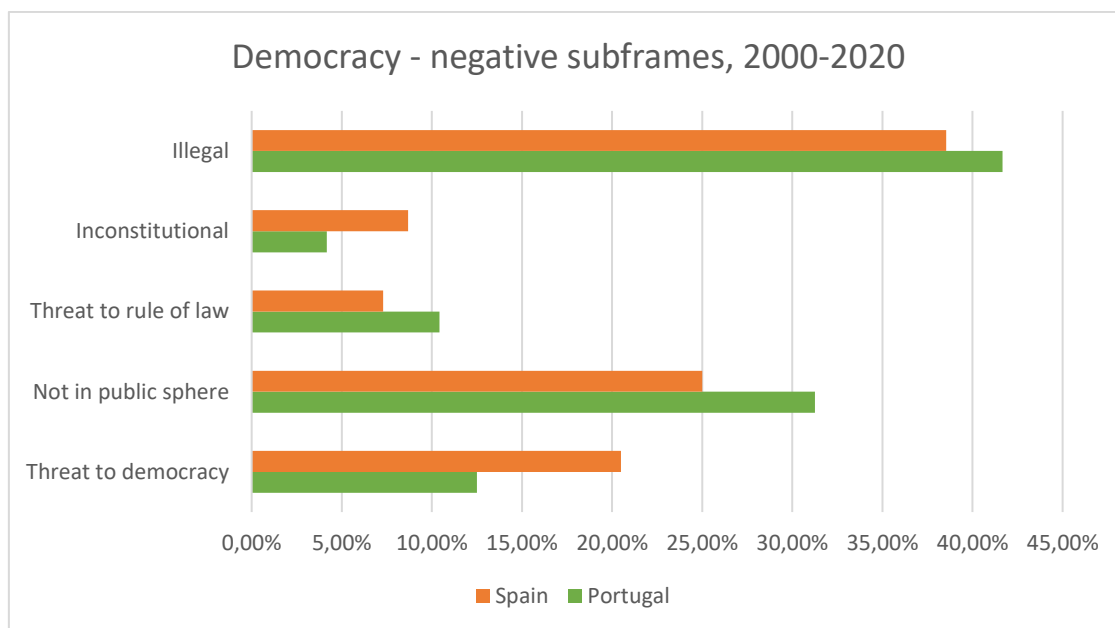
⁹⁵ «*La Junta Electoral prohíbe las concentraciones el día de reflexión. Los acampados... mantienen los actos de protesta porque “la soberanía nacional reside aquí y no en el Congreso”*», *El Mundo* cover, published on May 20th, 2011 (my translation).

⁹⁶ «*“Nosotros nunca hemos luchado por la legalidad de esta protesta, sino por su legitimidad”*», *El País*, “Los ‘indignados’ retan al Gobierno”, published on May 20th, 2011 (my translation).

⁹⁷ «*“são requeridos os elementos das forças armadas para ... substituir... os trabalhadores motoristas, em situação de greve e em incumprimento dos serviços mínimos”*», *Público*, “Governo recorre às Forças Armadas para repor mínimos no transporte”, published on August 13th, 2019 (my translation).

campaign described above, when police intervention was called precisely because of the repeated use of this repertoire. In fact, since student and pupil mobilisations often use this form of protest, they are frequently labelled as illegal (for example, during a national pupils strike in 2006 with locks and chains in schools across the country, some school directors called the police and reported the events to the Public Prosecutor's office)⁹⁸.

Figure 96. Democracy frame – negative subframes in Portugal and Spain, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

When illegality occurs, it often becomes hyper visible – an unplanned protest at the General Motors factory in 2006 is described mostly in terms of illegality (the newspaper article's subtitle reads *"GM management deplores illegal actions..."* and this is repeated several times: *"«these are "illegal acts»... they are «illegal actions» because blocking the entrance ... is unacceptable»"*⁹⁹), and the illegality of a protest event called by the military that same year is also particularly salient: *"The demonstration took place despite the prohibition by the Lisbon Civil Government, and the Prime Minister's and the Minister of the Presidency's warnings about «disciplinary consequences» («whoever does not comply with the law is naturally subject to the corresponding disciplinary procedures»,*

⁹⁸ *Diário de Notícias*, "Greve de alunos acaba em queixa no Ministério Público", published on November 18th, 2006.

⁹⁹ «Administração da GM lamenta actos ilegais...estes são "atos ilegais"... são "ações ilegais" porque o bloqueio da entrada... "não pode acontecer"», *Público*, "Trabalhadores bloqueiam fábrica da Opel na azambuja", published on September 7th, 2006 (my translation).

said Sócrates”); “The armed forces protest was prohibited by the Civil Government and was opposed by the President of the Republic, the Government and the military hierarchy, who said that the cohesion and unity of the Armed Forces were at risk”¹⁰⁰.

It is paradoxical that, as per chapters 3 and 4, protest repertoires in Portugal are mostly low and medium impact and the vast majority of protest events is not considered to be illegal, but it is here that this subframe is more prevalent. This is demonstrative that framing a protest event as illegal – and particularly highlighting the illegality of a certain protest action – can serve the purpose of delegitimising it, stigmatising its participants and its organisers as citizens who have participated or are willing to participate in illegal activity.

In Spain, illegality becomes, again, a partisan weapon, as demonstrated by the utterances below:

- During the protest against the Tireless submarine mentioned above, PP argued *“«We will never be complicit in unlawful conduct, because using public funds to charter buses for citizens to join a demonstration is a misuse of those funds»”¹⁰¹,*
- The first sentence of an article on the protest against the government’s water plan in Zaragoza in 2000 is a PP spokesperson’s declaration: *“«Someday, some people will be made accountable for the means used to summon the people to go to the demonstration with funds or public money»”¹⁰².*

There are also occasions when politicians are accused of participating in illegal protest events that are, indeed, illegal – that was the case, in 2005, of the occupation of *El*

¹⁰⁰ *«Protesto realizou-se apesar da proibição do governo civil de Lisboa e do aviso para as “consequências disciplinares” feitas pelo Primeiro Ministro e pelo Ministro da Presidência (“quem não cumpre a lei sujeita-se naturalmente aos procedimentos disciplinares que estão previstos”))», Público, “Generais ‘passaram’ ao lado de sargentos e praças”, published on November 24th, 2006; «O protesto dos militares foi proibido pelo Governo Civil e teve a oposição do Presidente da República, do Governo e das chefias castrenses, que disseram estar em risco a coesão e a unidade das Forças Armadas», Diário de Notícias, “Militares elogiam chefias e desafiam governo a tirar ilações do protesto”, published on November 24th, 2006 (my translation).*

¹⁰¹ *«“Nunca seremos cómplices de conductas ajenas a la ley, porque utilizar fondos públicos para fletar autobuses y que los ciudadanos se incorporen a la manifestación supone una mala utilización de esos fondos”», El Mundo, “El PP dice que sólo es «un mitin del PSOE», published on January 21st, 2001 (my translation).*

¹⁰² *«“Algún día, algunas personas tendrán que responder como han convocado a la gente con fondos o dinero público... para que fueron a la manifestación”», El País, “El PP afirma que la protesta contra el Plan Hidrológico es fruto de la ‘manipulación’”, published on October 10th, 2000 (my translation).*

Mundo's director holiday residence by an ERC MP, along with environmental activists, to denounce that the property had been built in a protected area, an action that was vehemently condemned by PP¹⁰³, and, in 2016, CUP members of the Catalanian parliament tore photos of the King in solidarity with activists who were facing legal penalties for doing the same – receiving the condemnation of PP and *Ciudadanos*, and the praise of *Podemos*, which framed the act as legitimate and well within freedom of expression¹⁰⁴.

While, in the first two examples, earlier in the series, the presence of illegal activity is implied as a way of delegitimising the opposition, the following two are indeed instances of illegal protest repertoires. Nonetheless, the goals of the actors framing the protest as illegal or legal – and of those actively protesting – are one and the same, with protest and protest reactions constituting above all, a play in the game of partisan politics.

The higher prevalence of high impact repertoires in Spain results, unsurprisingly, in some of them being framed as illegal – such was a 2015 strike by *Telefonica* TV and Internet installers which included, according to the protest target, “over 800 acts of sabotage and vandalism”¹⁰⁵ of company’s property across Spain. Although this was a private conflict, it, too, was framed as partisan, as *El Mundo's* reporting focus was the relation between one of the strike organisers and *Podemos* – the article title is elucidating in this regard: “From protecting Pablo Iglesias [the *Podemos* leader] on Labour Day to being arrested for sabotage”¹⁰⁶.

Inherently political are “*escraches*”, a high impact protest repertoire which begins being employed during the anti-austerity protest cycle, particularly in relation to house repossessions. These protest events are repeatedly described as illegal – as well as unacceptable, having no place in the public sphere and, at times, violent, including as

¹⁰³ *El Mundo*, “Un diputado nacional de ERC lidera el asalto al domicilio del director de El Mundo”, published on August 14th, 2005.

¹⁰⁴ «Diputados de la CUP rompen imágenes del Rey en el Parlament», *El País* cover of December 16th, 2016.

¹⁰⁵ «Según la empresa, durante la huelga, la policía ha acreditado más de 800 sabotajes y actos vandálicos sobre la red, las infraestructuras y algunos vehículos de la compañía en distintos puntos de España», *El País*, “Telefónica lanza un plan para reparar 40.000 averías causadas por la huelga”, published on May 17th, 2015 (my translation).

¹⁰⁶ *El Mundo*, “De arropar a Pablo Iglesias el 1 de Mayo, a detenido por sabotajes”, published on May 14th, 2015 (my translation).

gender-based violence (this is addressed in the Non-Protest section). For example, banners hung outside a PP leader's home in 2013 were condemned as intolerable, illegitimate, and unfair, and described as a useless attack by the party¹⁰⁷, which encouraged their members to denounce this form of protest to the police as assault¹⁰⁸.

Further, since the word “*escrache*” acquired – or was given – such a negative semantic value in the language of protest, it has been employed to refer to protest that does not, objectively, constitute an “*escrache*”, but rather a boycott or a demonstration, which are average and low impact repertoires, respectively – for example, university students boycotts of politicians speaking engagements start being described as “*escraches*” from the end of the anti-austerity protest cycle. Such was the case in Barcelona in 2019, when pro-independence students boycotted a conference of a PP candidate, who, in the name of democracy¹⁰⁹, described it as “*«a gruesome spectacle of young, posh, reactionary, subsidised, spoiled, totalitarian brats, intending to kidnap the university and convert it at the service of a nationalist totalitarian project»*”. The PP would then directly blame the central government, led by PSOE, for the incident¹¹⁰.

Illegality in Spain is also connected to the locale of protest, and to a particular location – the national or regional parliaments:

- The parliament president, in 2010, asked police to intervene during a demonstration by Saharawi activists at the national parliament galleries:
“*«Please expel the people shouting from the room and take their names, in case they are committing any offence or crime. Hand them over to the Congress police station»*”¹¹¹,

¹⁰⁷ «El PP... ha tachado de “intolerable” el escrache y ha condenado de manera “rotunda” este tipo de “ataques”. Asimismo, ha recordado que “además de ilegítimo es injusto e inútil”», *El Mundo*, “Escrache al dirigente del PP Carlos Floriano en su vivienda de Cáceres”, published on May 5th, 2015 (my translation).

¹⁰⁸ *El Mundo*, «Diputados del PP denuncian ante la Policía acoso en sus domicilios», published on March 26th, 2013.

¹⁰⁹ «“La democracia entra por la puerta principal”», *El Mundo*, cover of April 12th, 2019.

¹¹⁰ «“un espectáculo dantesco de jóvenes niños totalitarios, pijos, reaccionarios, subvencionados, consentidos, que pretendan secuestrar esta universidad y convertirla al servicio de un proyecto totalitario nacionalista”», *El País*, “Estudiantes de la UAB intentan boicotear un acto en el que participaba Cayetana Álvarez de Toledo (PP)”, published on April 11th, 2019 (my translation).

¹¹¹ «“les ruego expulsen de la sala a quienes gritan y tomen sus nombres, por si estuviesen cometiendo alguna falta o delito. Entréguenlos a la comisaría del Congreso”», *El Mundo*, “Detenidos seis horas por insultar a los diputados en el Pleno”, published on December 3rd, 2010 (my translation).

- Pro-choice Femen activists were arrested for demonstrating in the parliament in 2013, and their repertoire was framed as reproachable (*“In countries like Tunisia, feminists from the Femen group are arrested for indecent exposure, in Spain, they are arrested for disturbing the functioning of Congress when it is in plenary session, as stated in article 497 of the Penal Code”*)¹¹².

As for the unconstitutional and threat to the rule of law subframes in Portugal (4.2% and 10.4%, respectively), they frequently appear as an escalation of the illegality subframe – that was the case in the aforementioned student protest of 2003-4, when the University rector *“accused students of committing «a violent act» and behaving «unreasonably, illegally and unconstitutionally»”*¹¹³, and of a truck drivers protest in 2008, with the government declaring it would *“«not condone attitudes contrary to the Constitution, the law or the principles of the rule of law»”*¹¹⁴. This is also a rare case of labour unions condemning a protest event on account of it being unconstitutional:

*“The union that represents truck drivers says [the protest] ... is illegal.... And it argues that workers should not join a strike that is not theirs, but the bosses’... «If an employer interrupts its activity as a form of mobilisation and prevents employees from working, that is lockout. It is prohibited by the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic»”*¹¹⁵.

And on the 2019 truck drivers’ mobilisation, the President of the Republic asked that *“«the values and principles of democratic rule of law be safeguarded, as well as fundamental rights, security, and constitutional normality»”,* and added that *“«all those*

¹¹² *«En países como Túnez, a las feministas del grupo Femen las detienen por atentado al pudor, en España por perturbar el funcionamiento del Congreso cuando está reunido en sesión plenaria, como recoge el artículo 497 del Código Penal»*, *El País*, “Protesta feminista en el Congreso a favor del aborto”, published on October 10th, 2013 (my translation).

¹¹³ *«Reitor acusou os estudantes de cometerem “um ato violento” e de agirem de forma “despropositada, ilegal e inconstitucional”»*, *Público*, “Greve causa conflito entre estudantes e o reitor da Universidade de Coimbra”, published on March 15th, 2003 (my translation).

¹¹⁴ *«O governo... não pactuará com atitudes contrárias à Constituição, à lei ou aos princípios do Estado de Direito»*, *Diário de Notícias*, “Paralisação suspensa até sexta-feira para negociações”, published on June 10th, 2008 (my translation).

¹¹⁵ *«O sindicato que representa os camionistas diz que [o protesto]... é... ilegal. E defende que trabalhadores não devem associar-se a uma greve que não é deles, mas sim dos patrões... “Se uma entidade patronal interrompe a sua atividade como forma de luta e impede os trabalhadores de trabalhar, isso é lock out. Está proibido pela Constituição da República Portuguesa”»*, *Público*, “Sindicato apela aos camionistas para não aderirem à paralisação”, published on June 9th, 2008 (my translation).

involved in this conflict between private entities» should seek «fair solutions, without disproportionately sacrificing the Portuguese citizenry»¹¹⁶.

These statements are also indicative of the presence of another subframe – that of protest that does not belong in the public sphere (representing 31.5% of the negative Democracy frame in Portugal), as it is a conflict between private actors, which, therefore, should be solved in private. The 2003-4 student protest was, similarly, framed as a private matter (in the aforementioned words of the rector: “*«What I said was that I wouldn’t call the police to solve an internal problem of the university»*”). In addition, they reveal the interconnection between protest framed as unconstitutional and as a threat to the rule of law, also expressed in the following:

- The Minister of Education declared that the (same 2003-4) student protest constituted a “*violation of the rule of law*”¹¹⁷,
- The destruction of transgenic corn was brought to the parliament by PSD, the main party in the opposition, precisely because they framed it as a violation of the rule of law: “*«what happened... means the denial of State authority... an act of banditry... only comparable to the savage occupations of 1975»*”¹¹⁸ (and referred to the memory of the democratic transition to delegitimise the protest),
- And a judges’ strike in 2018 was negatively evaluated by the Prime Minister (“*«this type of protest is not suitable for holders of a sovereignty body»*”), the Minister of Justice (“*«discrediting» of the judiciary*”), and the President of the Supreme Court (“*«seriously worried» about the instability caused by the strike, a repertoire the citizenry does not understand*”)¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁶ «*pedindo que fossem “salvaguardados os valores e princípios do Estado de direito democrático e, neles, os direitos fundamentais, a segurança e a normalidade constitucional”... pedir a “todos os envolvidos neste conflito entre entidades privadas” que procurassem “soluções justas, sem sacrificar, de modo desproporcionado, os portugueses”*», Público, “Governo recorre às forças armadas para repor mínimos nos transportes”, published on August 13th, 2019 (my translation).

¹¹⁷ «*“proibir o acesso a um edifício público é uma violação do estado de direito”*» Público, “Ministra considera que não há nada que justifique protestos desta natureza”, published on November 11th, 2003 (my translation).

¹¹⁸ «*“o que aconteceu... significa a negação da autoridade do Estado... um ato de banditismo... só comparável às ocupações selvagens de 1975”*», Público, “PSD quer reunião extraordinária na AR com ministro para explicar acção da GNR”, published on August 20th, 2007 (my translation).

¹¹⁹ «*“descredibilização” da justiça... “este tipo de protesto não é adequado a titulares de um órgão de soberania”... “seriamente preocupado” pela instabilidade provocada pela greve... teme que os cidadãos*

Finally, protest can also be framed as anti-democratic and / or a threat to democracy (12.5% in Portugal) – that was the case during the anti-austerity protest cycle, at an occasion when pensioners sang “*Grândola Vila Morena*” (the musical symbol of the Carnations Revolution) from the national parliament galleries, and were reprimanded by the parliament’s president and subsequently expelled: “*This is not the place for demonstrations and I ask you to leave the galleries... What you are doing does not help democracy*”¹²⁰. The already mentioned 2003-4 student protest is also a significant example of popular mobilisation being framed as non-democratic, and, in addition, as a sign of the failure of the modern student movement to uphold the heritage of students’ resistance against fascism – a professor who had acted as Higher Education State Secretary described the protest as an “*«intolerable... disrespect for democratic institutions... synonymous with the weakening of the student movement»*”, and the director of another higher education institution added: “*«In May 68, we were fighting against the dictatorship... This is not the image [the student protest] is passing»*”¹²¹.

Naturally, there are instances when protest is framed as anti-democratic when that is indeed the case – an assault on a PS politician in 2003 was considered a sign that the Portuguese democracy needed constant reinforcement¹²², and subjected to a unanimous parliamentary protest vote, condemning it as “*anti-democratic*”, describing it as a “*black night for democracy*”, and calling for police intervention and punishment¹²³. Election boycotts, especially those including destruction of ballots combined with average or high impact repertoires, are also described in that way – “[t]he Presidency of the Republic condemned the demonstrations..., describing them as

tenham dificuldade em compreender esta forma de luta», Público, “Juizes falam em 90% de adesão à greve, presidente do Supremo em instabilidade”, published on January 21st, 2018 (my translation).

¹²⁰ «*“Este não é o lugar de manifestações e eu pedia aos senhores que saíssem das galerias... Não ajuda à democracia o que os senhores estão a fazer”», Público, “Reformados cantam Grândola e são expulsos”, published on May 4th, 2013 (my translation).*

¹²¹ «*“atitude intolerável... no respeito pelas instituições democráticas... sinónimo do enfraquecimento do movimento estudantil”... “No Maio de 68, lutávamos contra a ditadura... Não é essa a imagem que Coimbra está a passar”», Público, “Outras reacções”, published on November 11th, 2003 (my translation).*

¹²² «*“são sintomas de que a nossa cultura democrática precisa de um constante fortalecimento”», Público, “PS quer expulsar Fátima Felgueiras”, published on May 12th, 2003 (my translation).*

¹²³ «*O voto condena as agressões, considerando os atos como “antidemocráticos”, e classificando o sucedido como uma “noite negra para a democracia”... pede ainda às autoridades competentes que “se empenhem na identificação e punição exemplar dos responsáveis por estas agressões vis e criminosas”», Público, “AR aprova por unanimidade voto de protesto pelas agressões a Assis”, published on May 23rd, 2003 (my translation).*

«a challenge to democracy»” and a mere police case; and as illegal”¹²⁴). These are, despite the harsh vocabulary, constructive criticisms – as the main message is that democracy needs constant reinforcement.

In Spain, where the ‘Threat to Democracy’ subframe is significantly more present (20.5%), this can signify that the very understanding of democracy is contested – the aforementioned demonstration against the mitigated sentence of an ETA prisoner in 2007, which was described as intrinsically democratic by PP, is framed as anti-democratic by opposing political parties: the PSOE president compared it with a Francoist rally (“«*The same aesthetics, the same insults, the same use of Spain and the flag... Taking the extreme right out of the closet is very dangerous*»”), IU argued that the march inaugurated “«*a new phase of democratic destabilisation*»”, and ERC added that PP was creating “«*authentic civil war fascism*»” and had not renounced “«*the spirit of July 18th, 1936*»”¹²⁵. This event is particularly meaningful as it is also demonstrative of the use of the memory of the democratic transition to delegitimise – partisan – street politics. In effect, this protest event is considered by the opposition as rather removed from the streets, as they see it as nothing but a political move in electoral competition and attack it as such.

This ambiguity can also be produced by the media – for example, reporting on a 2012 anti-austerity demonstration organised by about 300 civil society organisations and labour unions, *El Mundo* put on its cover: “*Most of the demonstrators were transported [acarreados] in 850 buses chartered by regional labour unions’ offices. According to the Royal Academy, a transported person [acarreado] is «a person who is taken by bus to a place to participate in a demonstration or to vote*»¹²⁶” – the implication is that the

¹²⁴ «A Presidência da República insurgiu-se contra as manifestações..., qualificando-as como “um desafio à democracia” e um mero caso de polícia; são contrárias à legalidade», *Público*, “Presidente diz que manifestações são desafio à democracia” published on November 24th, 2004 (my translation).

¹²⁵ «“La misma estética, los mismos insultos, la misma utilización de España y la bandera... Sacar a la extrema derecha de los armarios es muy peligroso”... España asiste a “una nueva fase de desestabilización democrática”... “El PP está fabricando auténtico fascismo ambiental guerracivilista. La derecha no ha abjurado del espíritu del 18 de julio de 1936”», *El País*, “El fiscal general acusa al PP de usar el terrorismo con fines políticos”, published on March 10th, 2007 (my translation).

¹²⁶ «La mayoría de los manifestantes fueron acarreados en 850 autobuses fletados por las direcciones autonómicas de las centrales. Según la Real Academia, un acarreado es “una persona que es llevada en autobús a un lugar para que participe en una manifestación o para que vote”», *El Mundo* cover, published on September 16th, 2012 (my translation).

people participating in the protest event were mindlessly brought to the capital to comply with the will of protest organisers, and had very little political agency, which, in effect, renders the demonstration undemocratic, apolitical, and illegitimate. The fact that this was on the cover of the newspaper reinforces that message.

As in Portugal, there are also instances of student mobilisation being framed as undemocratic, but the expressions used are, again, stronger – during a 2008 protest against the Catalan university reform, the political party *Ciutadans* was impeded by students from joining a demonstration, and described that as a “«*moral lynching more typical of times reminiscent of Nazism or fascism*»¹²⁷”, and a 2016 boycott of the former PSOE Prime Minister Felipe González conference at a University was framed as “*totalitarian «escrache»*”¹²⁸ by PP.

“*Escraches*”, in fact, are framed as intrinsically anti-democratic – described as “*attacks on «representatives of popular sovereignty»*” and as “*democratically intolerable*”. There is, however, a clear counter-frame: in one article reporting on one “*escrache*”, *El País* includes opinions by law scholars who claim the repertoire is legitimate, provided it remains peaceful, and states most of the Spanish population approves of it¹²⁹.

A similar duality is found framing the anti-austerity movement, considered as democracy in practice by participants and organisers, but often described as non-democratic – *El Mundo*, in particular, tends to frame “*Acampadas*” and other protest events in the cycle as not democratic, or even anti-democratic: the first sentence of an article reporting on the “*Acampada 15-M*” refers to it as a “*libertarian settlement*”¹³⁰, another article declares that the protesters are against freedom of the press, a right

¹²⁷ «“*linchamiento moral más propio de épocas que recuerdan al nazismo o al fascismo*”», *El Mundo*, “Agreden a Ciutadans en una marcha contra la ley de Educación catalana”, published on November 14th, 2008 (my translation).

¹²⁸ «“*Condeno el escrache totalitario que ha sufrido Felipe González en la UAM*”», *El País*, “Decenas de violentos impiden un coloquio en la Universidad Autónoma”, published on October 20th, 2016 (my translation).

¹²⁹ «*ataques a “representantes de la soberanía popular” ... Democráticamente intolerable... “Es legítima si es pacífica, se produce en la vía pública y no se viola el espacio privado. Ellos son nuestros representantes. Si la gente quiere que conozcan su realidad, están en su derecho de informar, incluso, si es de forma tan directa”*», *El País*, “Cuando la protesta llega hasta la puerta de casa”, published on March 23rd, 2013 (my translation).

¹³⁰ “*Acampada Sol se ha convertido ya en un asentamiento libertario*”, *El Mundo*, “El 15-M busca un consenso de mínimos” published on May 26th, 2011 (my translation).

without which democracy cannot be conceived (the title of the article ironically reads *“Democracy... without freedom of information”*¹³¹) and an interview with the PSOE Minister of Labour features his message to protesters in the subtitle: *“To the youngsters of the 15-M Movement: calling democracy ‘real’ or ‘popular’ is typical of dictatorships”*. The title is also telling, as it exerts the supremacy of electoral politics over street politics (*“Young people must be told that change is best achieved at the polls”*) and so is the fact that participants in the *Acampada* are solely described as youthful – and, by consequence, inexperienced, naïve, unaware of the proper way of conducting themselves politically, and, therefore, needing to be told how to act and what to say¹³². What is more, this protest event was also described as a threat to the rule of law, having usurped the right to represent the Spanish people in defiance of all established powers, including that of the State and of sovereignty actors¹³³.

A particularly visible protest event at the Catalan parliament in 2011, called under the slogan *“Aturem el parlament”* (in Catalan, or *“Paremos el parlamento”* in Spanish – Stop the Parliament) was described as a *“siege”*¹³⁴ and as an inadmissible and violent threat to democracy and the rule of law by the regional government: *“the protesters crossed some inadmissible «red lines» in a democracy”*¹³⁵ and *“«serious, very serious crimes were committed in a democracy» [including] parliamentary obstruction and assault on elected representatives [and] crimes against the institutions of the State”*, causing all parties to unite in the condemnation of the protest event: *“[t]he presence of a common enemy, the violent protesters, created a kind of unity among the members of parliament”*¹³⁶.

¹³¹ *El Mundo*, “Democracia... sin libertad de información”, published on May 18th, 2011 (my translation).

¹³² *«Dice a los jóvenes del Movimiento 15-M que apellidar a la democracia como ‘real’ o ‘popular’ es propio de dictaduras»*, *El Mundo*, “«Hay que decir a los jóvenes que los cambios se logran mejor en las urnas»”, published on May 20th, 2011 (my translation).

¹³³ *«El movimiento 15-M se ha arrogado la representación del pueblo español y desafía a todos los poderes, los del Estado y los demás»*, *El País*, “Los ‘indignados’ retan al Gobierno”, published on May 20th, 2011 (my translation).

¹³⁴ *El País*, “El 15-M condena la violencia de Barcelona pero evita la autocrítica”, published on June 18th, 2011; *El País* cover, published on June 16th 2011; *El País*, “La deriva violenta de los indignados bloquea el acceso al Parlamento catalán”, published on June 16th, 2011.

¹³⁵ *«los manifestantes franquearon unas “líneas rojas” inadmisibles en democracia»*, *El País* cover, published on June 16th, 2011 (my translation).

¹³⁶ *«Los indignados, a los que la Audiencia Nacional ha citado a declarar por un delito contra las instituciones del Estado»*, *El País*, “50 antidisturbios irrumpen en los juzgados de Barcelona para detener a seis indignados”, published on October 7th, 2011; *«“Se cometieron delitos graves, muy graves en una democracia”... obstrucción parlamentaria y la agresión a diputados... La presencia de un enemigo común,*

This protest event, thus, is also revealing of the threat to the rule of law subframe (less prevalent in this country, at 7.3%, than in the Portuguese case), which emerges from the following statements by the general police director and the Madrid government delegate: “«An attempt to forcibly enter the congress, no matter how weak, is an attack on the rule of law»”¹³⁷ and “«we shall apply the law in case of another demonstration – with or without authorisation – in front of the Congress»”¹³⁸).

Pro-independence protest, additionally, is frequently described as non-democratic, a threat to the rule of law and fundamentally unconstitutional – that was the case with the Catalanian referendum: prior to it, the prime minister called on Catalan leaders to “return «to rationality and legality»”, stating the plebiscite would not happen because it was against the will and the rights of the vast majority of Spaniards¹³⁹, and protest policing by the *Mossos d'Esquadra* during the referendum was criticised as insufficient or even complicit by those political actors opposing the act, framed as a breach of their constitutional duty and a betrayal of the rule of law¹⁴⁰. And the ensuing popular mobilisation was also harshly described – a pro-independence strike was described by the PP congress spokesperson as a “Nazi-type” strike, to which he added “«I have the feeling that ERC, CUP, and other organisations [the protest organisers] want there to be deaths in Catalonia»”¹⁴¹. The unconstitutional subframe (8.7% in the country, twice more significant than in the Portuguese case) is, thus – and unsurprisingly –, particularly present in relation to independentist claims.

los violentos, creó una especie de unidad entre los diputados», El País, “Un operativo «insuficiente y discriminatorio», published on June 17th, 2011 (my translation).

¹³⁷ «“Un intento de allanamiento del Congreso, por muy débil que sea, es un ataque al Estado de Derecho”», *El Mundo*, “Se cometieron delitos contra las Cámaras”, published on September 27th, 2012.

¹³⁸ «“Se actuará en aplicación de la ley en caso de volver a concentrarse – con o sin autorización – frente al Congreso”», *El Mundo*, “Menos de lo mismo en la nueva ocupación del Congreso”, published on September 27th, 2012 (my translation).

¹³⁹ «El presidente del Gobierno... reclamó ayer a los dirigentes catalanes que ... vuelvan... “a la legalidad”... el referéndum “no se va celebrar” porque es “la liquidación de la voluntad mayoritaria de los españoles, de los derechos de la inmensa mayoría”», *El País*, “Rajoy: “Pueden estar tranquilos. Las cosas volverán a su cauce”, published on September 17th, 2017 (my translation).

¹⁴⁰ «“el incumplimiento de su deber constitucional... traición al Estado de derecho”», *El País*, “Los jueces investigan tanto la desobediencia de los Mossos como las lesiones a ciudadanos”, published on October 12th, 2017.

¹⁴¹ «El portavoz del Partido Popular en el Congreso... tachó ayer de paro “de corte nazi” la huelga auspiciada por el Gobierno catalán y varios sindicatos. Y añadió: “Tengo la sensación de que ERC, la CUP y alguna otra formación quiere que haya muertos en Cataluña”», *El País*, “La CUP arrastra al soberanismo a su estrategia de agitación callejera”, published on October 4th, 2017 (my translation).

Strikes of the judiciary are similarly framed across the border – commenting on a judges strike in 2013, the Spanish Ministry of Justice stated: *“holders of State power should not use «instruments» such as strikes”*¹⁴², and, as in Portugal, these are deemed as not belonging in the shared public sphere. This subframe, which represents 25.7% of the negative Democracy frame in Spain, also emerges in relation to protest repertoires, such as occupations or sit-ins, or of the date chosen to demonstrate – an anti-globalisation sit-in during a BBVA (a Basque bank) assembly, was received by the CEO with zero tolerance and equated to terrorism: *“«With terrorism, you must have zero tolerance. And these people shouting and interrupting a democratic act such as ours are showing what their ideals are in life and that they do not respect the freedom of others»”*¹⁴³, and popular mobilisation on the National Day of Spain is also framed in this way – for example, when the prime minister was booed during the 2009 celebrations in Madrid, the local mayor posited *“«If this were an act of the Government, I would understand that people protest, but this is a State act, so no»”*¹⁴⁴.

The analysis above informs the interpretation of the Democracy frame’s total negative and positive subframes presented in figure 97. It emerges that the illegality subframe is the most current across the border (31.5% in Spain against 28.9% in Portugal) and the second frame in both countries is that describing protest as not having its dutiful place in the shared public space, which is more current in Portugal (23%) than in Spain (21.2%) – values which are, again, very close.

It is on the third most relevant frame that the countries differ – while in Portugal, protest is described as an intrinsically democratic practice in 17.1% of the occurrences of the Democracy frame, against 7.1% in the neighbouring country, here it is the corresponding negative frame that is more prevalent (17.4%, and 8.9% in the Portuguese case) – and,

¹⁴² «“los titulares de un poder del Estado no deben utilizar instrumentos como la huelga”», *El País*, “Sin recursos no podremos investigar la corrupción”, published on February 21st, 2013.

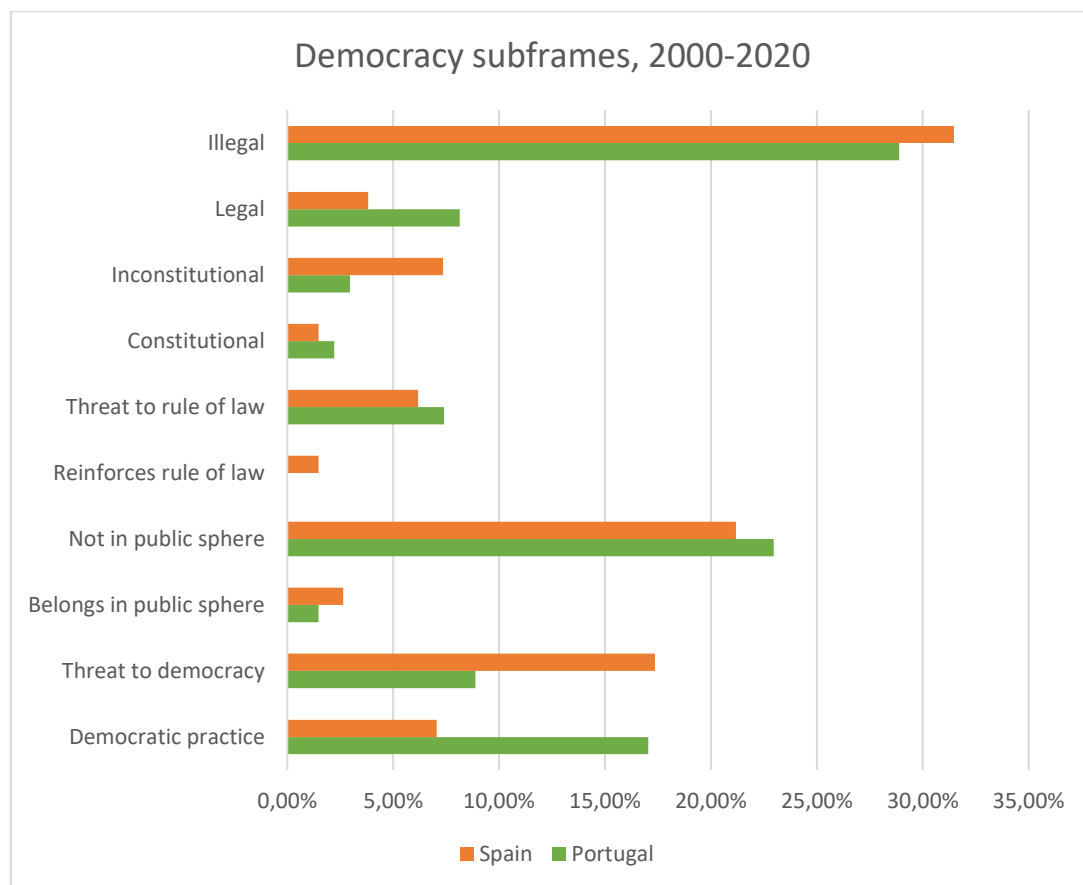
¹⁴³ «“Con el terrorismo hay que tener tolerancia cero. Y estas personas que están gritando e interrumpiendo un acto democrático como el nuestro, están demostrando cuáles son sus ideales en la vida y que no respetan la libertad de los demás”», *El Mundo*, “González pide «tolerancia cero» frente al terrorismo en su primera junta como presidente del BBVA”, published on March 10th, 2002 (my translation).

¹⁴⁴ «“Si esto fuera un acto de Gobierno, entendería que la gente manifestase su protesta, pero si es un acto de Estado, no”», *El País*, “Zapatero se resigna a ser abucheado durante el desfile militar: «Es un rito”», published on October 13th, 2009 (my translation).

as demonstrated above, this subframe is constituted by more impactful or extreme utterances in Spain, where, in addition, there is a discussion of what democracy actually is. It appears, then, that the shared meaning of democracy is more established on the Portuguese side of the border, as competing frames such as the ones found in Spain are mostly absent from the media during the period analysed here. The fact that the legality subframe represents 8.2% of the Democracy frame, against 3.8% in Spain, coupled with the relative absence of both the constitutional (2.2%, and 1.5% in Spain) and unconstitutional frame (3%, vs 7.4% in the Spanish case) confirms this.

This would be complicated by the relevance of the threat to the rule of law subframe, higher in Portugal (7.4%) than in Spain (6.2%) – however, in the Portuguese case, the frame is frequently employed as a caution to protesters, warning them that measures will be taken if they continue or aggravate their dissenting actions, rather than an accusation.

Figure 97. Subframes of the democracy frame in Portugal and Spain, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

Considering protest belonging in the public sphere, it is in Portugal that the negative subframe is more present (23%, and 21.2% in Spain), and the opposite occurs with the opposing subframe (1.5% in Portugal and 2.7% in Spain) – this is, however, nuanced by the fact that there seems to be a shared understanding of protest as belonging in the Portuguese public sphere, thereby eliminating the need to reaffirm it. On the contrary, the negative subframe seems to occur in the country particularly when it is needed to reinforce that a particular protest event is not acceptable, as demonstrated by the exploration of the presence of this frame across the series presented above. The same occurs in relation to the positive rule of law and constitution subframes. There is not one single instance of protest being described as abiding by or reinforcing the rule of law in Portugal, but this seems to indicate the absence of the need to affirm that protest can also play that role in the country (and the positive constitutional subframe appears mostly to remind the audience that the right to protest as enshrined in the Constitution and should, therefore, be respected).

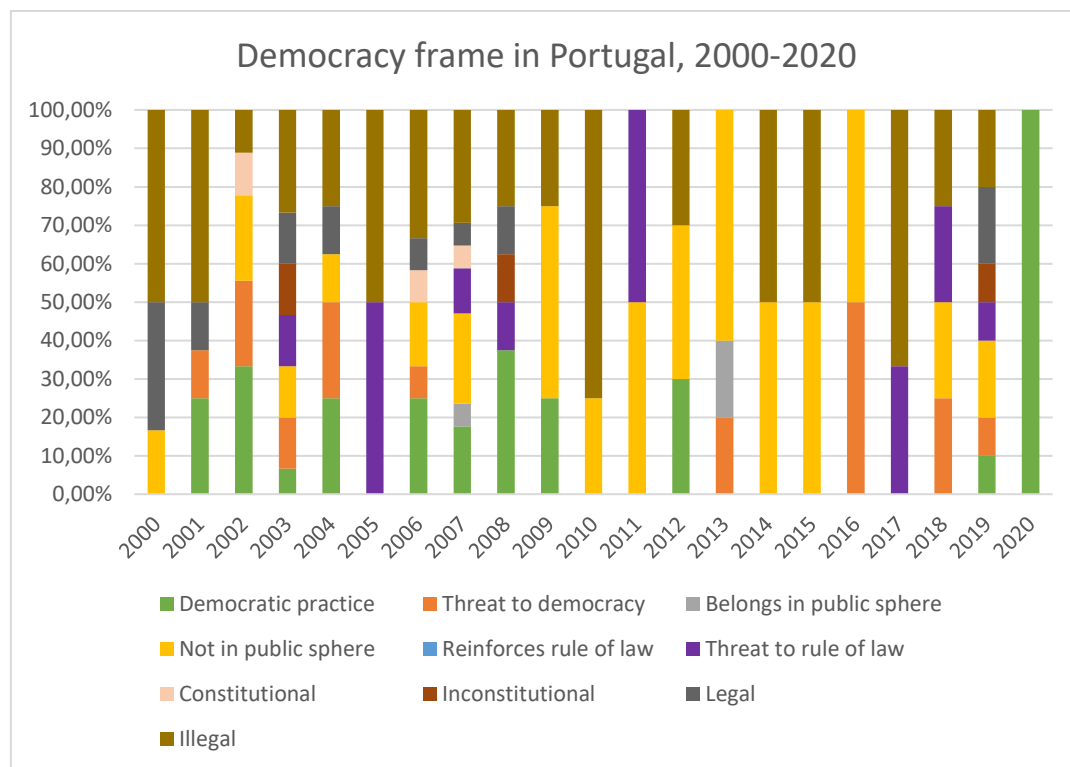
In Spain, two trends emerge from the analysis presented above – all frames have a stronger negative value, and these are expressed in stronger negative terms. The fact that protest is discussed in printed media primarily by those engaged in electoral politics is significant here, and so is the relative absence of civil society actors in framing their protest events. As such, the findings presented are self-reinforcing, as street politics is framed mostly as a partisan affair, deserving condemnation or support in accordance with each political party's (temporal) positions.

I finally consider the yearly evolution of the presence of the democracy subframes per country. In Portugal (figure 98), illegality emerges as the most common frame in most years (50% or over in 2000-2001, 2005, 2010, 2014-2015 and 2017), but it is not as relevant in years of heightened mobilisation – with the exception of the first two years in the series, the illegal subframe represents less than one third the democracy frame in 2002 (11.1%), 2008 (25%) and 2011-2012 (0% and 30%).

The second most common subframe – protest not belonging in the public sphere – becomes salient from the beginning of the Great Recession onwards (50% already in 2009, between 40% and 60% at the height of the anti-austerity protest cycle) and maintains its relevancy until the end of the series. Interestingly, the third most common

subframe – protest as a democratic practice – is not particularly present during most of the anti-austerity protest cycle (0% in 2010-2011 and 2013-2014, and 30% in 2012), being mostly present in the first half of the series (33.3% in 2002 and 25% in 2001, 2004, and 2006, as well as 37.5% in 2008). Its opposing subframe – threat to democracy – is absent in most years, but it is quite salient in the first five years of the series (between 12.5% and 25% in the period between 2001 and 2004), and again following the pinnacle of the anti-austerity protest cycle (20% in 2013, 50% in 2016, and 25% in 2018). This, too, is indicative of the battle over the meaning of democracy that was raging in Spain during those years not taking place – or at the very least, not finding its way to – in the Portuguese media.

Figure 98. Yearly breakdown of the democracy frame in Portugal, 2000-2020.

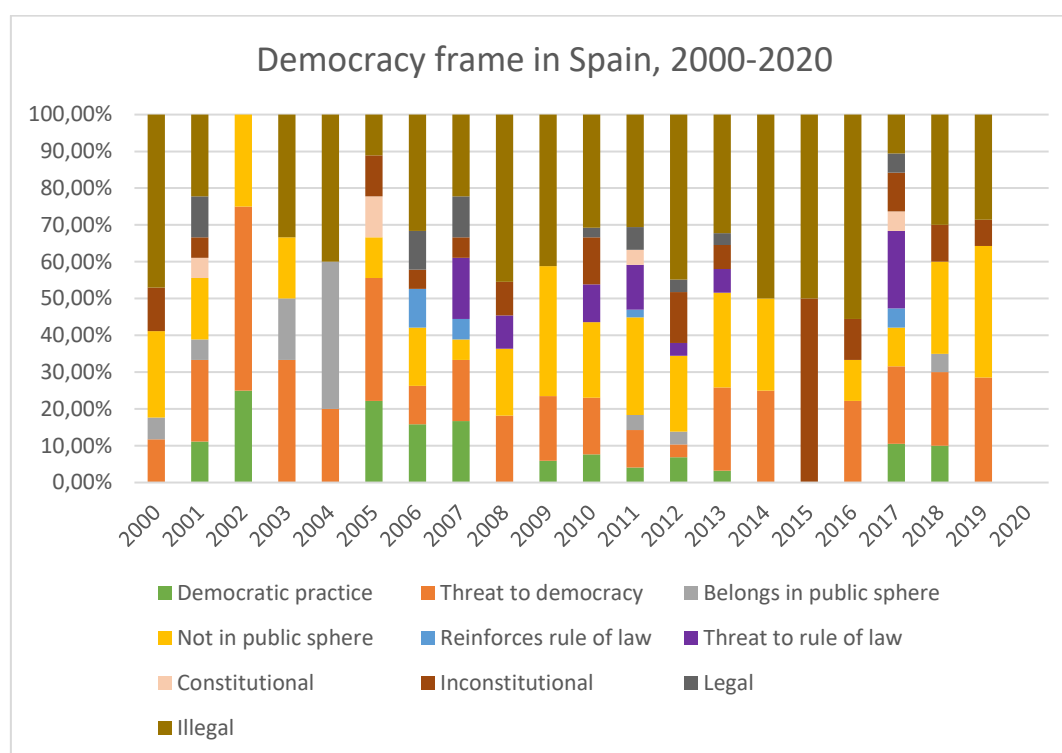


Own elaboration.

The illegality subframe is also the most common across the Spanish case (figure 99), and it is particularly so from 2008 onwards, representing at least 30% of the subframes between that year and 2016 – and over 50% of subframes in 2014, 2015 and 2016. Moreover, this frame runs in hand with statements that argue that the protest does not belong in the public sphere, particularly between 2009 and 2014, when this frame always corresponds to over one fifth of all democracy subframes.

Interestingly, during the anti-austerity protest cycle, business associations channelled the message that the protest needed to be removed from the public space (as per the statement of a shop owners association: “«another Sintel (a camp that was in La Castellana for several months) cannot be allowed in the heart of the city»”¹⁴⁵), a concern shared by PP, which considered turning to street politics to end the “Acampada Sol”: the secretary general “declared that the party was «very seriously» considering summoning its 90000 members to demonstrate against 15-M and in support of [Madrid] businessmen”¹⁴⁶. This subframe also becomes more salient in the last three years of the series (25% in 2018 and 35.7% in 2019), relating mostly to pro-independence protest, and, interconnectedly, to the development of increasingly divided positions in the Spanish political sphere, which are reflected on the discourse published in the media.

Figure 99. Yearly breakdown of the democracy frame in Spain, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

¹⁴⁵ «“no se puede permitir otro Sintel (campamento que estuvo varios meses en La Castellana) en pleno centro de la ciudad”», *El País*, “Los comerciantes, alarmados por el descenso de las ventas”, published on May 22nd, 2011 (my translation).

¹⁴⁶ «Granados declaró que se planteaba “muy seriamente” convocar a los 90.000 afiliados del PP de Madrid para manifestarse contra el 15-M y en apoyo de los empresarios», *El País*, “Rubalcaba: «200 personas no pueden poner patas arriba una ciudad»”, published on August 6th, 2011 (my translation).

That is, however, not the case with protest framed as a threat to democracy, a subframe appearing mostly in the first six years of the series (2002 and 2005 stand out, as this subframe represents 50% and 33.3% of those years' Democracy frame) and again from 2013 onwards (with the exception of 2015, which features a very low number of eventful events). In the rest of the years between 2013 and 2019, this subframe constitutes one fifth of the subframes relating to democracy. This is indicative of two trends – the fact that a part of Spanish politicians, led by PP, at the height of the anti-austerity protest cycle, was not particularly interested in it (a comment from one PP leader at the beginning of the cycle is significant here – “*«these are ‘antisystem’ movements that do not cause any concern to PP»*”¹⁴⁷), and the other part, most notably PSOE, was firstly more concerned with harnessing protesters' votes (in the words of PSOE candidate to the Madrid government, reacting to the first iteration of the protest camps: “*«I ask young people to rebel and I identify with their demands... I say to young people that there is a channel to change the world, which is [formal] politics»*”¹⁴⁸).

The result is that, despite the presence of very visible protest events (including protest camps and demonstrations at regional and national parliaments) which were framed as anti-democratic, or even as an attack on democracy, that was not the most salient frame during the protest cycle (and, in 2012, although the proportions are low, protest was more frequently framed as a democratic practice – 6.9% - than as a threat to democracy – 3.5%). Nonetheless, the fact that, during the cycle, the illegality and 'not in the public sphere' subframes are always more important than subframes expressly framing protest as a democratic practice is demonstrative that the protesters' demand for real democracy and the discussions held in the public sphere about what that would actually entail barely made their way to the mainstream media. The framing of the first years of the protest cycle, thus, was not exclusively adverse. This would change from 2013 onwards, and one repertoire in particular – “*escraches*” – elicited the tensest descriptors.

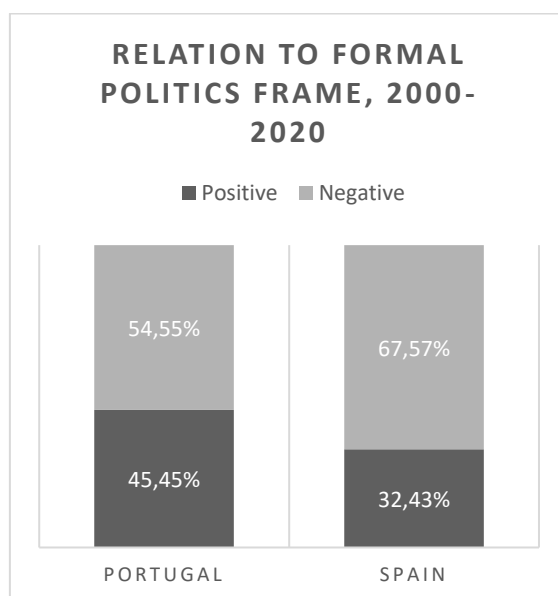
¹⁴⁷ «*se trata de movimientos “antisistema que al PP no preocupan”*», *El País*, “La indignación inquieta a la izquierda”, published on May 17th, 2011 (my translation).

¹⁴⁸ «*“Yo llamo a los jóvenes a la rebeldía y me identifico con sus reivindicaciones... Les digo a los jóvenes que hay un canal para cambiar el mundo, que es la política”*», *El País*, published on May 18th, 2011 (my translation).

5.2. The Relation to Formal Politics frame

As hinted above by the statement of PSOE's candidate to the Madrid government, the Relation to Formal Politics frame expresses the understanding of protest's role in democratic politics, with either a positive (popular mobilisation is seen as a true avenue of political participation with the ability to speak to power and to influence formal politics) or a negative value (street politics is understood as standing beneath formal politics, with no – or very little – ability to shape it). This dichotomy is captured in figure 100, which exhibits an important distinction: while in Portugal almost half of the utterances on protest concerning this relation are positive (45.5%), that only occurs in less than a third of the cases in Spain (32.4%).

Figure 100. Relation to Formal Politics frame in Portugal and Spain, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

It is important to notice that this is the least prevalent subframe, and there are years in the series where it is absent – eleven years in Portugal and six in Spain. In the first country, there are four years when this relation is framed in exclusively positive terms – 2001, 2013, 2015 and 2019 (figure 101). These include the following utterances:

- CGTP, the protest event organiser, on the aforementioned sit-in in several ministries in 2013: “«*There was no invasion or occupation, there was an*

intervention by labour unions demanding meetings [with ministers]... Isn't it a right to walk in and ask for meetings with ministers?»¹⁴⁹,

- In 2015, during the political turmoil that followed the parliamentary elections, the incumbent parties, PSD and CDS-PP, supported a demonstration outside the parliament asking for the maintenance of the right wing coalition (simultaneous to another demonstration, at the same location and with higher participation, asking for a left wing coalition government) – in the words of the Prime Minister, who had, at the beginning of his tenure, manifested hostility to popular mobilisation and asserted the primacy of electoral politics (*“he left a warning to those who thought «they can set fire to the streets and help to burn Portugal... Those who think they can shake things up in order to transform the period we are living into a war with the Government, when what exists is a war against delay, debt and waste, they will know that we know how to dialogue, but that we also know how to decide»¹⁵⁰”), uttered from the Parliament balcony: “«I come to congratulate the people who are demonstrating here»¹⁵¹.*

While it is expected for organisers of popular mobilisation to frame their actions as a way of influencing formal politics, the prime minister’s utterances are worth noticing, as they signal the inclination to consider street politics as an avenue to reach formal politics when it supports the government, and to interpret protest in the other direction when it does not – and here, PS prime minister’s reaction to teachers’ protests in 2008 is significant: *“«It would be inadmissible if government action depended on... demonstrations... Government action is determined by the Portuguese people when they choose the government. This must not be forgotten»¹⁵².* And a day of concerted

¹⁴⁹ «“Não houve invasão ou ocupação, houve intervenção de sindicatos exigindo reuniões... Então não é um direito entrar e pedir reuniões com ministros?”», *Público*, “PSP nega reforço nos ministérios e garante que ocupação era ‘expectável””, published on November 28th, 2013.

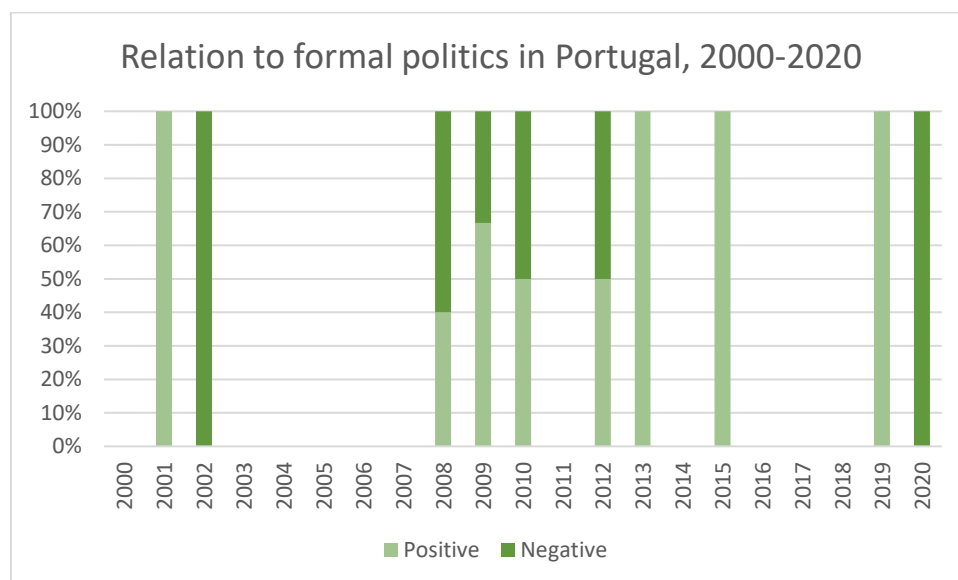
¹⁵⁰ «deixou um aviso aos que pensavam “que podem incendiar as ruas e ajudar a queimar Portugal... Aqueles que pensam que podem agitar as coisas de modo a transformar o período que estamos a viver numa guerra com o Governo, quando o que existe é uma guerra contra o atraso, a dívida e o desperdício, saberão que nós sabemos dialogar, mas que também sabemos decidir”», *Público*, “Um Governo não revela preocupação mas fica muito atento”, published on November 24th, 2011 (my translation).

¹⁵¹ «“Venho felicitar as pessoas que aqui estão a manifestar-se”», *Público*, “Pingue-pongue à porta da Assembleia da República: esquerda, direita, esquerda, direita”, published on November 11th, 2015 (my translation).

¹⁵² «“Mas era o que faltava se a ação governativa dependesse agora do nível de manifestações... Quem determina a ação governativa são os portugueses quando escolhem o governo. É bom que não nos

mobilisation across sectors in 2002 (one of the two years that exclusively features the negative side of this frame), the Minister of Labour (one of the targets of the demonstrations, from CDS-PP), declared that *“the Labour Code project was presented by a government that was «freely elected... There cannot be any minority dictatorships»”*¹⁵³. More recently, in 2020 (the other year with exclusively negative frames), a decision not to allow housing crisis demonstrators to participate in a local government assembly (when that would be a normal occurrence) was considered appropriate in a democratic polity (*“«It seems to us that the decision was adequate and it in no way affects the functioning of this assembly»”*¹⁵⁴).

Figure 101. Relation to Formal Politics frame in Portugal, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

In Spain (figure 102), there are two years when the relation of street politics to formal politics is framed exclusively in positive terms (2009 and 2018), and solely negatively in eight years (2003-2004, 2007, 2010, 2012-2013 and 2015-2016). Both exclusively positive frames are the work of PP, once whilst in the opposition and once as the

esqueçamos disto”», *Diário de Notícias*, “Professores já ameaçam Sócrates”, published on March 9th, 2008 (my translation).

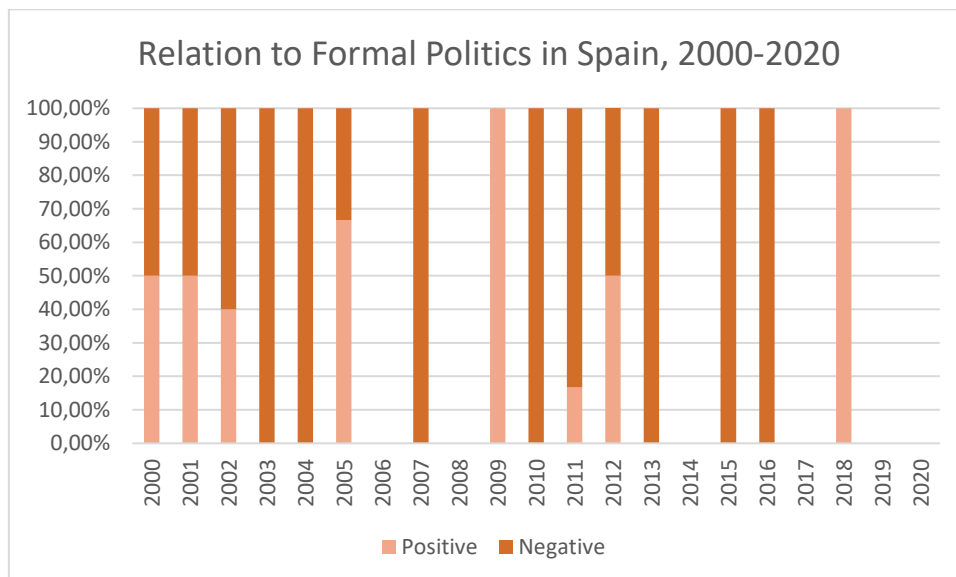
¹⁵³ «*O projeto do Código do Trabalho foi apresentado por um governo “eleito livremente... Não pode haver ditaduras de minorias”*», *Público*, “Ministro acusa CGTP de deslealdade”, published on October 31st, 2002 (my translation).

¹⁵⁴ «*“A decisão... parece-nos não só adequada como em nada fere o funcionamento desta assembleia”*», *Público*, “Medo de uma «invasão» fecha assembleia municipal a cidadãos”, published on March 11th, 2020 (my translation).

majority government, and occur in relation to gender equality, although in completely different directions:

- in 2009, on a pro-life demonstration, *“Rajoy described the demonstration as a success and asked the President of the Executive... to «stop acting arrogantly, listen to the people and withdraw a law that only serves to divide society»”*¹⁵⁵,
- in 2018, after the 8-M demonstration, the prime minister declared his satisfaction for the support and the transversality of the protest, while a top PP leader stated that the demonstration had been a *“«loud cry» and that the central government, the Congress, the regional presidents, and the mayors must «take note»”*¹⁵⁶.

Figure 102. Relation to formal politics frame in Spain, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

It is worth noticing that the 2018's utterances were a result of the party's perception of the protest event as successful, as its positioning prior to the feminist strike had been delegitimising: it had described the protest as the work of the elites, who were, in addition (and contradiction), dangerous extremists, the party spokesperson stated

¹⁵⁵ «Rajoy calificó de éxito la manifestación y pidió al presidente del Ejecutivo... que “deje de actuar con soberbia, escuche a la gente y retire una ley que sólo sirve para dividir a la sociedad”», *El País*, “Rajoy asegura que la ley del aborto divide a los Españoles”, published on October 19th, 2009 (my translation).

¹⁵⁶ «uno de los dirigentes de más peso en el PP aseguró que el 8-M ha sido un “clamor”, y que el Gobierno central, el Congreso, los presidentes autonómicos y los alcaldes han de “tomar nota”», *El País*, “El PP oye el 8-M y prepara medidas”, published on March 10th, 2018 (my translation).

women would not be able to join the mobilisation as they could not afford to miss a day's wage, and an official document stated PP would not support the strike as "*it constituted an attack on the western lifestyle*" (an argument that was also used by *Ciudadanos* to justify the same positioning¹⁵⁷).

What is more, the Spanish feminist movement which organised the 8-M strike is unabashedly pro-choice, and PP's support for this protest event stands in staunch contradiction with their previous standing. This is demonstrative of how frames can vary across periods of time (even in the space of a week, as was the case in 2018), and how they reflect shared understandings in a political community around a certain issue and their evolution, shaping the expected discourse. It is also indicative of the possibility of instrumentalising opposing frames for political gain (a protest event initially framed as partisan and extremist was, a few days later, declared to be representative and praised for its universality).

The negative side of this frame appears more intensely in the years of the anti-austerity protest cycle (100% in 2010, 2012 and 2013 and 83.3% in 2011), reflected in statements claiming the primacy of electoral politics over street politics, indicating that protest targets did not deem the newly created social movement as able to influence formal politics – and, in fact, protesters and protest organisers themselves, at the beginning of the protest cycle, also expressly placed their message as outside the realm of electoral politics as they knew it, for being incapable of handling the serious issues that were affecting the citizenry, demanding, instead, a completely different way of doing politics (as made clear in the *Democracia Real Ya!* manifesto).

This is exemplified by the already mentioned reaction to the *Acampada 15-M* by the PSOE candidate – "*I say to young people that there is a channel to change the world, which is [formal] politics*"¹⁵⁸, and on PP's reaction to the "siege" of the Catalan parliament in 2011: "*«There are many Spaniards who are dissatisfied with the situation.*

¹⁵⁷ «PP, concretamente a su portavoz... quien insinuó que las mujeres no están como para perder dinero ese día», *El Mundo*, "El PSOE llama a la movilización el 8-M", published on March 3rd, 2018 (my translation); «una huelga que en sus fundamentos pretendía terminar con "el modo occidental de vida"», *El País*, "El Gobierno no tiene un plan global tras el 8-M", published on March 10th, 2018 (my translation).

¹⁵⁸ «"Les digo a los jóvenes que hay un canal para cambiar el mundo, que es la política"», *El País*, published on May 18th, 2011 (my translation).

More than 23 million, a majority, have expressed it at the polls... The law and the will of the majority must be respected. The opposite is undemocratic behaviour”¹⁵⁹, a discourse the party would repeat in 2012, coupled with an expression aimed at delegitimising street politics: “*«The protesters were a few extremists... while 25 million Spanish citizens voted in the last elections»*”¹⁶⁰.

The frame was further reproduced in 2015, in relation to the main electoral contender that emerged from the anti-austerity protest cycle – commenting on a march organised by *Podemos*, PSOE declared it constituted nothing but noise, with no political implications (“*The leaders of PSOE... asked Podemos for «less shouting», «fewer voices» and «more ideas»... «it is not just about denouncing or shouting», but about «providing proposals and solutions for citizens’ problems»*”¹⁶¹). And from 2016 onwards, this frame begins being employed in relation to the pro-independence movement in Catalonia – in the words of the *Ciudadanos* leader: “*the best way to deal with the independentists «is at the polls, with all Spaniards voting»*”¹⁶².

Overall, then, one finds an opposing evolution of this frame across the border – periods of more mobilisation in Portugal feature a higher prevalence of the positive frame, and the opposite is true in Spain (with the exception of 2018, due to the positive response to the 8-M mobilisation). The values of the frame oscillate directly in relation to the discourse purveyor – on the one hand, civil society organisations, namely labour unions, frame protest as rightfully able to shape formal politics (and are given media space to express their message in years of heightened mobilisation in Portugal), as they push for their message to reach the seat of power, on the other, political parties’ employment of

¹⁵⁹ “*«Hay muchos españoles descontentos con la situación. Más de 23 millones, una mayoría, lo han expresado en las urnas... La ley y la voluntad de la mayoría hay que respetarlas. Lo contrario es un comportamiento antidemocrático»*”, *El País*, “Los partidos condenan la violencia mientras se extiende la preocupación”, published on June 16th, 2011 (my translation).

¹⁶⁰ “*«los manifestantes eran unos pocos extremistas... mientras que en las pasadas elecciones votaron 25 millones de españoles»*”, *El País*, “Parapetados y aislados”, published on September 26th, 2012 (my translation).

¹⁶¹ “*Los dirigentes del PSOE... pidieron a Podemos “menos gritos”, “menos voces” y “más ideas”... “no se trata sólo de denunciar o sólo de gritar”, sino de “dar propuestas y soluciones a los problemas de los ciudadanos»*”, *El Mundo*, “PSOE: «Menos gritos y más ideas»”, published on February 1st, 2015 (my translation).

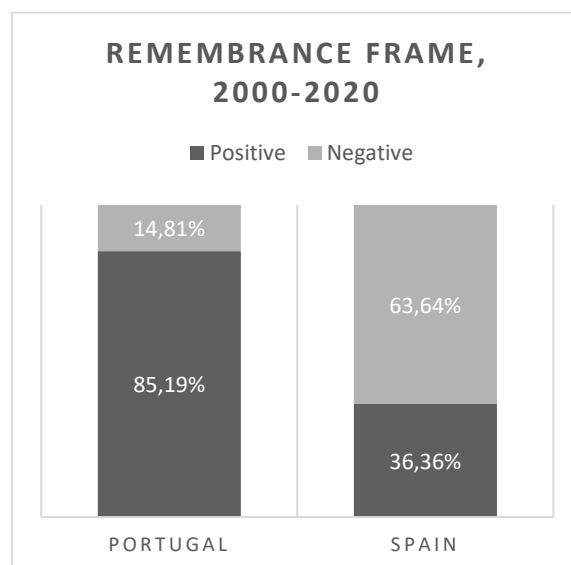
¹⁶² “*la mejor manera de hacer frente a los independentistas “es en las urnas y votando todos los españoles»*”, *El Mundo*, “Radicales revientan el mitin de Rivera: «¡Rompamos España!»”, published on June 12th, 2016 (my translation).

the frame varies in accordance with their presence – or absence – from that very seat: when in the opposition, they frame street politics as a true form of political participation, on the occasions when they harness the power of the streets behind them; and when in government, they claim the primacy of electoral politics over popular mobilisation. The exception is on themes that achieve a certain degree of consensus, such as gender equality in 2018 Spain.

5.3. The Remembrance frame

The Remembrance frame is the second least prominent frame in both countries, but it exhibits significant variation across the border (figure 103), as it is overwhelmingly positive in the Portuguese case (85.2% against 14.8%), and mostly negative in Spain (63.6% vs. 36.4%).

Figure 103. Remembrance frame in Portugal and Spain, 2000-2020.

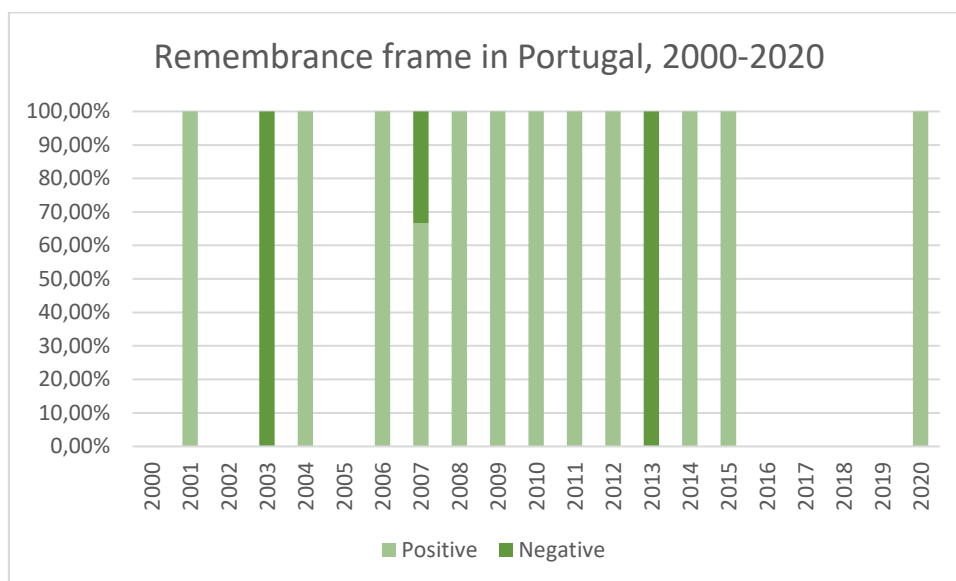


Own elaboration.

In Portugal, this frame is vastly positive, with the exception of 2003 and 2013 (figure 104). Two happenings are responsible for this – the use of symbols of the Revolution in protest events (in particular, the songs, the slogans, and the red carnations), and contrasting protest events with what was possible during the dictatorship.

The use of the Revolution's physical and discursive symbols is a way of signifying the continuation of the tradition of democracy from below established during the revolutionary period. It has been customary, for example, for CGTP protest events to feature those symbols, and these were also a staple of anti-austerity protest, as participants in varied protest events were seen wearing red carnations (including members of parliament while in session, in concerted days of dissent) and shouted / sang the revolutionary slogans and songs – one example has already been mentioned: pensioners singing *Grândola Vila Morena* at the national parliament galleries. QSLT named these protest events “*Grandoladas*”, involving activists from the anti-austerity movement greeting ministries and representatives of the government singing that song on multiple occasions and different locales during the protest cycle – this can be considered as the Portuguese equivalent of the “*escrache*”, as the goal of the protest repertoire was equally to directly intersect politicians, but these did not enact any of the harsh depictions found in the Spanish case.

Figure 104. Remembrance frame in Portugal, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

One other interesting instance of the use of this musical repertoire was during the previously mentioned dual protest events at the Parliament in 2015 asking for either the continuation of the incumbent right wing coalition or its replacement by a left wing government. While the leftist demonstration, coordinated by CGTP, blasted revolutionary songs and its participants held red carnations and echoed the Revolution

slogans, those on the opposing side donned Portuguese flags and played the national anthem. One of the last protest events in the series, a demonstration against a *Chega!* rally in Évora, a city that was a traditional stronghold of the Communist Party, also exhibited the same symbolic duality.

This could be indicative of a fraction in Portuguese society – at the 50th anniversary of the Revolution, there seems to be a part of the Portuguese citizenry, mainly those on both mainstream and extreme right, who do not identify with the inherited revolutionary protest instruments and reject using them, associating them exclusively with the left, which they see as having claimed their sole ownership. These objects and songs constitute a frame on their own – they have been embedded with shared meanings that are understood across Portuguese society, but that does not mean that they are not contested. The fact that supporters of the incumbent right wing government and of a far-right party do not use them is not a sign of the frame losing its meaning, but, rather, indicates that its very significance is being rejected as partisan by a portion of Portuguese society.

The second trend is appealed to in order to legitimise a protest event – this is not as salient as the direct referencing of the Revolution in protest practices, but it appears with thought-provoking nuances: for example, a 2001 demonstration by police officers to demand the right to form unions and to strike elicited the support of the labour confederation UGT in the following terms: “*«in Salazar's time we were proudly alone, and now we are shamefully alone»*”¹⁶³, thereby framing the police officers’ demands as intrinsically democratic, and opposition to them, by contrast, as anti-democratic; and a pro-life march in 2007 refused the participation of the extreme right party PNR, which framed their right to demonstrate by referring to the Revolution: “*«Is there no freedom of expression? Is that why they did the 25th of April?»*”¹⁶⁴. In this case, there is a strategic use of the Revolution to legitimise the presence of the extreme right in the public

¹⁶³ “*«no tempo do Salazar estávamos orgulhosamente sós, e agora estamos vergonhosamente sós»*”, *Público*, “*«Os senhores políticos voltaram a ser cobardes»*”, published on June 27th, 2001 (my translation); “*Proudly alone*” is an expression famously uttered by Salazar in 1965 to justify the maintenance of the Portuguese colonies and the colonial war.

¹⁶⁴ “*«Não existe liberdade de expressão? Foi para isso que fizeram o 25 de abril?»*”, *Público*, “*Extrema-direita alega «discriminação» na marcha*”, published on January 27th, 2007.

sphere. Simultaneously, the party rejects it as something with which they identify – “they (someone else) *did*” the Revolution, not PNR and its supporters.

On the negative side of this frame, there are a few instances where the memory of the Revolution is used to delegitimise protest: that was the case of the aforementioned 2013 pensioners protest at the parliament, as well as the 2003-4 University students protest against rise in tuition costs, whose actions were described as contrasting or even disrespectful to the student fight against fascism (in an opinion piece, *Público*’s director wrote: “*The freedom for which generations of students have fought cannot be kidnapped, sequestered by groups that believe they have all rights and no duties*”¹⁶⁵).

Finally, this frame clearly disappears from 2016 onwards, corresponding to the clear decrease in the number of protest events towards the end of the series in Portugal. It is worth noticing, however, that this is not necessarily a sign of the retreat of these symbols from the streets, as their ubiquitousness could signify that news outlets do not feel the need to report on their usage by protest actors.

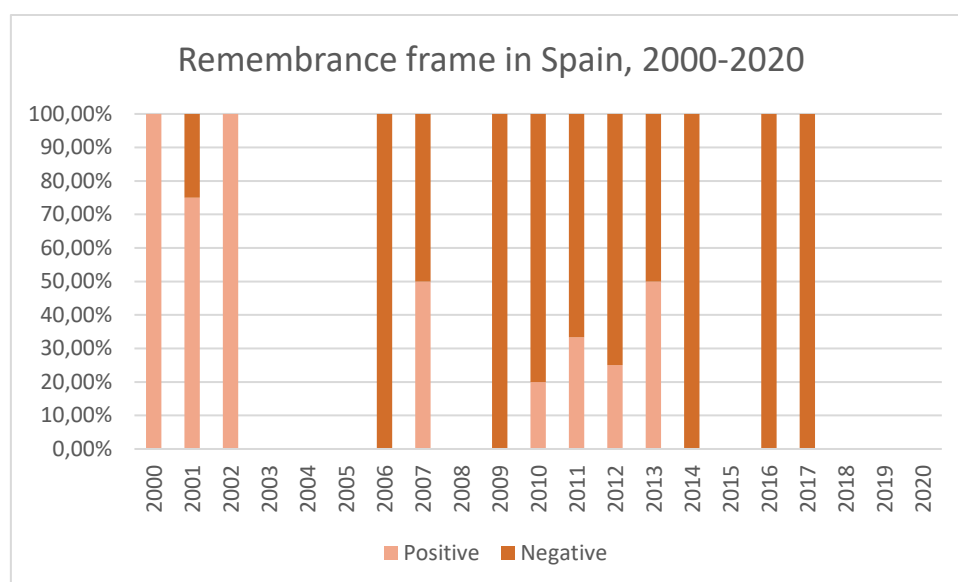
In Spain (figure 105), it is in the first three years of the series that positive mentions of the transition are more common, as well as in 2017. As in the Portuguese case, this is constituted by instances when the protest event is contrasted with the dictatorship to highlight its inherent democratic character, but symbols of the transition also emerge, although not as frequently. They are present, for example, in 2000 mobilisation against the water plan, when protesters sang the *Himno a la libertad* (*Anthem to freedom*), which *El País* informs, is “*a symbol of the transition and the current Aragon regional anthem*”¹⁶⁶ (no such clarification regarding revolutionary symbols was found in the Portuguese case, where it would be utterly unnecessary), and are also a staple of pro-independence protest in Catalonia, although, here, the Catalonia flag firstly, and after the *Procès* sentence, the yellow ribbons, become the most prominent signs.

¹⁶⁵ «*A liberdade por que lutaram gerações de estudantes não pode ser raptada, sequestrada por grupos que julgam que têm todos os direitos e nenhuns deveres*», *Público*, “A liberdade sob sequestro”, published on November 11th, 2003 (my translation).

¹⁶⁶ «*Himno a la libertad... (un símbolo de la transición e hoy le himno oficioso de Aragón)*», *El País*, “Unas 250.000 personas se manifiestan en Zaragoza contra el Plan Hidrológico”, published on October 9th, 2000 (my translation).

In the first case, protest is framed as only being a possibility in a democratic politics – that was the case during a uniformed *Guardia Civil* demonstration for the demilitarisation of the force in 2007, a protest considered illegal by the hierarchy of the police force, and condemned in strong terms (*“captains and generals described the protest as “very serious” and “inconceivable”*¹⁶⁷); in contrast, the organisers asserted the legitimacy of their demands and their mobilisation by referring to the transition (*“«After almost 30 years of democracy, we still do not have the same rights as the Police and other citizens»”*¹⁶⁸) and to their role in protecting the democratic polity (*“«dignity, freedom and justice” for those... who have done so much so that citizens can enjoy their democratic rights»*¹⁶⁹).

Figure 105. Remembrance subframe in Spain, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

More ambiguous is the declaration of the Congress President on the *“Indignados”* attempt to reset the *“Acampada”* at Puerta del Sol: *“It is necessary to «listen» to these citizens, but, during Franco’s regime «there were also many indignados who*

¹⁶⁷ *«desde capitanes a generales han calificado de “gravísimo” e “inconcebible” la protesta»*, *El País*, “Interior estudia sancionar a los convocantes de la manifestación de guardias civiles, published on January 15th 2007.

¹⁶⁸ *«“después de casi 30 años de democracia, seguimos sin tener los mismos derechos que la Policía y el resto de ciudadanos”»*, *El Mundo*, “La AUGC revela que Interior ultima abrir expedientes a otros 30 guardias civiles, published on El Mundo, January 27th, 2007 (my translation).

¹⁶⁹ *«“Dignidad, libertad y justicia» para los ... han hecho para que los ciudadanos disfruten de sus derechos democráticos”»*, *El Mundo*, “Más de 3.000 guardias civiles uniformados exigen al Gobierno derechos constitucionales, published on January 21st, 2007 (my translation).

*demonstrated against the dictatorship, so that there would be freedom and democracy would be decided at the polls, and not in tents set at Puerta del Sol»*¹⁷⁰. Although this statement attributes some legitimacy to the protest event, as it connects it to the history of resistance to dictatorship, it is also delegitimising, as it asserts that the legitimate place to express dissent in a democratic politics is at voting stations, not the streets.

Protest is also legitimised by the mention of the coup attempt of 1981 – that was the case with a labour union protest in 2000 at the Castilla y León parliament, with protest policing to remove protesters from the galleries, which PSOE, in the opposition, described as “*«an unprecedented measure since Lieutenant Colonel Antonio Tejero took over the Congress of Deputies in 1981»*”¹⁷¹. And the organisers of a (aforementioned) widely participated demonstration against austerity in 2012 chose the anniversary of the failed coup as its date, precisely to capitalise on its shared meaning: “*Marea Ciudadana Unida [United Citizen Tide], composed of more than 300 civil society organisations,... chose the 23-F, the 32nd anniversary of the failed coup d'état, because it considers that we are witnessing another coup, this time led by the markets*”¹⁷².

Precisely on account of the date, the protest event became an easy target – as put by PP: “*«We need democracy, not what happened today, like 32 years ago, when enemies of freedom took over the Congress and the streets»*”¹⁷³. The aforementioned “*siege*” of the Catalan parliament was also framed in these terms by the leader of the PSC: “*«They intended to prevent the normal functioning of the institutions. Like... Tejero»*”¹⁷⁴. Finally, the Catalanian referendum was, too, equated to the coup – as put, preventively, by the

¹⁷⁰ «hay que “escuchar” a esos ciudadanos, pero recordó que durante el régimen de Franco “hubo también muchos indignados que nos manifestamos contra la dictadura, para que hubiera libertad y que la democracia se resolviera en las urnas y no en tiendas de campaña en la Puerta del Sol”», *El Mundo*, “Rubalcaba: «200 personas no pueden poner patas arriba una ciudad»”, published on August 6th, 2011 (my translation).

¹⁷¹ «“una medida sin precedentes desde que el teniente coronel Antonio Tejero tomara el congreso de Diputados en 1981”», *El País*, “La Guardia Civil irrumpe en el Parlamento de Castilla y León para expulsar 10 sindicalistas”, published on November 14th, 2000 (my translation).

¹⁷² «La llamada Marea Ciudadana Unida, aglutinadora de más de 300 colectivos... eligió la fecha del 23-F, 32 aniversario del fallido golpe de Estado, porque considera que el origen de los recortes es otro golpe, este de los mercados.», *El País*, “Miles de personas protestan en toda España contra los recortes”, published on February 24th, 2013 (my translation).

¹⁷³ «“Necesitamos democracia, no que hoy, como hace 32 años, los enemigos de las libertades tomen el Congreso y las calles”», *El País*, “Como los golpistas del 23-F”, published on February 24th, 2013 (my translation).

¹⁷⁴ «“pretendían impedir el normal funcionamiento de las instituciones. Como... Tejero”», *El Mundo*, “Democracia real”, published on June 16th, 2011 (my translation).

leader of *Ciudadanos*: “«Just like we overcame the 23-F, we will overcome October 1st and the coup attempt that they will attempt to carry out this week»”¹⁷⁵.

This subframe is also fed from negative references to protest events in relation to the Spanish Civil War and the dictatorship – the above-mentioned 2007 demonstration against the mitigated sentence of an ETA prisoner is a fine example, with ERC referring to the demonstration as “*authentic civil war fascism*”, and PSOE equating it to a Francoist rally. Additionally, a 2010 gathering in support of a judge was faulted for keeping the spirit of the Civil War alive (*El Mundo*’s title reads “*Civil war act in defence of Garzón*”), but the framing was contested by protesters and protest organisers, who pronounced the act as intrinsically democratic, as they were protesting against “*a brutal strike against democracy*” organised by those who fancied themselves into “*an instrument at the service of the current expression of Spanish fascism*»”¹⁷⁶.

One aspect that stands as essential to understanding this distinction is van Hulst and Yanow’s (2014, pp. 10-11) reflection on the role of naming and storytelling as framing devices used by actors in the public sphere to reinforce their message, particularly in issues that are seen as controversial. Precisely because there was widespread participation in the anti-austerity protest cycle, retelling the story of the 1981 coup in relation to twenty-first century protest and protesters is a simplifying device used to quickly and undoubtedly frame popular mobilisation as illegitimate and antipolitical, thereby pushing for a final resolution of the protest cycle in favour of those in power – and the same can be said about the pro-independence mobilisation in Catalonia. In this sense, this becomes an issue frame (Dombos *et al.*, 2012, p. 5).

Considering the balance of discursive power, thus, is essential to understand how opposing frames work and their possible reception by a wider audience – as Bourdieu (1991, p. 239) puts it, there is an ongoing struggle for the symbolic power of imposing the legitimate version of events, and the Spanish case is clear in demonstrating that

¹⁷⁵ «“Igual que nos levantamos del 23-F nos vamos a levantar del 1 de octubre y del intento de golpe que darán esta semana”», *El País*, “Ciudadanos apoya al Ejecutivo, pero lamenta su “ingenuidad”, published on October 2nd, 2017 (my translation).

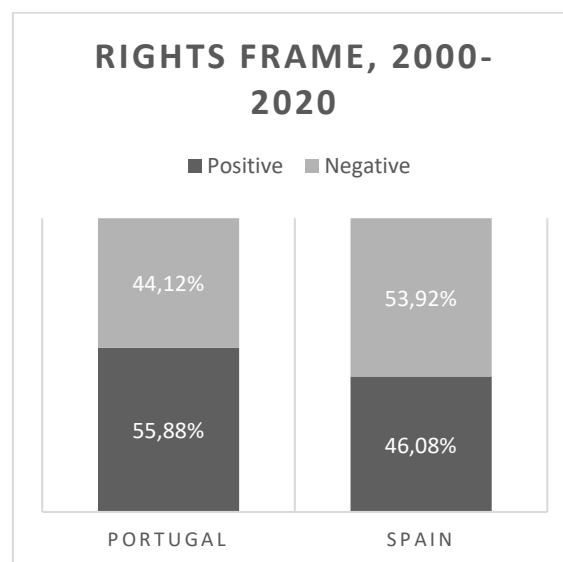
¹⁷⁶ «“un golpe brutal a la democracia”... se ha constituido en “instrumento al servicio de la actual expresión del fascismo”», *El Mundo*, “Acto guerracivilista en defensa de Garzón”, published on April 14th, 2010 (my translation).

formal politics actors have significantly more discursive power in framing protest than civil society organisations, but also that there is a discursive power struggle, aligned on the left-right cleavage, on creating, dissemination and ultimately shaping the final narrative on a determined protest event – and on popular mobilisation overall. In the Portuguese case, and although this is still present, there is a more equitable distribution of discursive power, as – some – civil society organisations, namely labour unions, have wide access to the media and often exert their discursive power in framing protest in a positive light. The following section will further illuminate this.

5.4. The Rights Frame

Although with a lower weight than the Remembrance frame, the Rights frame is also mostly positive in the Portuguese case (55.9%, vs. 44.1% negative), and leans in the opposite direction in Spain (53.9% negative, vs. 46.1% positive) (figure 106) – it is, thus, the most balanced frame across the border.

Figure 106. Rights frame in Portugal and Spain, 2000-2020.

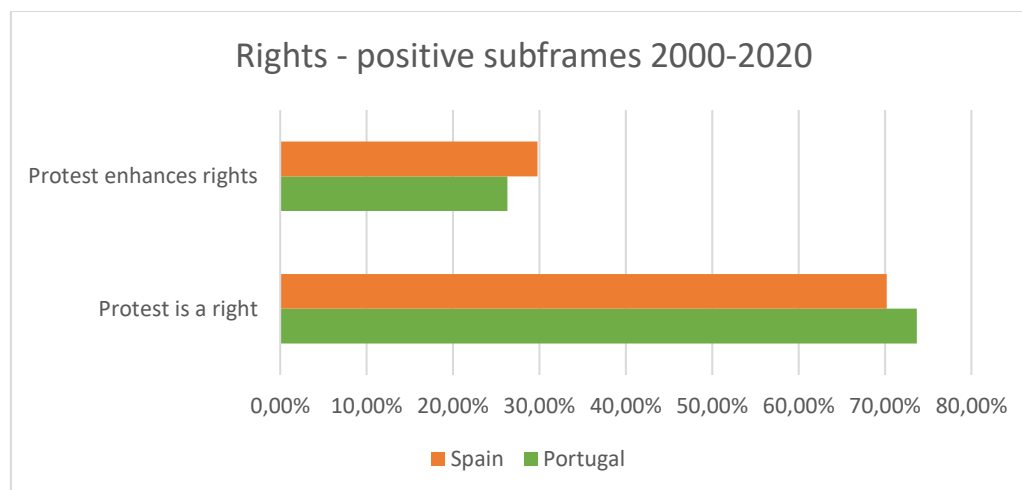


Own elaboration.

This balance also emerges considering the positive subframes that constitute this frame (figure 107)– the ‘protest is a right’ subframe represents over 70% of all positive utterances in both countries, although at slightly higher levels in Portugal, at 73.7% than

in Spain (70.2%), where protest is more often said to enhance other rights (29.8%) than in the neighbouring country (26.3%).

Figure 107. Rights frame – positive subframes in Portugal and Spain, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

This subframe's presence in Portugal is condensed in one sentence published in *Público* on the 2011 general strike: “«*The right to strike is a fundamental right that must be respected*»”. Underneath this cliché repeated by everyone every time the subject is mentioned, lies the reality of a head-on political clash”¹⁷⁷. This is an appropriate commentary, given that this is, indeed, a ubiquitous frame in Portuguese protest, with parties both in government and in the opposition uttering it in reaction to protest events. That are, however, nuances, as implied in the following utterances:

- On the November 14th, 2012, general strike, the prime minister stated that “*the right to strike must be enjoyed with moderation*”¹⁷⁸,

¹⁷⁷ «“A greve é um direito fundamental que se deve respeitar.” Por baixo da frase feita que a todos [no governo] sai de cada vez que se fala no tema, subjaz a realidade de um embate político frontal», *Público*, “O Governo não revela preocupação mas fica muito atento”, published on November 24th, 2011 (my translation).

¹⁷⁸ «“O direito à greve deve ser exercido com moderação”», *Diário de Notícias*, “Passos Coelho pede moderação as greves e elogia quem foi trabalhar”, published on November 15th, 2012 (my translation).

- On the 2013 general strike, he commented: “*«the country needs fewer strikes and more work..., but the right to strike is inalienable»*”¹⁷⁹,
- And prior to a 2016 taxi drivers’ demonstration against ride sharing services, the President of the Republic stated: “*«Everyone has the right to demonstrate peacefully, without violence, and I hope that is what happens»*”¹⁸⁰.

In Spain, the right to protest is similarly framed – for example, on the demonstrations against the *Procès* sentence, the prime minister declared that “*«the government guarantees the right to peaceful demonstration in Catalonia»*”¹⁸¹, and, after the aforementioned demonstration against austerity cuts on February 23rd, 2013, a PP spokesperson also stated his unshakable defence of the right to demonstrate and of freedom of expression. This was, however, preceded by the following: “*«The anti-system and anti-democratic tide is a tsunami against liberties»... intended «to object to a system that guarantees freedoms for all»*”¹⁸².

On both sides of the border, these utterances serve the purpose of asserting that the right to protest should be enjoyed with limits – be it based on repertoires (the right to protest depends on peaceful – or low impact – repertoires), be it, and this is particularly salient in the Portuguese case, based on the need for moderation, which, in contrast, frames one particular repertoire – strikes – as harmful to the political community, particularly when appealed to during a socioeconomic crisis. These utterances, thus, do not seek to deny the right to protest (a statement that would, most likely, be highly contested), but, rather, to discourage participation in protest events – and constitute, ultimately, an attempt to delegitimise street politics.

That is, however, not the case with the last statement in the Spanish case, which does erase the rightfulness of protest – the stronger utterance is not the one that proclaims

¹⁷⁹ “*«o país precisa menos de greves e mais de trabalho..., mas o direito à greve é inalienável»*”, *Público*, “Passos Coelho: «País precisa menos de greves e mais de trabalho»”, published on June 26th, 2013 (my translation).

¹⁸⁰ “*«Todos têm o direito à manifestação pacífica, sem violência e espero que seja isso que aconteça»*”, *Público*, “A taxista rebelde que não se preocupa com a Uber”, published on October 11th, 2016 (my translation).

¹⁸¹ “*«El gobierno garantiza el derecho a la manifestación pacífica en Cataluña»*”, *El País* cover, published on October 17th, 2019 (my translation).

¹⁸² “*«La marea antisistema y antidemocrática es un tsunami contra las libertades»... los manifestantes... pretendían «contrariar un sistema que garantiza las libertades de todos»*”, *El País*, “Como los golpistas del 23-F”, published on February 24th, 2013 (my translation).

the right to demonstrate, but the preceding statement, declaring that protest constitutes a threat to rights and freedoms. This is particularly relevant because that statement was uttered in response to a highly participated demonstration, with an extensive coalition of organisers, a low impact repertoire, and no incidents of violence. It is also a case of the protest target appropriating civil society's framing of the protest event – the metaphor of the tide as an unstoppable force for positive change is turned into an existential threat (equated to a natural disaster) to rights and freedoms. Ironically, the right to protest needs to be defended precisely because it can be framed in such a way.

Another nuance must be noticed – the language of rights is more subdued in Spain. While, in Portugal, the 'Right to protest' subframe is expressed exclusively in terms of rights and freedoms, in Spain, there are several occasions when this is uttered through a discourse focused on respect, as per the following statements:

- On a demonstration against the 2005 education reform, the PSOE prime minister stated he "*respected, by principle, the protesters*"¹⁸³,
- On the pro-life mobilisation of 2009, the Ministry for Equality stated her "*maximum respect*" for protesters¹⁸⁴, and
- On another highly participated demonstration against austerity cuts, the government affirmed its respect for the reasons behind the demonstration¹⁸⁵.

The discourse around respect for protest, rather than right to protest, is less definitive, as respect tends to be understood as a two-way street, depending on receiving respect back – respect for protest, then, can erode, if protest is considered disrespectful or not worthy of respect. On two occasions in the series, Spanish protest targets demonstrated they had, in fact, no respect for protesters, as they reacted by showing them the middle finger (Aznar, in 2010, at a student protest during one of his speaking engagements and

¹⁸³ «*El presidente "respeto por principio a los manifestantes"*», *El País*, "Zapatero recibirá a los convocantes de la protesta para dialogar sobre la LOE", published on November 14th, 2005 (my translation).

¹⁸⁴ «*"máximo respeto" a los manifestantes*», *El Mundo*, "Bibiana Aído: «No cejaremos en el empeño de modernización»", published on October 18th, 2009 (my translation).

¹⁸⁵ «*El Gobierno "respeto" las razones de la multitudinaria manifestación*», *El País*, "El Ejecutivo replica: «La mayoría de la sociedad está con las reformas»", published on September 16th, 2012.

the PP Justice spokesperson during a 2011 protest event against corruption)¹⁸⁶. No such reactions are recorded in Portugal.

Rights are not understood that way: fundamental rights such as the ones that are essential for the right to protest are commonly accepted as essential characteristics of a democratic polity and its members can freely participate in their fulfilment without any drawback (except those included in the country's law). The removal of the discourse of the right to protest, or its replacement for neutral utterances such as respect, therefore, bears consequences for the common understanding of protest in a political community as inherently or, by contrast, conditionally rightful.

Unlike the 'protest is a right' subframe, which is mainly uttered by protest targets, the potential of popular mobilisation to enhance other rights is an argument often used by protest organisers in both countries to legitimise street politics. In Portugal, this is particularly salient in protest events by public servants in education or health, which often feature demands combining labour rights and the preservation of the citizenry's right to education or healthcare (for example, teachers and pupils students demonstrated under the slogan "*for public, free of charge, quality and democratic education*"¹⁸⁷, and the 2010 public servant strike was described by the Communist Party as a protest by brave workers defending public services¹⁸⁸.

In Spain, too, PAH's defence of their protest repertoire included above is a statement on how protest for housing is expanded into protest for general Human Rights¹⁸⁹, the *Acampada 15-M* is described as a protest enhancing civil rights for the whole political community¹⁹⁰, and anti-Iraq war and Prestige related protest in Galicia became a protest

¹⁸⁶ *El País* cover, "Aznar: «Algunos no pueden vivir sin mí»...Aznar responde a insultos de estudiantes con un gesto grosero", published on February 10th, 2010; *El Mundo*, «La alternativa a lo que hay es el PP», published on May 20th, 2011.

¹⁸⁷ «"Por uma escola pública, gratuita, de qualidade e democrática"», *Público*, "Estudantes manifestam-se contra exames nacionais", published on February 2nd, 2008 (my translation).

¹⁸⁸ «"ato de grande coragem" por parte dos trabalhadores que estão a "defender os serviços públicos"», *Diário de Notícias*, "PCP contra «ofensiva» do Governo", published on March 5th, 2010.

¹⁸⁹ «"Lo que es ilegal es que se deje a familias sin techo... se está vulnerando el artículo 25 de la Declaración Universal de los Derechos Humanos, el artículo 11 del Pacto Internacional de Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales, y el artículo 47 de la Constitución"», *El País*, "Que el 'crash' inmobiliario no arruine al vulnerable", published on June 26th, 2011.

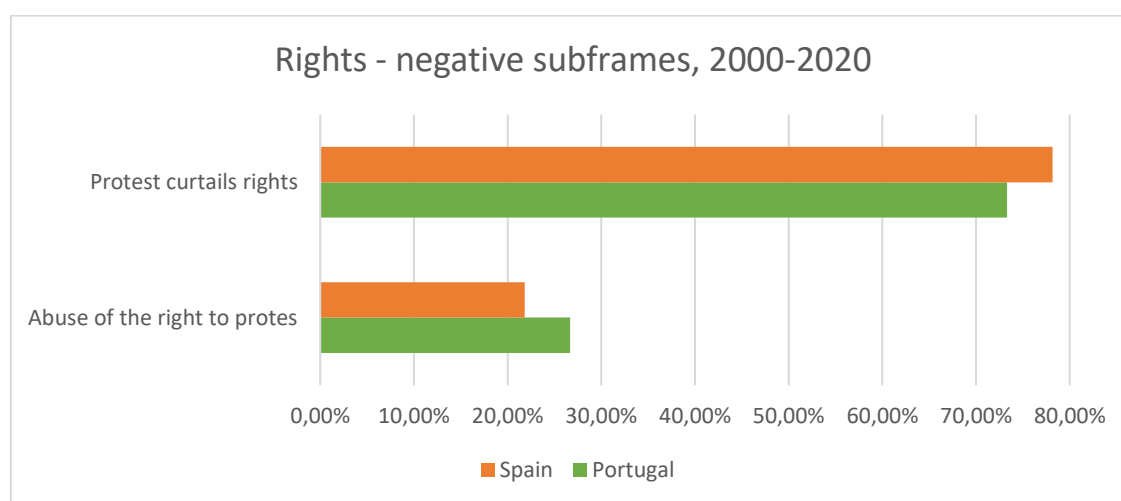
¹⁹⁰ «"Jóvenes concienciados con las libertades civiles se levantaron para encabezar una protesta que persigue un gran cambio"», *El País*, "El 15 -M sacude el Sistema", published on May 22nd, 2011

for freedom of expression following what was perceived as repression from the regional government:

“The Xunta de Galicia’s ordonnance to tackle the proliferation of banners featuring “no to war” and “nunca más” slogans in public schools stumbled on the disobedience of a large part of the educational community... they publicly challenged the instructions of the government... with a new cause: defence of freedom of expression”¹⁹¹.

The negative side of this subframe (figure 108) exhibits more variation, as the abuse of the right to protest argument is more frequently used in Portugal (26.7%) than in Spain (21.8%). Contrastively, expressions stating that protest curtails rights are more frequent here (78.2%, vs. 73.3% in Portugal). The particularity of these negative subframes is that they do not remove the rightfulness of protest, but rather introduce gradations that either imply the protest has an element of illegality (abuse of the right to protest) or is harmful to the political community, standing between the citizenry and the enjoyment of other rights, which are equally or superlatively valued.

Figure 108. Rights frame – negative subframes in Portugal and Spain, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

In Portugal, these utterances appear mainly during strikes and exhibit two salient characteristics: the strike is considered abusive for failure to comply with minimum

¹⁹¹ «La orden promulgada por la Xunta de Galicia para atajar la proliferación de carteles con el “no a la guerra” y el “nunca más” en los colegios públicos ha tropezado con la desobediencia de gran parte de la comunidad educativa... desafiaran públicamente las instrucciones del gobierno... con una nova causa: la defensa de la libertad de expresión», *El País*, “Colégios Galegos desafían a la Xunta y exhiben cartelas contra la guerra”, published on March 28th, 2003 (my translation).

services or for its length – an example would be a TAP pilots’ ten days strike in 2015, during which the vice prime minister stated they were abusing the right to strike and that all the Portuguese citizenry was against them¹⁹² (a sentence that is also indicative of the government claiming the right to speak for the whole political community, when, in reality, it was being highly contested). Other instances include a 2007 CGTP labour unionists demonstration framed as an abuse of the right to protest precisely because it is understood by the protest target – the PS prime minister – as disrespectful and partisan: “*«The Communist Party confuses the right to demonstrate with insult. They are not the same thing»*”¹⁹³).

In Spain, the abuse of the right to protest subframe is, first and foremost, associated with “*escraches*” and other direct action protest repertoires – for example, a protest against over-tourism in Baleares by a pro-independence youth group (*Arran*) that entered a restaurant, threw confetti, and ignited a smoke flare, was framed as an abuse of the right to protest for creating a potential risk for the citizenry, despite the fact that the only consequence of the protest was the restaurant exchanging customers’ plates (“*«citizens have the... right... to express their criticisms, which is perfectly legitimate within a democratic system ... What is not legitimate is for anyone to put people and belongings at risk»*”¹⁹⁴).

The more frequent negative subframe, protest curtails other rights, often occurs immediately after the most recurrent positive subframe – protest is a right. It is common across the border for the statement asserting people’s right to protest to be followed by an addendum – that such right is actively curtailing other rights of the political community (although the disturbance of rights discourse also appears on its own). Examples in Portugal abound on government’s reactions to any strike:

¹⁹² “*«o país inteiro censura aquilo que é um abuso»*”, *Diário de Notícias*, “Cavaco: «Queira deus que não aconteça aquilo que aconteceu noutros países da EU»”, published on May 1st, 2015.

¹⁹³ “*«O Partido Comunista confunde o direito à manifestação com o insulto. Não são a mesma coisa»*”, *Público*, “Sócrates diz que protestos de sindicalistas são insultos do PCP”, published on October 7th, 2007 (my translation).

¹⁹⁴ “*«los ciudadanos tienen ... el derecho ... a expresar sus críticas, hecho perfectamente legítimo dentro de un sistema democrático ... lo que no es legítimo... es poner en riesgo a las personas y los bienes materiales de otro»*”, *El Mundo*, “La turismofobia llega a Baleares”, published on August 3rd, 2017 (my translation).

- On the general strike of 2002, the Ministry of Labour argued that “*«disruption of public transport... prevented many Portuguese citizens from exercising their fundamental rights to work, health and education»*”¹⁹⁵,
- On a judiciary strike in 2005, the Ministry of Justice stated that the strike jeopardised “*rights, freedoms and guarantees*” (thereby also framing the protest event as a threat to the rule of law)¹⁹⁶,
- And a nurses’ strike in 2019 was described in these terms by the PS prime minister: “*«The legitimate exercise of the right to strike» should not be confused «with... savage strikes», whose aim is simply to «attack the National Health Services and which are absolutely illegal»*”¹⁹⁷.

In Spain, the ‘protest curtails rights’ subframe is used in more diverse situations, as demonstrated by the examples below:

- The abovementioned anti-globalisation protest at a BBVA assembly is framed as a limitation of freedom of assembly¹⁹⁸,
- A shipbuilders’ strike and roadblock in Cadiz in 2004 triggers the following question from the local PSOE representative: “*«Where does the workers’ right to strike end... and the rights of the people from Cádiz to travel or simply go to work begin?... [the protesters] are a group of radicals who do not represent the majority and use senseless violence, colliding with the right of the Cadiz people to go about their daily life normally»*”¹⁹⁹,

¹⁹⁵ “*«a perturbação nos transportes... impediu muitos Portugueses de exercerem os seus direitos fundamentais ao trabalho, à saúde, à educação»*”, *Público*, “Entre o 8 e o 80”, published on December 11th, 2002 (my translation).

¹⁹⁶ “*«com a greve, ficam em causa “direitos, liberdades e garantias”»*”, *Público*, “Governo diz que greve captura “funções soberanas”, published on September 30th, 2005 (my translation).

¹⁹⁷ “*«O “exercício legítimo do direito à greve” não deve ser confundido “com ... greves selvagens, que visam simplesmente atentar” contra... “o SNS e que são absolutamente ilegais”»*”, *Público*, “Greve dos enfermeiros é ilegal para o primeiro ministro, mas juristas dividem-se”, published on February 2nd, 2019 (my translation).

¹⁹⁸ “*«Y estas personas que están gritando e interrumpiendo un acto democrático como el nuestro, están demostrando... que no respetan la libertad de los demás»*”, *El Mundo*, “González pide «tolerancia cero» frente al terrorismo en su primera junta como presidente del BBVA”, published on March 10th, 2002.

¹⁹⁹ “*«Dónde empieza el derecho de los trabajadores al derecho a la huelga... y el del conjunto de gaditanos a poder desplazarse o simplemente ir trabajar?... Son un grupo de radicales que no representan a la mayoría y que emplean la violencia sin sentido colisionando con el derecho de los gaditanos a desarrollar su vida diaria con normalidad»*”, *El País*, “El sitio de Cadiz”, published on September 15th, 2004 (my translation).

- *El Mundo* publishes legal experts' opinions to assert that the anti-austerity *Acampadas* effectively curtailed citizens' rights, under the subtitle: "*Prestigious jurists believe that the protesters invade the rights of other citizens*"²⁰⁰, thereby harnessing the power of expertise to convey and reinforce that message, and
- Students' boycotts of speakers are framed as curtailing the rights of other students and of the citizenry in general to freedom of expression (that was the case on both boycotts mentioned above).

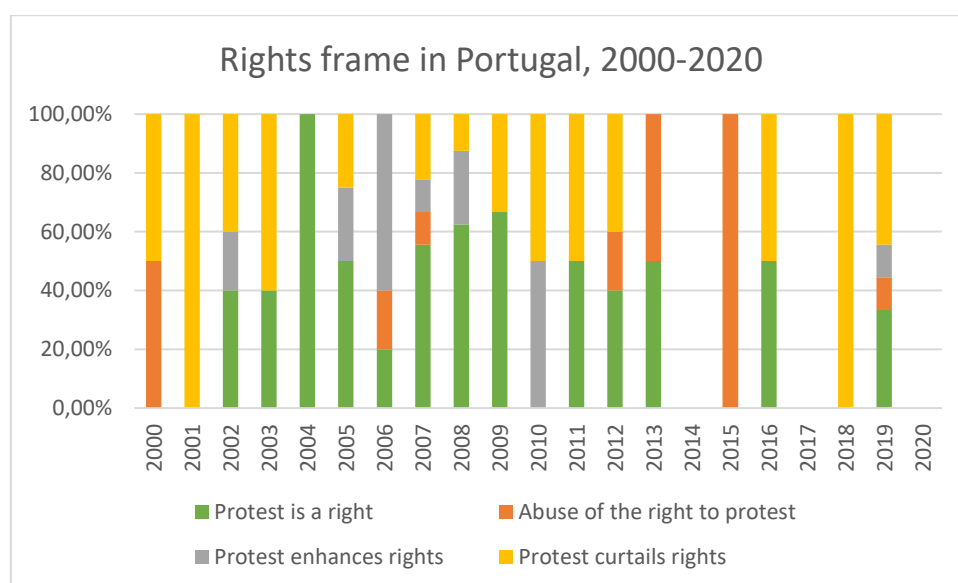
The government in Portugal, and a variety of actors in Spain (including the government, political parties, private interests, but also the media), thus, actively use this subframe to describe protest as a violation of the fundamental rights of the political community. This has, firstly, the effect of creating a hierarchy of rights, where the right to protest is, at best, framed as equal to other citizenship rights, or, at worst, valued below those. Users of this subframe, thus, appear to ignore – or purposely occlude – the fact that protest is inherently conflictive: a basic premise of protest is that it constitutes a break in normality and inserts an element of disturbance in day-to-day activities, which may include temporary limits on other rights, such as the right to freely circulate, the right to work or to conduct a business, or the right to access public services. And although one can argue that abuse of the right to protest may indeed cause unreasonable disturbances and excessively curtail other rights, the normalisation of this subframe creates discursive space for protest that is reasonable, not excessive or – simply put – normal, to also be, ultimately, understood as harmful to the fundamental rights of the political community.

What is more, the subframe of protest curtailing rights is often given more space in the media and frequently occurs on its own, without a reminder that protest itself is a right (or depends on fundamental rights) that also needs protecting. This erases the language of rights associated with protest and eventually contributes to eroding the political community's collective understanding of protest as an inherent citizenship right.

²⁰⁰ «*Prestigiosos juristas creen que los manifestantes invaden derechos de otros ciudadanos*», *El Mundo*, "«El derecho a la indignación es de todos, no sólo de unos pocos»", published on May 24th, 2011 (my translation).

This becomes more apparent when analysing the evolution of the Rights frame across the series in each of the case studies. Figure 109 concerns the Portuguese case. It demonstrates that the positive language of rights mostly relates to the framing of protest of a right, and that this remains relatively stable across the series, representing at least 40% of the Rights frame in eleven years of the series. However, it becomes less frequent from the end of the anti-austerity protest cycle, when there is, in addition, an increase in the negative subframes.

Figure 109. Rights frame in Portugal, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

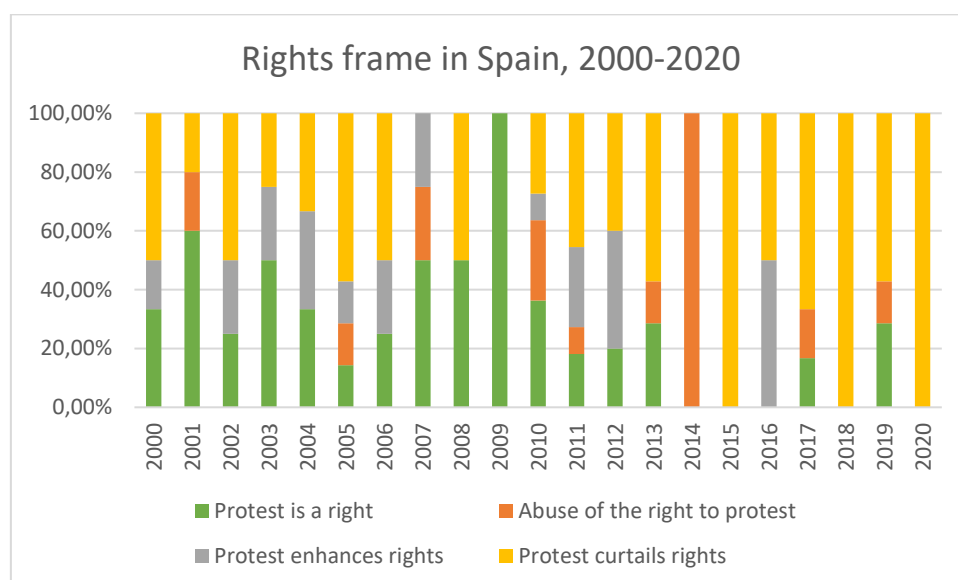
The negative expression of the Rights frame mostly relates to protest being framed as a threat to other rights – particularly in 2001 and 2018 (the only subframe present), but also in 2003 – 60% – and during the anti-austerity protest cycle – 50% in 2010 and 2011, and 40% in 2012. It is worth noticing, however, that it is precisely during the anti-austerity protest cycle that the “protest curtails rights” addendum is paired with the positive “protest is a right” subframe, and the first is normally given more salience – the prime minister’s reactions to the 2012 and 2013 general strikes included above constituting good examples. In this sense, there is a risk of the ‘protest as a right’ subframe becoming an empty signifier or, as *Público* alerted, a cliché²⁰¹, blindly repeated

²⁰¹ «“A greve é um direito fundamental que se deve respeitar.” Por baixo da frase feita que a todos [no governo] sai de cada vez que se fala no tema...», *Público*, “O Governo não revela preocupação mas fica muito atento”, published on November 24th, 2011.

every time there is a highly participated protest event in the country, and actively counterbalanced by an utterance highlighting the negative effects of popular mobilisation on the rights of the citizenry – conveying the speaker’s true intentions.

What is more, the rights discourse can also be appropriated by the government (the protest target) to assert the right to run the country regardless of street politics – and that was the case on a public servant demonstration in 2005, when the Minister of Labour commented: “«*Just as people have the right to demonstrate, the government also has the right to conduct the policies it deems appropriate*»”²⁰², thus stating the primacy of formal politics over street politics and stating the government’s imperviousness to the latter.

Figure 110. Rights frame in Spain, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

The Spanish case (figure 110) clearly exhibits a gradual erasure of the positive language of rights associated with protest from the country’s media sphere – particularly of the ‘protest is a right’ subframe, which seems to disappear from 2009 onwards. In comparison with Portugal, however, the ‘protest enhances other rights’ subframe is more visible across the series, but it also loses significance in the last eight years (with the exception of 2016, when it represents 50% of the Rights frame). The most current is

²⁰² “«Assim como o direito à manifestação é livre, também o governo tem o direito de conduzir as políticas que considera adequadas»”, *Público*, “«Governo não pode ficar indiferente a este protesto»”, published on June 14th, 2005 (my translation).

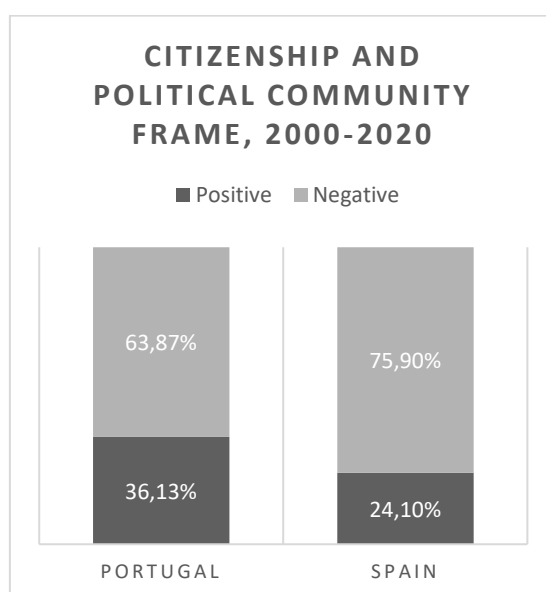
the ‘protest curtails rights’ subframe, which represents at least 50% of the Rights frame in eleven years of the series, and gains salience from 2013 onwards.

There is, then, a growing prevalence of a negative discourse associating rights and protest in the last third of the period analysed here – there is only one year between 2014 and 2020 with a balanced framing (2016), and, in six of those seven years, the dominant frame is that protest effectively curtails citizenry’s rights. Again, this evolution has consequences in the public understanding of popular mobilisation, as negative frames gradually become the mental ideation of what protest actually is and what it achieves / causes.

5.5. The Citizenship and Political Community Frame

The last – and the most common – frame with positive and negative values pertains to Citizenship and Political Community. This frame is expressed mostly in negative terms in both countries (figure 111), although more so in Spain (over three quarters of the subframe – 75.9% – are negative expressions, and 24.1% are positive). In Portugal, this frame is negatively expressed in slightly less than two thirds of occurrences (63.9%, against over one third of positive utterances – 36.1%).

Figure 111. Citizenship and Political Community subframe in Portugal and Spain, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

The positive CPC frame consists of utterances that describe a protest event as being the work of good people or having a good impact on the polity, but also those that label it as appropriate – or fitting within the generally accepted limits of what protest is expected to be. This is the frame component that is more important in Spain (40.5%) and the second most prevalent in Portugal (27.1%) (figure 112), and includes utterances referring to protest in the following terms:

- In Portugal:
 - A slow march for a paediatric hospital received the political support of PSD, CDS-PP and UGT, which considering the demands fair and the protest timely²⁰³,
 - The first general strike of the anti-austerity protest cycle, in 2010, was described as an occasion of *“great joy in the day of discontent”*²⁰⁴, and received the solidarity of PCP and BE, but also of transnational actors (*“The Progressive Union of Spanish Prosecutors and the European Magistrates for Democracy and Freedom (MEDEL) stood in solidarity... with Portuguese magistrates for their participation in the general strike”*²⁰⁵); parties on the right – in the opposition at the time – also expressed their understanding of the demands uttered as fair²⁰⁶.
- In Spain:
 - A demonstration in Teruel for more government investment received the solidarity of all political parties (except PP), the Zaragoza city hall, and the Catholic Church (*“«The Church is no stranger to this town’s feelings and is delighted to support it»”*²⁰⁷),

²⁰³ *Diário de Notícias*, “Guarda em marcha lenta por pediatras”, published on November 11th, 2020.

²⁰⁴ *Diário de Notícias*, “Grande alegria na jornada de descontentamento”, published on November 25th, 2010 (my translation).

²⁰⁵ *“A União Progressista de Procuradores de Espanha e os Magistrados Europeus para a Democracia e a Liberdade (MEDEL) solidarizaram-se... com os magistrados portugueses pela sua participação na greve geral”*, *Público*, “Tribunais fechados, julgamentos adiados”, published on November 25th, 2010 (my translation).

²⁰⁶ *Público*, “Sindicatos pedem recuo na austeridade após «a maior greve de sempre»”, published on November 25th, 2010.

²⁰⁷ *“La iglesia no es ajena al sentir de este pueblo y estamos encantados de apoyarle”*, *El País*, “Teruel hace huelga general con cortes de carreteras para exigir más inversiones estatales”, published on November 30th, 2000 (my translation).

- One of the first demonstrations of the Great Recession, which received the support of almost all political parties, was described as a rare occurrence of synchrony between the labour movement and the government: *“Rarely has such a massive concentration of workers and in such a difficult economic climate found such complicity between the labour force and the Government”; “Several members of the Government accepted the hand extended by protesters and assured they will take their demands into account for the negotiations of the social pact”*²⁰⁸,
- An *Indignados* protest in June 2011, following the “Acampadas” and the protest at the Catalan parliament, was consistently described as appropriate because it was peaceful and highly participated²⁰⁹.

Protest described as consensual or representative of the political community is the second most important component of this frame in Spain (32.4%), and it occurs in 25.2% of the occurrences in Portugal, where it includes those instances when protest organisers assert their role as the voice of the people to power, expressed in superlatives such as “grand”, “historical” or “unprecedented” used to describe the protest event (*“«grand demonstration»”; “«biggest demonstration in the last years»”; “«historical demonstration»”*²¹⁰). It further includes popular mobilisation which is described as having appealed to different types of participants around the same cause (*“Mayors, politicians, businessmen and hundreds of people joined [the protest]”*²¹¹) or that

²⁰⁸ «Rara vez una concentración tan masiva de los trabajadores y en un entorno económico tan complicado encontró semejante complicidad entre la fuerza laboral y el Gobierno», *El Mundo*, “Los sindicatos se exhiben en Madrid”, published on December 13th, 2009; «Varios miembros del Gobierno recogieron el guante de los manifestantes u aseguraron que tendrán en cuenta sus reivindicaciones para las negociaciones del diálogo social», *El Mundo*, “PP y CiU lamentan la falta de críticas al Gobierno”, published on December 13th, 2009 (my translation).

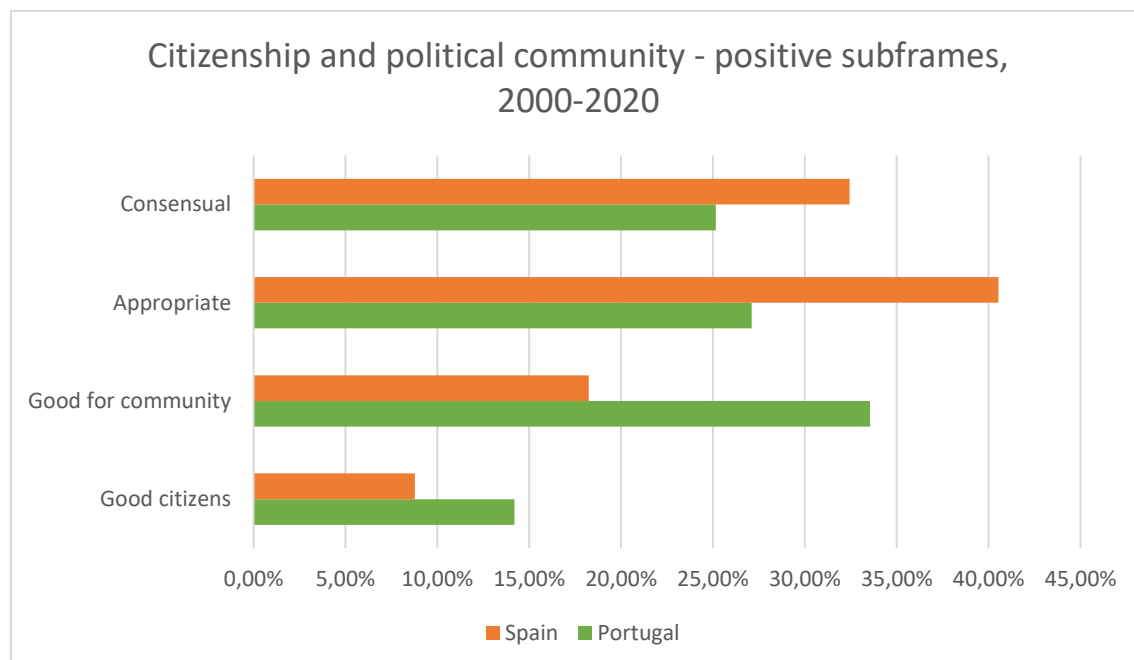
²⁰⁹ *El País* cover, “Los indignados se reafirman con una movilización masiva y en paz por toda España”, published on June 20th, 2011; *El País*, “El 15-M se reafirma en paz en toda España”, published on June 20th, 2011; *El País* “Menos porrazos y más abrazos”, published on June 20th, 2011; *El Mundo* cover, “Decenas de miles de personas se manifestaron pacíficamente en toda España”, published on June 11th, 2011.

²¹⁰ «“grandiosa manifestação”», *Diário de Notícias*, “PCP contra «ofensiva» do Governo”, published on March 5th, 2010; *Diário de Notícias*, “CGTP fala da maior manifestação dos últimos anos”, published on March 14th, 2009; «“manifestação histórica”», *Público*, “Mais de 15 mil enfermeiros inundaram ruas de Lisboa para pedir «bom senso» ao governo”, published on January 30th, 2010 (my translation).

²¹¹ «Autarcas, políticos, empresários e centenas de populares juntaram-se [ao protesto]», *Diário de Notícias*, “Viagem anti-portagens no IC1 registou grande adesão”, published on April 28th, 2004 (my translation).

harnesses the participation of most people in a professional class (*“Since the 25th of April, the sector had not experienced a strike with such large participation”*²¹²).

Figure 112. Positive Citizenship and Political Community subframes in Portugal and Spain, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

Protest specifically framed as non-partisan also features in this category – that was the case of a policemen demonstration in 2003 (also described as the biggest demonstration to date), whose organisers did not invite political parties or labour unions to avoid any partisan connotation²¹³. This, however, comes with a caveat, as protest which is clearly partisan, with the direct involvement of political parties, can also be framed as non-partisan – that was the case of a pro-life demonstration in 2007, described by CDS-PP, one of its supporters, as *“a demonstration of citizenship that proves that this issue is nor partisan nor religious”*²¹⁴. This also ensues in Spain: PP called on voters of all parties to participate in its 2007 march against the mitigated sentence of an ETA prisoner and

²¹² «Desde o 25 de abril que o setor não tinha uma greve com uma adesão tão grande», *Público*, “Mais de 15 mil enfermeiros inundaram ruas de Lisboa para pedir «bom senso» ao governo”, published on January 30th, 2010 (my translation).

²¹³ «Maior manifestação de sempre nas forças de segurança... Não foram convidados partidos ou centrais sindicais para o protesto de forma a evitar “conotação política”», *Diário de Notícias*, “Polícias unidos contra o pacto social”, published on February 13th, 2013.

²¹⁴ «“manifestação de cidadania que prova que esta questão não é partidária, nem religiosa”», *Diário de Notícias*, “A vida concebida jamais será vencida”, published on January 29th, 2007 (my translation).

framed the pro-life demonstration of 2009 as mobilisation against a law that would divide Spain – thus implying the protest’s main claim was representative.

Other instances in which protest is framed as consensual in Spain are also similar to the Portuguese case – for example, the aforementioned Teruel protest is framed as such precisely because it involved a variety of local actors, and so is the demonstration against the stationing of the nuclear submarine *Tireless*. What is novel in the Spanish case is the regular presence of the opposing subframe – protest is partisan – as demonstrated in the following statement about the *Tireless* protest event: “*The protest was attended by trade unionists, environmentalists and politicians from all parties except the PP, which vehemently criticised what it considered a PSOE rally*”²¹⁵.

Protest deemed as grandiose or historical, or able to gather a wide variety of participants, is similarly framed as consensual in the Spanish case – such was the student mobilisation of 2001, “*a historical strike*”²¹⁶ and the biggest in the country’s democratic history, bringing together students, professors, and technical staff, and supported by university rectors and by cultural agents, as well as by the two main parties on the left (PSOE and IU), and of the citizen tide demonstration against austerity of February 23rd, 2013 (“*Doctors, teachers, firefighters, miners, people affected by mortgages and bank titles, 15-M members, representatives of political parties such as Izquierda Unida or Equo, young people, pensioners...*”²¹⁷) – this representativeness, however (and as mentioned above), did not stop the protest target from equating the protest event with the 1981 coup attempt and framing it as an attack on fundamental rights and freedoms.

Unlike the two previous components of this frame, protest being described as good for the political community is significantly more prevalent in Portugal (33.6%), where it is the most important subframe, than in Spain (18.2%), and it is a common feature of teachers and health workers’ strikes (as formerly stated, their demands often couple

²¹⁵ «A la protesta asistieron sindicalistas, ecologistas y políticos de todos los partidos excepto del PP que dedicó virulentas críticas a lo que consideró un mitin del PSOE», *El Mundo*, “El PP dice que sólo es «un mitin del PSOE»”, published on January 21st, 2001 (my translation).

²¹⁶ «“una huelga que hará historia”», *El País*, “Huelga general universitaria contra la ley del PP”, published on November 8th, 2009 (my translation).

²¹⁷ «Médicos, profesores, bomberos, mineros, afectados por las preferentes e hipotecas abusivas, miembros del 15-M, representantes de partidos políticos como Izquierda Unida o Equo, jóvenes, pensionistas...», *El País*, “Miles de personas protestan en toda España contra los recortes”, published on February 24th, 2013 (my translation).

labour rights with guaranteeing / improving free education and health provision). That was the case in the first half of the series – a Left Bloc MP joined a 2000 occupation of a job centre by precarious teachers and framed the protest as an opportunity for the government to improve education provision²¹⁸; in 2004, young precarious doctors demonstrated under the slogan “*A strike for SNS [Serviço Nacional de Saúde – National Health Service] users*”²¹⁹; and a teachers’ protest in 2008 declared to be defending the national public education, and its vocation to serve the community and foster democratic citizenship practices²²⁰.

The same can be said of general strikes in the country – these are often framed as defending public services for all citizens, as PCP stated in 2010²²¹. This was repeated during the anti-austerity protest cycle – during the first general strike of 2012, CGTP stated “*joining the strike is an investment*”²²², and on the November 14th, 2012, strike, it argued: “*«This was not just a general strike of protest, it was a strike to present proposals»*”²²³.

In Spain, the ‘protest is good for the community’ subframe is only present in a few years of the series, in relation to resources preservation (i.e., the water plan protest of 2000) or public services provision (an example would be a 2004 human chain to protect a local hospital). The anti-austerity protest movement also presented itself as a movement aiming at improving the citizenry’s material and political conditions (here, *El País* description of the participants in the *Acampada 15-M* is elucidating – “*Woke young*

²¹⁸ «“o governo tem por obrigação aproveitar esta crise para melhorar a educação”», *Público*, “Preparados para o ataque?”, published on January 19th, 2000.

²¹⁹ «“Uma greve pelos utentes”» *Público*, “Médicos internos saíram à rua «em luta pela saúde»”, published on July 29th, 2004 (my translation).

²²⁰ «“objetivo é sentir a democraticidade da escola pública ao serviço da cidadania e da comunidade”», *Público*, “Quatro mil na rua em Évora e Leiria”, published on March 4th, 2008.

²²¹ «“ato de grande coragem” por parte dos trabalhadores que estão a “defender os serviços públicos”», *Diário de Notícias*, “PCP contra «ofensiva» do Governo”, published on March 5th, 2010.

²²² «“aderir á greve é um investimento”», *Diário de Notícias*, “Uma greve sem balanço”, published on March 23rd, 2012 (my translation).

²²³ «“Esta não foi só uma greve geral de protesto, foi uma greve de propostas”», *Público*, “CGTP tentou uma greve de propostas mas recebeu um dia de protestos”, published on November 15th, 2012 (my translation).

people aware of civil liberties have risen to lead a protest that pursues a major change”²²⁴.

It is worth noticing, however, that this subframe is also invoked in situations where protest is actually not necessarily beneficial for the whole polity – such was the case of the anti-marriage equality protest of 2005, described by PP, standing as an organisational ally, as a demonstration in support of the family²²⁵, by which it meant the heteronormative, heterosexual, patriarchal family, and not the whole political community.

Qualifying protesters as good, full members of the polity is another way of legitimising protest and asserting the right of those good citizens to stand in the public sphere during protest actions. The good citizens component of the CPC frame captures those instances when protest reactions include a positive value judgement about citizens, and is the least frequent subframe, occurring more frequently in Portugal (14.2%) than in Spain (8.8%). Interestingly, however, this subframe, in the first country, mostly refers to non-protesters, as it is mostly used by the government during labour conflicts, through expressions of appreciation of those citizens who choose not to protest, or, better yet, exercise their right to work:

- Reacting to the 2002 general strike, the PSD spokesperson expressed his recognition for “*«the large share of the Portuguese population who displayed their willingness to exercise their right to work»*”²²⁶,
- In the second 2012 general strike (on November 14th), the prime minister signalled “*«the courage of all those who worked today and those who, not having a job, are trying to get one»* [thus] *helping to add value to the country*”²²⁷,

²²⁴ «*Jóvenes concienciados con las libertades civiles se levantaron para encabezar una protesta que persigue un gran cambio*», *El País*, “El 15 -M sacude el Sistema”, published on May 22nd, 2011.

²²⁵ «*“El Gobierno puede ignorar que miles de ciudadanos salgan a la calle a manifestarse sobre temas fundamentales como ... la defensa de la familia”*», *El Mundo*, “Centenares de miles de personas le piden al Gobierno que la unión gay no se llame matrimonio”, published on June 18th, 2005.

²²⁶ «*“grande franja dos portugueses demonstrou querer exercer o seu direito de trabalhar”*», *Público*, “Greve Geral vista pelos partidos”, published on December 11th, 2002 (my translation).

²²⁷ «*o primeiro-ministro optara por “assinalar a coragem de todos aqueles que trabalham no dia de hoje e dos que, não tendo trabalho, fazem por ter trabalho” [e] ajudam a acrescentar valor ao país*»», *Público*, “CGTP tentou uma greve de propostas mas recebeu um dia de protestos”, published on November 15th, 2012 (my translation).

- On the 2015 TAP pilot strike, the Minister of the Economy declared: “*«The pilots who came to work... did not do the Government any favours “Coming to work ... means ... that they are genuinely concerned about the country's economy and TAP's future»*”²²⁸.

This frame, then, is used to contrast good and bad members of the political community in accordance with whether or not they engage in street politics. In the examples above, the good citizens are those who do not and who, by implication, support the policies of the government the protest event is contesting. This erases the fact that participating in protest is a choice that is not only ideological, but also depends on having the material ability to do so – and, particularly during the Great Recession, that choice could be unattainable for a vast proportion of the citizenry. In fact, media reports of Portuguese strikes are often accompanied by first hand testimonies of people who are unable to join the protest because they cannot afford to do so, but state their support for the demands causing the protest – the title of a section reporting on the 2010 general strike is elucidative in this regard: “*Striking is not for those who want to protest, it is for those who can afford it*”²²⁹. By framing those citizens who work as having made a choice that is independent of those material conditions which are often the root cause of protest, the government is also separating the protest from its demands, ultimately signalling their non-representativeness. This serves the purpose of validating and legitimising the government’s positionings and, simultaneously, erasing that of protesters.

Another instance when this frame is present in Portugal is when protest organisers describe participants as good citizens as a response to protest policing, in protest events with high or medium impact protest repertoires:

²²⁸ «*“Os pilotos que vieram trabalhar... não fizeram nenhum favor ao Governo. “Virem trabalhar... significa... que estão genuinamente preocupados com a economia do país e com o futuro da TAP”*», *Público*, “Mais de 80% dos passageiros da TAP conseguiram chegar ao destino”, published on May 1st, 2015 (my translation).

²²⁹ *Público*, “A greve não é para quem quer, é para quem pode”, published on November 25th, 2010 (my translation).

- During a block of the international bridge in Caminha in 2007, the local mayor, who organised the protest, appealed to participants: “*«Let’s demobilise and show the minister that we are orderly and correct people»*”²³⁰,
- Following a taxi drivers’ protest against Uber and similar ride sharing services, with confrontations between protesters and non-protesters, as well as between taxi and Uber drivers, the professional organisation calling the demonstration described it as “*«a peaceful protest of good people»*”²³¹.

In Spain, this subframe occurs in two main circumstances – firstly, protesters are described as good or patriotic Spaniards by *Partido Popular* when they participate in demonstrations organised / supported by the party. That was the case in 2007, with “*«good Spaniards»*”²³² taking to the streets to protest the mitigated sentence, in 2005 in a demonstration called to pay homage to and protect the Constitution (*El Mundo* reproduces Mariano Rajoy’s full speech that ends with the sentence “*«Friends, shout with me and be heard throughout Spain, from Finisterre to Cabo de Gata and from the Pyrenees to Lanzarote: Long live the Constitution! Long live freedom! Long live the Spanish Nation!»*”²³³), and participants in the abovementioned 2017 march in Barcelona for the unity of Spain were also framed as good, patriotic citizens (“*«Today ... all of Spain is coming out to the streets to defend us against a coup d’état»*”²³⁴).

In fact, PP appears to hold a monopoly of nominating who the good citizens in relation to protest are, and that still stands during the anti-austerity protest cycle, when, as in Portugal, and while in government, the party states that good citizens were those who aligned with its policies and choose not to protest:

²³⁰ “*«Vamos desmobilizar e mostrar ao senhor ministro que somos um povo ordeiro e correto»*”, *Público*, “Urgências Valença pede demissão de Correia de Campos”, published on February 19th, 2007 (my translation).

²³¹ “*«protesto pacífico e de gente de bem»*”, *Diário de Notícias*, “Milhares de taxistas pararam Lisboa e Porto contra Uber”, published on September 9th, 2015 (my translation).

²³² “*«Mariano Rajoy, ha intentado convocar a “los españoles de bien»*”, *El Mundo*, “Decenas de miles de españoles se concentran en 65 ciudades como preludio de la marcha contra Zapatero”, published on March 10th, 2007.

²³³ “*«Amigos, gritad conmigo y que se os oiga en toda España, desde Finisterre hasta el Cabo de Gata y desde el Pirineo hasta Lanzarote: ¡Viva la Constitución! ¡Viva la libertad! ¡Viva, la Nación española! ¡»*”, *El Mundo*, “La Constitución no tiene más dueño que el pueblo”, published on December 4th, 2005 (my translation).

²³⁴ “*«Hoy ... toda España está saliendo a la calle para defendernos de un golpe de Estado»*”, *El Mundo*, “La mayoría rompe el silencio: «También somos catalanes»”, published on October 9th, 2017 (my translation).

- On the 2013 judiciary strike, the Ministry of Justice thanked the “*«the majority of judges»*” who had come to work, adding that holders of a sovereignty power should not strike²³⁵,
- On the 2015 student strike, the state secretary of education also thanked the students who attended class²³⁶.

In fact, there are only two occasions where other vested actors describe protesters as good citizens – the aforementioned framing of the participants in the *Acampada 15-M* by *El País*²³⁷ and the PSOE statement of pride of the miners’ mobilisation²³⁸ of 2012.

This is problematic because this frame is indicative of the creation of a clear Manichean divide between the good citizens (those who, in the majority of the occasions when this frame is appealed to, stand with the PP) and the bad ones – those who oppose it. This is amplified by the fact that, as seen in figure 113, this is the most present negative component of the Citizenship and Political Community frame in Spain (36.5%, against 20.4% in Portugal).

In both countries, citizens are often framed as bad citizens simply because they protest – as manifested in this statement by the PP Prime Minister in 2012: “*«The majority of Spaniards who do not demonstrate, who do not appear on the front pages of the press and who do not open the news... That vast majority is working... giving their best to achieve the national objective... which is getting out of the crisis»*”²³⁹, a very close declaration to those uttered by the leader of the Portuguese austerity government reproduced above. Indeed, it is during the anti-austerity protest cycle that this genre of

²³⁵ «La respuesta del ministro... fue agradecer "a la mayoría de los jueces" que acudieran a trabajar mientras opinaba que los titulares de un poder del Estado no deben utilizar "instrumentos" como la huelga», *El País*, "Sin recursos no podremos investigar la corrupción", published on February 21st, 2013 (my translation).

²³⁶ «La secretaria de Estado de Educación... dio las gracias a los alumnos que asistieron a clase», *El País*, "Los estudiantes Protestan contra Wert", published on February 26th, 2015.

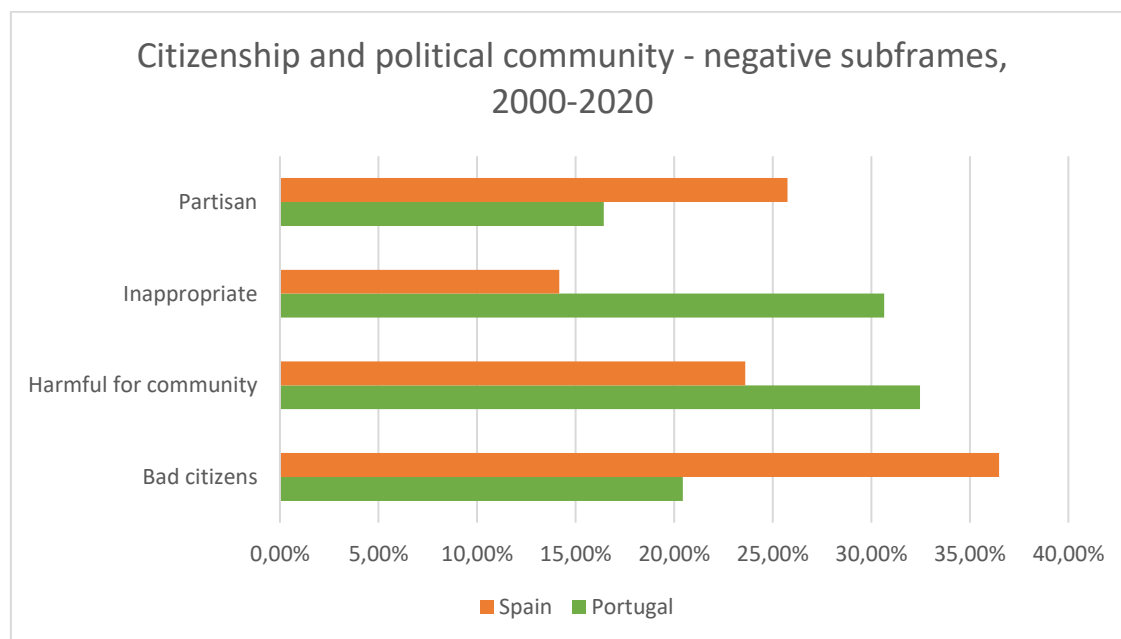
²³⁷ «Jóvenes concienciados con las libertades civiles se levantaron para encabezar una protesta que persigue un gran cambio», *El País*, "El 15 -M sacude el Sistema", published on May 22nd, 2011

²³⁸ «Gómez se mostró "orgulloso" de la actitud de los mineros al considerarlos "un ejemplo para todo el país al defender el pan de sus hijos"», *El Mundo*, "Los mineros pisan Madrid: «Si esto no se arregla: ¡Guerra, guerra, guerra!»", published on July 11th, 2012.

²³⁹ «"La mayoría de españoles que no se manifiestan, que no salen en las portadas de la prensa y que no abren los telediaris... Esa inmensa mayoría está trabajando... dando lo mejor de sí para lograr ese objetivo nacional... que es salir de la crisis"», *El País*, "Rajoy rechaza el 25-S y alaba "a la mayoría silenciosa que no se manifiesta", published on September 27th, 2012 (my translation).

utterance is more prevalent – as seen in the 2013 judiciary or student strikes, or in the following statement from PP’s general secretary, reacting to another widely participated demonstration against government cuts in 2012: “«The *Spanish people... even those who are putting stones in the way, making it more tortuous and difficult, will appreciate the government’s responsibility*»”²⁴⁰.

Figure 113. Negative Citizenship and Political Community frame in Portugal and Spain, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

The ‘bad citizens who protest’ frame, however, is also present prior to the anti-austerity protest cycle – for example, in 2009, PP described a labour union demonstration as “«*betrayal and mockery to society...only serving to show how many people were living off labour unions*»”²⁴¹ – a rather hostile depiction of unionised labour, deemed as harmful to the general population as a parasite would be, instead of partners involved in social concertation. Here lies a significant difference between cases, as ‘bad Portuguese citizens’ are not portrayed in such harsh terms.

²⁴⁰ «“Los españoles... incluso los que están poniendo piedras en el camino para que sea más tortuoso y difícil, van a agradecer la responsabilidad del Gobierno”», *El Mundo*, “«La gente nos lo agradecerá», published on September 16th, 2012 (my translation).

²⁴¹ «“traición y burla a la sociedad.. sólo sirve para saber cuántos viven de los sindicatos”», *El Mundo*, “PP y CiU lamentan la falta de críticas al Gobierno”, published on December 13th, 2009 (my translation).

The most common utterances in the ‘Bad citizens’ component of the CPC frame in Spain, however, are those framing of protesters as radical – and this occurs throughout the series: for example, participants in a roadblock against the construction of a highway in Ibiza in 2006 were described by the community president as “*«violent and radical»*”²⁴², and celebrators of the *Diada* 2008 were labelled “*pro-independence radicals*”²⁴³.

It is, however, during the anti-austerity protest cycle that this subframe gains strength – *El Mundo*, particularly, already in 2011, termed popular mobilisation as the work of radicals, referring to the 15-M’s demands as “*rancid and old fashioned... linked to the far left... alienated from political liberalism*”, and exuded efforts to connect the *Indignados* with the *Okupa* and anti-system movement of the end of the twentieth century and early 2000s²⁴⁴. The following utterance is particularly telling:

*“The cyber-activists of [Puerta del] Sol, recently proclaimed the seat of «national sovereignty», and that in the middle of 2011, want to make their revolution with the old recipes of popular assemblies, the stigmatisation of everything that has to do with private initiative and, paradoxically, the invasion of areas now reserved for individual freedom by public powers, as well as a feral fear of freedom of information”*²⁴⁵.

The framing of movement participants as leftist radicals is clear, but the activists are also labelled as not belonging in the actual, ‘real’ public sphere (the movement belongs in cyberspace, not on the streets). It is also stated that they constitute a threat to freedom of information and established individual freedoms – including the sacrosanct freedom to invest. This utterance is also intended at removing any novelty or innovation from the *Indignados* movement – described as a refashioning of old radical ideas that had been

²⁴² «El presidente Matas tildó de “violentos y radicales a los que protestan», *El País*, “Las protestas contra las autovías en I biza duran ya dos meses y suman 23 detenidos”, published on March 27th, 2006 (my translation).

²⁴³ «Radicales independentistas... cuelgan una enseña inconstitucional... un grupo de radicales quemó banderas españolas», *El Mundo*, “La ‘Diada’ culmina con la quema de una foto de los Reyes y de varias banderas de España”, published on September 12th, 2008 (my translation).

²⁴⁴ «discurso rancio y perenne de las asociaciones ...vinculadas a la izquierda más alejada del liberalismo político», *El Mundo*, “Las viejas recetas de la nueva revolución”, published on May 21st, 2011; «El Patio Maravillas, una casa okupa... es uno de los epicentros del Movimiento 15-M», *El Mundo*, “El PSOE intenta pescar en el 15-M”, published on May 18th, 2011 (my translation).

²⁴⁵ «Los ciberactivistas de Sol, recién proclamada sede de la “soberanía nacional” en pleno 2011, quieren hacer su revolución con las viejas recetas del asambleísmo, la estigmatización de todo lo que tenga que ver con la iniciativa privada y, paradójicamente, la invasión por los poderes públicos de ámbitos ahora reservados a la libertad individual y el miedo cerval a la libertad de información», *El Mundo*, “Las viejas recetas de la nueva revolución”, published on May 21st, 2011 (my translation).

proved wrong well before 2011. This framing is very close to that of former PP Prime Minister, José María Aznar, who reiterated that the *15-M* was a “*marginal, antisystem, extreme left*” movement and insisted it did not deserve any other descriptor²⁴⁶.

The goal of this framing is to firmly place protesters outside the political community, eliminating any mechanisms of identification and solidarity creation between those camping at Puerta del Sol and those witnessing the protest, and serving the ultimate goal of diminishing the representativeness and the impact of protest. Once the movement has been so qualified and the frame is considered as being accepted by the audience, it can be constantly revalidated, and even expanded – and that was the case already during the education strike of 2012, when the Minister of Education condemned the support of the main parents’ association to what he deemed as an extreme left protest, which was, in addition, equated by PP’ spokesperson in Congress to an instance of street politics that could have been convened by a terrorist organisation: “*«When I was in high school, strikes were organised by... Batasuna»*”²⁴⁷. Activists in leftist grassroots movements, but also general participants in instances of popular mobilisation gradually became, then, the preferred target of this framing, uttered by those on the mainstream right, namely those in or close to the PP government and their supporters in the media.

Finally, bad citizens can also be part of the elites, taking to the streets to maintain privileges that the rest of the citizenry cannot access. This was already patent in the student mobilisation of 2001, with the minister of education aiming at university rectors when he stated that the protest was the result of the “*«status quo positioning of those who want everything to remain the same, and are satisfied to maintain their interests and levels of power»*”²⁴⁸, was repeated in a 2005 march against an educational reform

²⁴⁶ «*“Es extrema izquierda marginal antisistema”*», *El País*, “Aznar tilda al movimiento de “extrema izquierda antisistema”, published on October 11th, 2011 (my translation).

²⁴⁷ «*Wert ya había criticado... a unos padres que apoyaban una protesta “de extrema izquierda radical” y ... el portavoz del PP en el Congreso... dijo que era “incomprensible” el apoyo de Ceapa a la huelga y añadió: “Yo cuando iba al instituto, las huelgas las organizaban los de Batasuna”*», *El País*, “Wert sugiere en plenas protestas que hay margen para recortar más”, published on October 18th, 2012 (my translation).

²⁴⁸ «*“postura inmovilista que quiere que todo siga igual, más satisfactorio para sus intereses y cotas de poder”*», *El País*, “Del Castillo niega que la nueva norma permita a docentes de la pública trabajar en la privada”, published on December 2nd, 2001 (my translation).

(“«we must isolate those minorities who seek regression and privilege»”²⁴⁹), and, again, in a notably conflictual labour struggle involving air traffic controllers in 2010 – “«Those who resort to blackmail to defend their privileges are the ones to blame»”²⁵⁰.

In effect, the ‘bad citizens’ component of the Citizenship and Political Community frame in Spain can be found condensed in one utterance from 2019 (already included above): “«a gruesome spectacle of young, posh, reactionary, subsidised, spoiled totalitarian brats»”²⁵¹. This is a testament to the argument already advanced on the lack of respect for protest: precisely because protesters are framed as bad citizens, they can be disrespected and insulted, even called Nazis, mass murderers, or terrorists (a few examples were already mentioned, such as *Ciutadans*’ reaction to being rejected from the 2008 student strike²⁵², PP considering the pro-independence strike of 2017 as “Nazi-type strike”²⁵³, the reaction of a PP MP to an “*escrache*” – “«They say they’re going to signal me, but signalling is what the Nazis did with the Jews»”²⁵⁴, or BBVA CEO calling anti-globalisation activists terrorists²⁵⁵), or, at the very least, left wing bums or agitators (“*perroflautas*”²⁵⁶), pathetic, undignified, repugnant, fanatic, and silly (the expletives reserved to Femen – female – activists who protested at the parliament²⁵⁷). Protesters described in these terms are, thus, firmly placed outside the political community – they

²⁴⁹ «El Gobierno subraya que “hay que aislar a las minorías que buscan la involución y privilegios”», *El País*, “Zapatero recibirá a los convocantes de la protesta para dialogar sobre la LOE”, published on November 14th, 2005 (my translation).

²⁵⁰ *El Mundo*, “Bono: «Quienes recurren al chantaje para defender privilegios son los culpables»”, published on December 7th, 2010 (my translation).

²⁵¹ “«un espectáculo dantesco de jóvenes niños totalitarios, pijos, reaccionarios, subvencionados»», *El País*, “Estudiantes de la UAB intentan boicotear un acto en el que participaba Cayetana Álvarez de Toledo (PP)”, published on April 11th, 2019 (my translation).

²⁵² “«linchamiento moral más propio de épocas que recuerdan al nazismo o al fascismo»», *El Mundo*, “Agreden a Ciutadans en una marcha contra la ley de Educación catalana”, published on November 14th, 2008.

²⁵³ «El portavoz del Partido Popular en el Congreso...tachó ayer de paro “de corte nazi” la huelga», *El País*, “La CUP arrastra al soberanismo a su estrategia de agitación callejera”, published on October 4th, 2017.

²⁵⁴ “«Dicen que me van a señalar, pero señalar es lo que hacían los nazis con los judíos»», *El País*, “Cuando la protesta llega hasta la puerta de casa”, published on March 23rd, 2013 (my translation).

²⁵⁵ “«Con el terrorismo hay que tener tolerancia cero»», *El Mundo*, “González pide «tolerancia cero» frente al terrorismo en su primera junta como presidente del BBVA”, published on March 10th, 2002.

²⁵⁶ “El Ayuntamiento de Barcelona ha abierto un expediente sancionador al policía por alentar a la violencia contra los «perroflautas», como denomina despectivamente a los indignados”, *El País*, “«No he podido darles ni una colleja»”, published on May 31st, 2011.

²⁵⁷ *El Mundo*, “Desde ‘repugnante’ a efectivo” published on October 10th, 2013.

and their demands are delegitimised and ignored, and their actions are considered a-political or even anti-political.

In Portugal, the 'bad citizens' subframe is expressed in milder terms and is mainly connected to participation in popular mobilisation – that is particularly the case during the anti-austerity protest cycle (as advanced by the Prime Minister's warning to the citizenry above²⁵⁸), when it can be found in almost all mass protest events, but also on instances of micro-protest:

- On the 2011 general strike, the PSD parliamentary leader stated: "*«What we want is to see a country mobilized not to demonstrate, ... but... focused on doing its job»*"²⁵⁹,
- During a parliamentary debate, participants of the first general strike of 2012 were framed by the PSD as public enemies ("*«The real enemy of the country is those who don't let others work»*"²⁶⁰),
- And reacting to a protest inside the parliament when the demonstrators shouted the slogans of the Revolution, the Parliament president ordered their removal and commented: "*«We were not elected to be afraid, to be coerced and not respected.... ... We cannot allow, as Simone de Beauvoir said, that our executioners create bad habits in us»*"²⁶¹ – this is the only occasion when an equivalence to Nazism is hinted at, but it is never expressly uttered (and may not have been understood as such by the general public), as occurred on multiple occasions in the Spanish case.

The other component of this frame emerging in Portugal (as in Spain) is the framing of protesters as backwards, privileged people, mobilising to keep those privileges – that

²⁵⁸ «deixou um aviso aos que pensavam "que podem incendiar as ruas e ajudar a queimar Portugal... saberão que nós sabemos dialogar, mas que também sabemos decidir"», *Público*, "Um Governo não revela preocupação mas fica muito atento", published on November 24th, 2011.

²⁵⁹ «"O que queremos é ver um país mobilizado não para se manifestar... mas... concentrado em fazer o seu trabalho"», *Público*, "PS, PSD e CDS compreendem descontentamento", published on November 25th, 2011 (my translation).

²⁶⁰ «"O verdadeiro inimigo do país é quem não deixa os outros trabalhar"», *Público*, "Bancadas da direita têm «ódio e medo» da greve geral, diz PCP", published on March 22nd, 2012 (my translation).

²⁶¹ «"Não fomos eleitos para ter medo, para ser coagidos e não sermos respeitados... Não podemos deixar, como dizia Simone de Beauvoir, que os nossos carrascos nos criem maus costumes"», *Público*, "«Carrascos» incomodam Assunção Esteves, que ameaça fechar galerias do povo", published on July 12th, 2012 (my translation)

was particularly the case at the beginning of the series, namely in the 2002 general strike, with high mobilisation of public servants who were described as lazy and backwards (Portuguese industry associations commented that public servants had adhered to the strike because they were already used to working very little, were very conservative, and afraid of change²⁶²). The student mobilisation of 2003-4 was also described as a protest of a privileged few (“*«The country is experiencing an economic and moral crisis and university students are one of the most favoured classes»*”²⁶³), and a strike in a hospital in the Lisbon Metropolitan area was condemned by the director as a “*«baseless defence of the interests of a few»*”²⁶⁴. It is worth noticing, however, that, in these cases, the government or formal politics actors were not involved in the framing.

In Portugal, however, the most common component of the negative Citizenship and Political Community frame is utterances describing the protest event as inappropriate (30.7%). These relate to three tropes – the protest is considered untimely, the protest is regarded as unjustified, or the protest repertoire is deemed as unfitting.

In particular, protest is considered an untimely form of pressure when it occurs during a negotiation process – that was the case of the aforementioned demonstration in 2002, which caused the Ministry of Social Security to accuse the CGTP of being disloyal, for having organised a demonstration during the social pact negotiations²⁶⁵. The pilot strike of 2007 was also framed by the government as untimely, on account of the long months of negotiation that were still taking place, resulting in a statement of intent to sue the labour union²⁶⁶, and, again, in 2011, during a prison guards strike, the “*Ministry of Justice*

²⁶² «“como eles “já estão habituados a fazer pouco”...“apetência” dos funcionários públicos pela greve explicada pelo seu maior “conservadorismo” e “receio de mudança”», *Diário de Notícias*, “Associações empresariais falam em ‘fiasco’ de uma ‘greve política’”, published on December 11th, 2002.

²⁶³ «“O país vive uma crise económica e moral e os universitários constituem uma das classes mais favorecidas”», *Público*, “Outras reacções”, published on November 11th, 2003.

²⁶⁴ «“greve é ... uma defesa infundada dos interesses de poucos”», *Público*, “Greve no Amadora-Sintra com leituras diferentes”, published on December 15th, 2004 (my translation).

²⁶⁵ «Ministro... acusa a CGTP de “deslealdade”... critica o facto de a confederação ter organizado uma “jornada de luta numa altura quando se está a negociar”», *Público*, “Ministro acusa CGTP de deslealdade”, published on October 31st, 2002 (my translation).

²⁶⁶ «Secretário de estado... considerou a greve inoportuna e prejudicial, porque o governo negociou durante largos meses com o sindicato... admitiu mesmo processar o sindicato», *Público*, “Primeiro dia da greve dos pilotos deixa milhares de passageiros em terra”, published on October 24th, 2007.

*accused the union of having called the strike «in defiance of the principles of good faith», taking into account that negotiations were taking place»*²⁶⁷.

Protest is framed as unjustified when the protest target does not acknowledge the legitimacy of protesters' demands – that was the case during nurses' strikes, in a Lisbon hospital in 2004, described as unfounded by the unit's director²⁶⁸, and in the Algarve (the main summer tourism destination in the country) during the month of August, framed by the hospital director as both unwarranted and untimely²⁶⁹.

On the other hand, when protesters' demands are considered legitimate, protest can still be framed as inappropriate on account of its repertoire – on a university canteen workers' strike, the administration stated it was in agreement with the workers' claims, but considered the repertoires as unfitting²⁷⁰, and a doctor on hunger strike for career progression was suspended on account of “*«inappropriate protest methods»*”²⁷¹.

The ‘protest is inappropriate’ subframe in Spain (14.2%) also exhibits the same characteristics: for example, the 2000 Teruel protest was deemed by the local mayor as untimely²⁷², and the 2005 education march was framed as such by the PSOE government, as there were negotiations taking place (“*«This is the moment for negotiation, not for disqualification»*”²⁷³). The State Attorney General, further, rejected PP's 2010 mobilisation on the mitigated sentences as untimely, unjustified, and partisan

²⁶⁷ «Ministro da justiça acusou o sindicato de ter convocado a greve “ao arrepio dos princípios de boa fé”, tendo em conta que estavam a decorrer negociações», *Público*, “Guardas prisionais estão em greve até à próxima quarta-feira”, published on November 6th, 2011 (my translation).

²⁶⁸ «paralisação é injustificada», *Público*, “Greve no Amadora-Sintra com leituras diferentes”, published on December 15th, 2004.

²⁶⁹ «lamentável “fazer uma greve em agosto no Algarve... não há razão que justifique esta greve”», *Diário de Notícias*, “Greve dos enfermeiros deixa Algarve sobre pressão”, published on August 11th, 2015.

²⁷⁰ «[Administração] concorda com as reivindicações dos trabalhadores mas considera que “a forma de luta não é a mais adequada”», *Diário de Notícias*, “Greve encerra cantinas”, published on February 1st, 2001.

²⁷¹ «“métodos inadequados de contestação”», *Público*, “Médico brasileiro em greve de fome no hospital de Braga”, published December 15th, 2002 (my translation).

²⁷² «El alcalde del PP... consideraba la huelga inoportuna», *El País*, “Teruel hace huelga general con cortes de carreteras para exigir más inversiones estatales”, published on November 30th, 2000.

²⁷³ «“Es el momento de la negociación y no de la descalificación”», *El País*, “Zapatero recibirá a los convocantes de la protesta para dialogar sobre la LOE”, published on November 14th, 2005 (my translation).

(“The State Attorney General reproached the PP for calling a demonstration for «political reasons» when «there are practically no victims of terrorism»”²⁷⁴).

In Spain, protest is, in addition, framed as untimely for taking place on particular dates – that is the case of popular mobilisation on the Spanish National Day²⁷⁵, and was particularly expressed during the anti-austerity protest, in a demonstration on March 11th, 2012: *El Mundo’s* gives it central stage in its front page, under the title: *“UGT and CCOO use 11-M against labour reform. Trade union leaders summoned tens of thousands of workers to protest against labour reform using a homage to the victims of the biggest terrorist attack in Europe’s history to attack the PP and the Government”*²⁷⁶, and *El País*, too, publishes: *“The Government, the PP, various associations of victims of terrorism and various media criticised labour unions on account of the date chosen to demonstrate, 11-M”*²⁷⁷, thereby joining and reinforcing the consensus on the untimeliness of the protest event.

Protest in Spain is also framed as inappropriate when it is deemed as unjustified, such as the 2001 student strike, when the Minister of Education considered it *“«difficult to find grounds for the student strike because the students do not know why they are protesting»”*²⁷⁸, or of the Iberia pilots’ strike that same year, condemned as *“suicidal and absolutely irresponsible”* by the administration, and framed as *“untimely, inappropriate and unnecessary”* by a professional association representing the tourism industry²⁷⁹.

²⁷⁴ *«El fiscal general del Estado censuró a los populares por convocar una manifestación por “razones políticas” cuando “ya prácticamente no hay víctimas del terrorismo”», El País, “El fiscal general acusa al PP de usar el terrorismo con fines políticos”, published on March 10th, 2010 (my translation).*

²⁷⁵ *«“Si esto fuera un acto de Gobierno, entendería... pero si es un acto de Estado, no”», El País, “Zapatero se resigna a ser abucheado durante el desfile militar: «Es un rito»”, published on October 13th, 2009.*

²⁷⁶ *«UGT y CCOO utilizan el 11-M contra la reforma laboral... Los líderes sindicales que ayer convocaron a decenas de miles de trabajadores para protestar contra la reforma laboral utilizaron uno de los homenajes a las víctimas del mayor atentado de la historia de Europa para atacar al PP y al Gobierno», El Mundo, published on March 12th, 2012 (my translation).*

²⁷⁷ *«Las críticas a los sindicatos desde el Gobierno, el PP, varias asociaciones de víctimas del terrorismo y en diversos medios de comunicación vinieron por la fecha elegida para manifestarse, el 11-M», El País, “Si Rajoy no rectifica, el conflicto seguirá”, published on March 12th, 2012 (my translation).*

²⁷⁸ *«“difícil encontrar fundamento a la huelga estudiantil porque los alumnos no saben porque se manifiestan”», El País, “La universidad vive su mayor protesta”, published on November 15th, 2001 (my translation).*

²⁷⁹ *«“suicida y una absoluta irresponsabilidad”... huelga “inoportuna, inadecuada y desnecesaria”», El Mundo, “La huelga de celo demora el 35% de los vuelos de Iberia”, published on March 2nd, 2001 (my translation).*

Finally, protest repertoires are also a reason why protest is framed as inappropriate – the aforementioned uniformed *Guardia Civil* demonstration was initially framed as illegal by the Minister of Defence precisely because members of the armed forces are forbidden from protesting while wearing their uniforms, but he would backpaddle to state the protest was simply “*«something that cannot be done»*”²⁸⁰. And in 2010, while in the opposition, although expressing an understanding of the reasons behind popular mobilisation, PP declared that strikes were an inappropriate protest repertoire: “*«My party has always understood that strikes are not the solution, but we understand the outrage of the strikers»*”²⁸¹. The Catholic Church, too, condemned an occupation of a church-owned building by 15-M activists as unfitting, signifying unjustified hatred towards the church²⁸².

The ‘Protest is partisan’ subframe is notably more important in Spain than in Portugal – 25.8% vs. 16.2%. Here, it emerges mostly at the beginning of the series with statements framing the protest as the work of the parties further to the left (BE and, mainly, PCP). These parties are simultaneously framed as the extreme left, leading popular mobilisation that was, by extension, equally extremist. Such was the reaction of the PSD Prime Minister to a workers’ march in 2002: “*This demonstration is influenced by the «extremist positions» of the Communist Party... «which wants to show on the streets what it did not accomplish at the polls»*”²⁸³ (which, simultaneously, asserts the primacy of electoral politics over street politics). This was repeated the next year during a march against tolls when the PSD-led government accused the PS of “*«yielding to the extremist pressures of PCP and BE»...becoming «more and more a protest party» and «less a*

²⁸⁰ «El ministro de Defensa... corrigió ayer sus declaraciones del día anterior de que los guardias civiles no habían cometido ninguna ilegalidad, al entender que hubo una mala interpretación. Ayer explicó que lo que hicieron los agentes “no se puede hacer”», *El País*, “Interior estudia sancionar a los convocantes de la manifestación de guardias civiles”, published on January 25th, 2007 (my translation).

²⁸¹ «“Mi partido siempre ha entendido que las huelgas no son la solución, pero entendemos la indignación de los huelguistas”», *El Mundo*, “El PP se retrata contra la huelga en el Congreso”, published on June 9th, 2010 (my translation).

²⁸² «La Diócesis, que expresó su “repulsa” por una acción que considera fruto de una “agresividad gratuita” contra la Iglesia», *El Mundo*, “Miembros de 15-M ocupan un edificio del Obispado leonés”, published on May 17th, 2012.

²⁸³ «Esta ação é influenciada pelas “posições extremistas” do Partido Comunista que “quer mostrar nas ruas aquilo que não conseguiu nas urnas”», *Diário de Notícias*, “Segurança Social dá mote para novo protesto”, published on June 21st, 2002 (my translation).

*serious and responsible alternative»*²⁸⁴. This statement illuminates, in addition, the fact that protest is not regarded as real politics, but, rather, as a nuisance to those who are engaged in the serious business of governing the country.

The general strike of 2002 was also framed as partisan – and although the connection between the organiser, CGTP, and the Communist Party is not expressly mentioned, it was hinted at in the government’s reaction, which classified it a partisan failure – the Ministry of Social Security did not spare expletives to describe the strike, which included “*«pseudo-strike»*” ... “*«so-called general strike»*” or “*«minimum guaranteed strike»*” – here referring to universal basic income, which the government coalition was strongly opposed to, and, simultaneously, framing the participants in the protest as non-productive members of society (echoing the argument against that instrument of social protection). In addition, his comment on GCTP’s assessment of the strike’s success, achieving 100% adherence in some sectors, included the following statement: “*It is such a blatant lie that it must be debunked... CGTP must be «honest enough» to admit that there was not 100% participation. «Only Saddam Hussein can obtain 100% results in the elections in Iraq»*”, to which he added that the strike would – as per usual – have no influence in shaping policy (“*«Three general strikes called by the CGTP in recent years have not led to any profound or marginal change in policies»*”²⁸⁵). This statement, thus, not only achieves the delegitimation and depoliticisation of the strike, it also asserts the primacy of electoral politics over street politics and frames labour unions as harmful to the community, lying and instrumentalising information in the same way a known dictator would. Four months later, the government coalition would support the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

There are, in addition, occasions of the Socialist Party, benefiting from governing alone, also referring to protest as partisan due to its connection with PCP: during the teachers’ mobilisation of 2008, a spontaneous (thus illegal) demonstration outside the

²⁸⁴ “ceder às pressões extremistas do PCP e do BE”... o que faz dos socialistas “cada vez mais um partido de protesto” e “menos uma alternativa séria e responsável”, *Público*, “PSD critica PS por apoiar protestos”, published on January 7th, 2003 (my translation).

²⁸⁵ “pseudo-greve”... “greve dita geral”... “greve mínima garantida” ... “é uma mentira grosseira que tem de ser denunciada”... CGTP deve ser “suficientemente honesta” para admitir que não houve participações a 100%. “100% só Saddam Hussein consegue atingir nas eleições no Iraque”... “3 greves gerais convocadas pelas CGTP nos últimos anos não conduziram a nenhuma alteração profunda ou marginal das políticas”, *Público*, “Greve entre o oito e o oitenta”, published on December 11th, 2002 (my translation).

headquarters of the PS enacted this reaction from the prime minister: *“Sócrates accused the protesters of not being teachers, but militants of another party... «It is regrettable that they held a demonstration outside a political party headquarters, trying to pressure it. They should already know that the PS does not allow itself to be pressured»”*²⁸⁶. The connection with PCP is hinted at, but not outwardly articulated, and the protest event is framed as out of place at the headquarters of the party (thereby not belonging in the public sphere) and as a form of unacceptable pressure to those holding legitimate power. This was repeated by the same actor at another teachers’ demonstration the following year: *“«I saw footage of a teachers’ demonstration this afternoon. I saw several party leaders there. But the PS does not instrumentalise labour union struggles»”*²⁸⁷. The extremist allegations are absent here, but the framing of protest as the work of the parties on the further left remains very present.

This is revealing of a tendency to frame protest as a partisan weapon of those forces further to the left – the protesters, by consequence, are either being naively instrumentalised by those forces or espouse those beliefs (that are, however, not reflected at the polls). In Portugal, then, this frame is not widely accepted, as indicated by the fact that CGTP continues to be, until the end of the series, the most mobilising actor – most highly participated protest events are the work of this labour confederation (and they are allies in highly participated protest events called by new social movements during the anti-austerity protest cycle). It is nonetheless concerning that PCP, a political party which is intrinsically democratic, is framed as extremist by mainstream right wing parties at the beginning of the series, a discursive trope that would be adopted by the populist far-right in the country at the end of the second decade of the 21st century with very little modification²⁸⁸.

²⁸⁶ *«Sócrates acusou os manifestantes de não serem professores, mas sim militantes de outro partido... “É lamentável que tenham feito uma manifestação à porta de um partido político, tentando condicioná-lo. Já deviam saber que o PS não se deixa condicionar”»*, *Público*, “Assobios no Rato”, published on February 24th, 2008 (my translation).

²⁸⁷ *«“Vi esta tarde imagens de uma manifestação de professores. Vi lá vários dirigentes partidários. Mas no PS não instrumentalizamos lutas sindicais”»*, *Público*, “Manifestantes diminuiram mas continua a revolta dos professores”, published on May 31st, 2009 (my translation).

²⁸⁸ *Público*, “Chega reúne conselho nacional no mesmo fim-de-semana do congresso do PCP”, published on November 20th, 2020.

The ‘Protest as partisan’ component of the CPC frame is complicated in Spain by the fact that framing protest as partisan is a most common strategy to delegitimise popular mobilisation across the series. It is present from the beginning, when PP argued that the highly participated demonstrations against the stationing of the nuclear submarine and the water plan, as well as the general strike of 2002, were the work of PSOE²⁸⁹, and, naturally, as an obvious response to the protest events called by PP between 2005 and 2008 – as put by the PSOE Prime Minister: *“Zapatero referenced the multiple demonstrations that the Partido Popular has promoted or supported in recent months to conclude: «We are pleased that the right appreciates demonstrating after so many years; that they are enjoying the exercise of democracy»”*.

This is, however, followed by multiple assertions that PP was instrumentalising the victims of terrorism to gain political traction – to that utterance, Zapatero added: *“«Those who use the pain of the victims deserve the greatest disapproval»”*²⁹⁰ and, on different demonstrations, the party declared that *“«PP used a march in favour of the victims of terrorism as an instrument of partisan politics»”*²⁹¹ and *“«Not all the victims were in the demonstration, but the entire Partido Popular was»”*²⁹².

PP’s turn towards street politics is actually the object of a comment in *El País* in 2005:

“PP has supported and encouraged a protest against the Government every two months, on average, so far this year. The PP has served as a loudspeaker and has used its vigorous

²⁸⁹ *«“Nunca seremos cómplices de conductas ajenas a la ley, porque utilizar fondos públicos para fletar autobuses y que los ciudadanos se incorporen a la manifestación supone una mala utilización de esos fondos”», El Mundo, “El PP dice que sólo es «un mitin del PSOE», published on January 21st, 2001; «“Algún día, algunas personas tendrán que responder como han convocado a la gente con fondos o dinero público... para que fueron a la manifestación”», El País, “El PP afirma que la protesta contra el Plan Hidrológico es fruto de la ‘manipulación’”, published on October 10th, 2000; «“el mayor fracaso de los socialistas en los últimos 20 años”», El Mundo, “El Gobierno se siente reforzado para mantener la reforma”, published on June 21st, 2002.*

²⁹⁰ *«Zapatero hizo referencia a las múltiples manifestaciones que el Partido Popular ha promovido o secundado en los últimos meses para concluir: “Nos complace que a la derecha le guste manifestarse después de tantos años; que disfruten del ejercicio de la democracia... Los que utilizan el dolor de las víctimas merecen la mayor reprobación”», El País, “Zapatero asegura que “la gran mayoría de los españoles” apoya el proceso para el fin de ETA”, published on June 11th, 2006 (my translation).*

²⁹¹ *«“El PP utilizó una marcha en favor de las víctimas del terrorismo para hacer partidismo”», El Mundo, “El Gobierno convoca a las asociaciones de víctimas para atajar “la manipulación partidista y extremista”, published on January 24th, 2005 (my translation).*

²⁹² *«“En la manifestación no estaban todas las víctimas, pero sí todo el Partido Popular”», El Mundo, “El Gobierno pide al PP que ayude a la paz y deje la confrontación”, published on November 26th, 2006 (my translation).*

convening capacity to encourage participation, and, on most occasions, has supplied its supporters with the resources to attend demonstrations. Its public support for rallies has become more and more energetic... PP's new strategy contrasts with the position maintained in its years in government, when Aznar labelled political parties that participated in the protest events against the invasion of Iraq and the management of the Prestige disaster as «pancarteros» [thugs holding banners; agitators]... About José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, Aznar said: «A political leader is expected to display judgement, instead of going from demonstration to demonstration and from banner to banner...» or «We already know that he is more comfortable behind banners than doing serious and responsible politics»²⁹³.

Again, a parallel with the situation in Portugal, where the Socialist Party was also censured by PSD for supporting demonstrations, can be found. The same cannot be said about the PP's turn to street politics when in opposition, which finds no correspondence in the Portuguese case with PSD (or CDS-PP, its coalition partner). Indeed, when in opposition, neither of these parties play a significant role in organising or supporting protest and, concomitantly, are not active discursive actors in framing protest from the protesters' seat, as PP is in Spain.

Here, in addition, the anti-austerity protest events were always framed as leftist – while firstly described as the work as the “*most orthodox left*”²⁹⁴, or that of PSOE and its old and new allies (“*«The protest instigators are PSOE and its candidate, as well as people from the unions, the 15-M»*”, and known leftists cultural agents²⁹⁵), they were, as the protest cycle advanced, firmly framed as the work of the radical left, as the following

²⁹³ «El PP ha apoyado y alentado un acto de protesta contra el Gobierno cada dos meses, de media, en lo que va de año. El PP ha servido de altavoz y ha utilizado su vigorosa capacidad de convocatoria para alentar la participación, y en la mayoría de las ocasiones ha puesto al servicio de sus simpatizantes los medios para acudir a las manifestaciones. Su apoyo público a las concentraciones cada vez ha sido más enérgico... La nueva estrategia del PP contrasta con la posición que mantuvo en sus años de Gobierno, cuando Aznar calificaba a los partidos que participaban en las protestas contra la invasión de Irak y la gestión del Prestige de “pancarteros”... Sobre José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, Aznar se refirió aquellos días así: “A un dirigente político le es exigible no tanto andar de manifestación en manifestación y de pancarta en pancarta, sino tener criterio...” o “ya sabemos que está más cómodo detrás de las pancartas que haciendo política seria y responsable”», *El País*, “Las pancartas de los populares”, published on December 4th, 2005 (my translation).

²⁹⁴ «la izquierda política más ortodoxa», *El Mundo*, “Los ‘indignados’ piden ahora una huelga general”, published on June 20th, 2011 (my translation).

²⁹⁵ «“PSOE y a su candidato... como instigadores de las protestas, así como a “liberados sindicales”, a los del 15-M y a “los de la ceja”, en referencia a los escritores y cineastas que han apoyado la movilización», *El País*, “Los profesores paran los institutos”, published on September 21st, 2011 (my translation).

utterances demonstrate: “*What began as a transversal movement is leaning towards the anti-system left*”²⁹⁶, and the education strike of 2012 was a “*protest of the radical extreme left*”²⁹⁷.

It is from this point onwards that the electoral contender born from the movement, *Podemos*, begins to be associated with protest events deemed as extreme or violent – such was the case of the aforementioned *Telefonica* strike (despite the party’s non-involvement), and of the boycott of Felipe González conference: “*PSOE and the Government blame Podemos for the violent boycott of González at the university*”²⁹⁸.

The radical trope remains in the media sphere until the end of the series, and gained traction with the intensification of the pro-independence movement in Catalonia, when protest is framed as partisan in connection with CUP – and as increasingly radical:

- The *Diada* 2016 is reduced to a CUP march that ended with the burning of Spanish, French and EU flags, and people shouting “*«Off with the king’s head»*”²⁹⁹, protest repertoires framed as radical and violent,
- A demonstration against PP at the party’s Catalan headquarters was so received by the regional leader: “*The PP leader... branded the CUP... as «fascists who represent the worst and most despicable of Catalan society»*”³⁰⁰, and
- The “*Nazi-type strike*”³⁰¹ of 2017.

Finally, the Citizenship and Political Community frame includes instances when the protest is framed as being harmful to the political community – a common trope when protest events are described mostly in terms of their negative effects on the day-to-day life of the citizenry (beyond, but often accompanied by, the discourse focused on rights).

²⁹⁶ «*Lo que empezó como un movimiento con vocación transversal se escora hacia la izquierda antisistema*», *El Mundo*, “La buena fe, apaleada a la hora del telediario”, published on September 26th, 2012 (my translation).

²⁹⁷ ²⁹⁷ «*una protesta “de extrema izquierda radical”*», *El País*, “Wert sugiere en plenas protestas que hay margen para recortar más”, published on October 18th, 2012.

²⁹⁸ «*El PSOE y el Gobierno culpan a Podemos del violento boicot a González en la universidad*», *El Mundo*, “Iglesias señala y los violentos lo reproducen”, published on October 20th, 2016 (my translation).

²⁹⁹ «*La marcha de la CUP acabó con quema de banderas de España, Francia y la UE y gritos de “vamos a cortar la cabeza al Rey”*», *El Mundo* cover, published on September 12th, 2016 (my translation).

³⁰⁰ «*El líder del PP en Cataluña tildó de “fascistas que representan lo peor y más despreciable de la sociedad catalana” a la CUP*», *El Mundo*, “La CUP ataca la sede del PP para exigir la consulta”, published on March 18th, 2017 (my translation).

³⁰¹ «*paro “de corte nazi”*», *El País*, “La CUP arrastra al soberanismo a su estrategia de agitación callejera”, published on October 4th, 2017.

This is particularly salient around health, education, and transportation strikes, as well as general strikes.

This is the most important component of the negative CPC frame in Portugal (32.5%), expressed mostly in media reports that extensively cover the consequences of the strike, featuring first-hand testimonies of people who were unable to get their doctor's appointments or missed work due to lack of public transport, presented as the unintentional victims of labour conflicts. Further, dockers, truck drivers, or aviation strikes are depicted as particularly costly in financial terms and, in what may be a singular case, a strike by stock exchange traders was described in the same terms (*"Stock market strike jeopardises the image of the national market"*)³⁰².

What is unique about this frame in Portugal is the fact that particularly the PDS/CDS-PP government at the beginning of the series highlights the effects of strikes on the most vulnerable, expressed in the following utterances: *"«People who are already fragile are being affected»"*³⁰³ or *"The Prime Minister considered the action unfair because it harmed the poor"*³⁰⁴.

As expected, during the anti-austerity protest cycle, this subframe is expressed through utterances that describe protest as harmful to the country's economic recovery and its international reputation:

- As stated by the PDS prime minister shortly after his election: *«Those who think they can shake things up in order to transform the period we are living into a war with the Government, when what exists is a war against delay, debt and waste»*³⁰⁵,

³⁰² *Público*, "Greve na bolsa põe em causa imagem do mercado nacional", published on June 12th, 2002 (my translation).

³⁰³ *«"Estão a ser afetadas pessoas já por si fragilizadas"»*, *Público*, "Paralisação »desnecessária», segundo a tutela, published on April 7th, 2001 (my translation).

³⁰⁴ *«Primeiro ministro considerou "injusta" a ação por prejudicar os pobres»*, *Diário de Notícias*, "Médicos indicam 90% de adesão", published on January 30th, 2003 (my translation).

³⁰⁵ *«Aqueles que pensam que podem agitar as coisas de modo a transformar o período que estamos a viver numa guerra com o Governo, quando o que existe é uma guerra contra o atraso, a dívida e o desperdício"»*, *Público*, "Um Governo não revela preocupação mas fica muito atento", published on November 24th, 2011 (my translation).

- *“The Prime Minister and the President of the Republic – always concerned about separating the wheat from the chaff when it comes to social protest – the same as saying the Portuguese situation from the Greek...”*³⁰⁶.

In Spain, where this is less frequent (23.6%), the frame is similarly expressed – as seen in the Cadiz shipbuilders protest of 2004, when PSOE estimated that “*«About 400.000 [Cadiz citizens] suffer directly or indirectly from these protests»*”³⁰⁷, and, that same year, a Murcia farmers demonstration for irrigation (which Mariano Rajoy joined) was described as harmful to the whole region: “*the demonstration «is a serious mistake for the future of the Region, because it puts it at odds with the Government of Spain»*”³⁰⁸. Spanish dockers and aviation strikes are, as in Portugal, described as a particularly high financial burden (on an air traffic controllers’ strike in 2010, there are multiple reports on financial losses, and the same is said about a dockers’ strike in 2017³⁰⁹).

It is worth noting, however, that, in this country, strike pickets often include the use of high impact repertoires such as roadblocks or destruction of property (mostly burning tyres, garbage containers, or other objects), while, in Portugal, these are very rare. Further, sectorial strikes – such as the shipbuilders example above – tend to outlast their Portuguese equivalents. The consequences of such protest on the Spanish political community are, therefore, more impactful and extended over time. Nonetheless, they are not the focus of media reports – it is the actions of protesters that make it to the printed press, with illustrative images of lit fires and picketers wearing balaclavas or equivalent face-hiding attire. This fact is likely to explain why this component of the frame is less prevalent than in Portugal, but it also has to do with the fact that strikes are a more common protest repertoire here than in Spain.

³⁰⁶ «*O Primeiro-Ministro e o Presidente da República – preocupados que sempre estiveram de separar o trigo do joio no que toca à contestação social – o mesmo que dizer a situação portuguesa da grega*», *Diário de Notícias*, “Governo acredita que greve geral vai ter «forte adesão»”, published on November 24th, 2011 (my translation).

³⁰⁷ «*“En tomo a unos 400.000 padecen directa o indirectamente estas protestas”*», *El País*, “El sitio de Cadiz”, published on September 15th, 2004 (my translation).

³⁰⁸ «*la manifestación “es un grave error para el futuro de la Región, porque la enfrenta con el Gobierno de España”*», *El País*, “Rajoy se manifiesta con los regantes de Murcia en demanda de «agua para todos»”, published on July 15th, 2005 (my translation).

³⁰⁹ *El País*, “Pérdidas millonarias para las compañías”, published on December 5th, 2010; *El Mundo*, “La industria se blinda ante los paros en la estiba”, published on June 15th, 2017.

Anti-austerity protest is also framed as harmful to the Spanish political community – and perhaps because there weren't any lit fires at the *"Acampadas"*, it is the consequences for neighbouring stores and residents that are made very visible. These protest events are firstly described as inconveniencing local businesses, and the circulation of locals and tourists – and here, PSOE and PP seem to agree: while the PSOE deputy Prime Minister stated that *"200 people cannot turn a city upside down"*, PP argued that *"«the heart of Madrid, has been sequestered for three months... by 15-M...The victims and the real Indignados are the shop owners in the area, the Madrid citizens and the tourists who visit Madrid»"*³¹⁰.

However, the framing of *"Acampadas"* as harmful to the community quickly escalated to the protest camps being described as a potential public health issue that needed to be removed from the shared public sphere – two examples stand out:

- The eviction of *"Acampada"* Barcelona in 2011 by local government in order to remove dangerous objects and clean the area (through forceful protest policing)³¹¹,
- The need to resort to protest policing to remove the *"Acampada"* from the Puerta del Sol expressed by PP, since *"«citizens have the right to circulate in peace, to keep their businesses alive, to do tourism and for cities to be clean»"* and to expect protection from *"«a small, radical group, dedicated to making life difficult for the citizenry»"*³¹².

Contrastingly, the demonstration against marriage equality supported by PP constituted one instance when the protest demand was actually harmful to the political community,

³¹⁰ *«"el corazón de Madrid, lleva tres meses secuestrada... por el 15-M...los perjudicados y auténticos indignados son los comerciantes de la zona, los ciudadanos madrileños y turistas que visitan Madrid"», El País, "Rubalcaba: "200 personas no pueden poner patas arriba una ciudad", published on August 6th, 2011 (my translation).*

³¹¹ *«El 'conseller' Puig ordenó usar la fuerza al impedirse la retirada de "objetos peligrosos" y la limpieza de la zona», El Mundo cover, "La torpeza de los Mossos reactiva las acampadas", published on May 28th, 2011.*

³¹² *«"los ciudadanos tienen derecho a circular en paz, a mantener vivos sus negocios, a hacer turismo y a que las ciudades estén limpias.. grupo pequeño, radical, que se está dedicando a complicar la vida a los ciudadanos"», El Mundo, "El Gobierno avala la acción policial contra el 15-M", published on August 7th, 2011 (my translation).*

and that was the reaction it elated from the PSOE government: “«Those who demonstrate do so to demand that a right be denied to others»”³¹³.

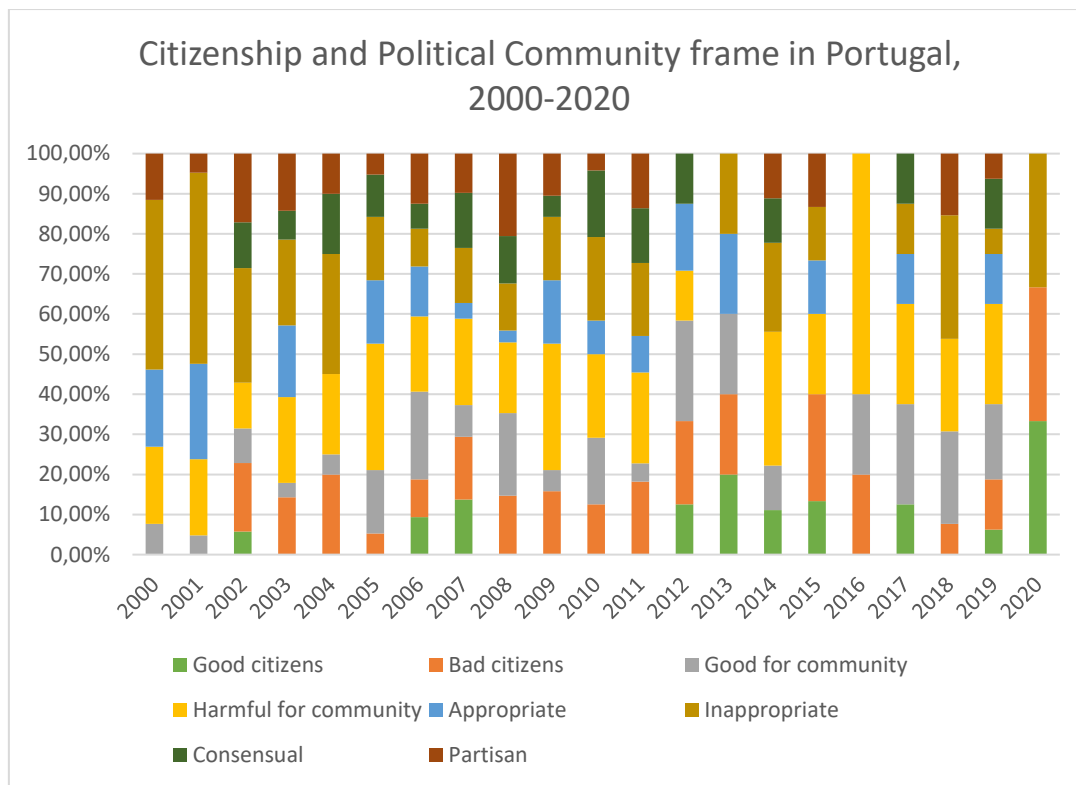
Concerning the evolution of the Citizenship and Political Community in Portugal (figure 114), it is noticeable that the ‘Good citizens’ subframe is more prevalent in the second half of the series, and particularly from the height of the anti-austerity protest cycle in the country, and it is also from then onwards that framing of protest as good for the political community becomes more salient – this is indicative of a variety of actors in the Portuguese media landscape who are framing protest positively, but also of the ubiquitousness of the ‘good citizens do not protest’ trope. In fact, 2012 and 2013 are the years in the series when positive frames outweigh the negative (66.7% vs. 33.3% in 2012, and 60% vs. 40% in 2013) – the other year in 2017 (62.5% positive frames, against 37.5% negative), a year when most eventful events occur in the health sector, with protesters framing the protest events as a struggle for the protection of the national health service.

Nonetheless, with the exception of 2005 and 2019 (split at 50%), all other years feature a mostly negative Citizenship and Political Community frame, and particularly so in the first five years of the series (between 70% and 80% between 2000 and 2005), in 2009 (73.7%), 2015-2016 (73.3% and 80%) and 2018 (76.9%). In the first five years, the ‘protest is inappropriate’ and ‘protest is harmful to the political community’ subframes are particularly salient (due to the prevalence of education and labour related conflicts framed that way), and the remaining years feature sectorial strikes in transportation and trucking whose impact for the citizenry is described in generally negative terms. In the first half of the series, the partisan / representative dichotomy is more common and, from 2011 to 2016, the ‘bad citizens’ subframe gains salience (over 20% every year, with the exception of 2014) – relating, as demonstrated above, to protesters being framed as obstacles – or “*enemies*”³¹⁴ – on the country’s path to recovery.

³¹³ «“los que se manifiestan lo hacen para exigir que un derecho se le niegue a otros”», *El Mundo*, “El Gobierno recuerda que la marcha niega un derecho a otros”, published on June 19th, 2005 (my translation).

³¹⁴ «“O verdadeiro inimigo do país é quem não deixa os outros trabalhar”», *Público*, “Bancadas da direita têm «ódio e medo» da greve geral, diz PCP”, published on March 22nd, 2012.

Figure 114. Citizenship and Political Community frame in Portugal, 2000-2020.

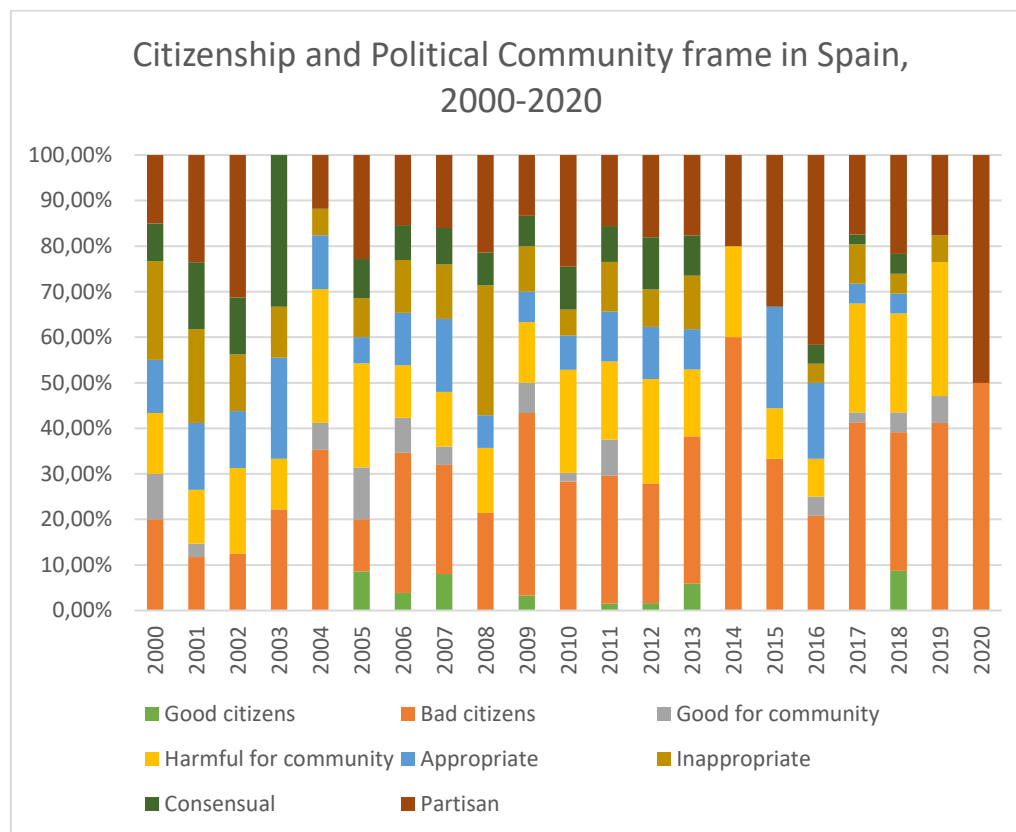


Own elaboration.

The Spanish case (figure 115) exhibits one clear trend – the rise of the ‘Bad citizens’ subframe across the series (coupled with the virtual inexistence of its oppositional subframe, ‘Good citizens’). This reflects the discursive turn towards describing protest as radical identified in the Spanish case, which finds no correspondence in Portugal. The tendency to frame protest as partisan is also reflected in the fact that, every year in the series, with the exception of 2003, the ‘partisan’ subframe outweighs its contrary, ‘protest as representative’.

There is only one year with a mostly positive Citizenship and Political Community Frame in the country – 2003 (55.6% positive, vs. 44.4% negative). Interestingly, this is a year of sectorial strikes in shipbuilding that, despite the duration and the repertoire, were mostly positively framed. All other years in the Spanish case feature a majority of negative subframes, and that is particularly so in 2004, 2008, 2011, 2014 (no positive utterances), and 2017, 2019 and 2020, when negative values make up over 80% of the frame.

Figure 115. Citizenship and Political Community frame in Spain, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

In the next chapter, some of these conclusions will be revised and their impact on securitisation dynamics will be considered, but this work now turns to the last legitimacy and politicisation frame, the 'Non-protest', which is also significant for the third master frame – (in)security.

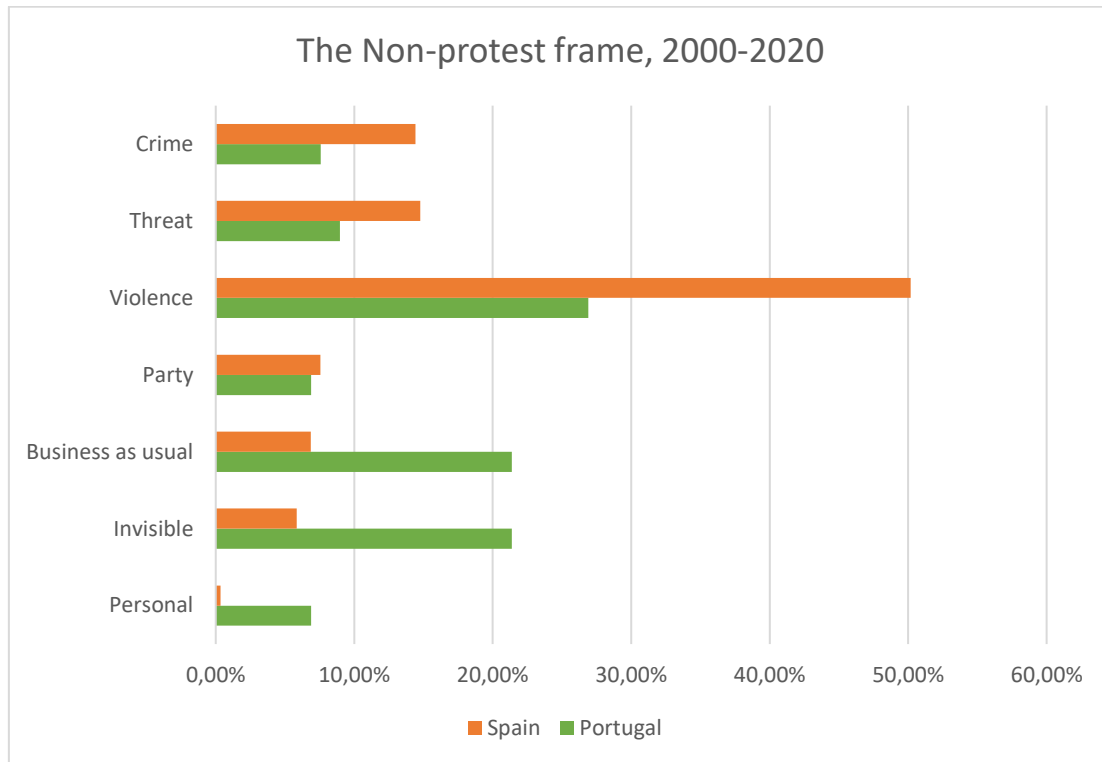
5.6. The non-protest frame

Framing protest as something completely distinct is a discursive strategy to delegitimise and depoliticise it commonly found across the border – it is the second most common frame in Portugal and third in Spain, although manifested differently.

In Spain, half of this frame (50.2%) is manifested through narratives of the protest event that describe it essentially as an episode of violence (figure 116). This happens in three different circumstances – the protest is an actual instance of violence, an episode of violence is reported as the main happening of the protest event, often described in great

detail (thereby reducing the protest event to that very episode and, in the process, voiding it of any political or claim-making premiss), or the protest event is framed as violent, even though no actual violence occurred.

Figure 116. The Non-protest frame in Portugal and Spain, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

The first case is the least common and occurs mainly in instances of popular mobilisation that cannot be considered progressive or emancipatory – for example, parents boycotting a school against attendance by Roma children assaulted teachers and members of the security forces in 2001³¹⁵.

The most common instances of this subframe, however, relate to protest events featuring generally low and average impact repertoires, but a minority of protesters engage in high impact protest repertoires such as attacks on people and on property. Those receive more mediatic attention, through detailed descriptions of those episodes and of protest policing. Most significantly, this occurs throughout the series mostly during strikes and student mobilisation, partially or effectively erasing the protest from

³¹⁵ *El País*, “Los 633 alumnos de un colegio religioso de Barakaldo boicotean a tres hermanos gitanos”, published on May 11th, 2000; *El País*, “El Gobierno vasco denunciará ante el fiscal a los padres de lo colegio de Barakaldo”, published on May 12th, 2000.

the narrative, which is turned into a story about controlling violence and removing it from the shared public sphere.

In what concerns general strikes, protest targets can choose to place the emphasis on violent incidents when reacting to the protest event – that was the case of the 2002 strike, when PP's government's comments exclusively and extensively addressed any violent incidents, which needed condemning, while, simultaneously, protest policing needed praising, in controlling the violence and as its main victim. The Ministry of the Interior's reaction deserves reproducing:

“Rajoy assures there have been more than a thousand violent actions... he congratulated the State Police Forces for their actions... He explained that, thanks to police intervention, many establishments that... were forced to close due to pickets, were able to reopen... he specified that there were numerous picket actions «with varying degrees of violence», which caused considerable material damage and injuries... There were also direct attacks on members of the Security Forces... Among these, he highlighted the one suffered by two police units in Zaragoza”³¹⁶.

This utterance serves two purposes – firstly, it erases the protest, framing it as nothing but a gathering of violent people, impeding good people from working and attacking other good people, the members of the police forces. Secondly, the choice to highlight protest policing projects the strike as a public security problem – and the fact that the government's spokesperson on the strike was the Ministry of the Interior is not incidental. This dislocates the issue, which ceases to be government labour and social policies that the protesters were resisting, to being the protesters themselves. The result is both delegitimising and depoliticising, through the creation of the very same Manichean divisive line between the good and the bad members of the political community already identified above.

³¹⁶ «Rajoy asegura que se han producido más de un millar de acciones violentas... felicitó a las Fuerzas y cuerpos de Seguridad del Estado por su actuación... Explicó que gracias a la intervención policial muchos establecimientos que... se vieron obligados a cerrar por la acción de los piquetes, pudieron funcionar... precisó que se produjeron numerosas acciones de piquetes “con diversos grados de violencia”, que provocaron cuantiosos daños materiales y lesiones... También, se produjeron agresiones directas a miembros de las Fuerzas de Seguridad... Entre estos ataques destaca el sufrido por dos dotaciones policiales en Zaragoza», *El Mundo*, “Detenidos más de 100 miembros de piquetes y manifestantes”, published on June 21st, 2002 (my translation).

Once the anti-austerity protest cycle is underway, one witnesses an equivalent to frame bridging, as the violence frame is dislocated to the newly formed social movement – and is particularly present in reactions to the “*Aturem el Parlament*” protest event that has been previously discussed, primarily framed as a security problem created by a movement which was, in the words of Catalan Interior Ministry, essentially violent:

“«The problem was the aggressiveness and violence»... «Yesterday there was a fierce desire for a battle royale and to transfer urban guerrilla to the Parliament»... «Violent people were there, those who gave them cover too, and then there were naive people who, without realising it», gave the most radical people more strength. «If they [the 15-M] say that violent people are not with the movement, why don't they throw them out?... before, people threw a stone and hid their hands. Now they throw a stone and raise their hands», alluding to the gestures of peaceful resistance that have been seen in recent weeks in the 15-M Movement”³¹⁷.

The purpose of this discussion is not, naturally, to deny that the protest event at the Catalan parliament included the use of high impact repertoires that constituted acts of violence, and it is therefore expected – and legitimate – that these are widely condemned. Nonetheless, the statement reproduced above demonstrates the existence of a transfer of the violence framing from the occurrences of the day to the 15-M movement itself, which is depicted as an essentially violent actor, unable or unwilling to control its own members. This framing attempts to break off the solidarity links between the citizenry and the movement – the Manichean divide between good and bad protesters is completely annulled here, all protesters being framed as equally bad.

The following year, a protest event at the national and regional parliaments was simply dismissed by the government as a violent episode (“*The Government dismisses the protest as violent*”³¹⁸) – at this point, thus, the ‘non-protest: violence’ subframe had

³¹⁷ «“El problema fue la agresividad y la violencia”... “Ayer había unas ganas feroces de batalla campal y de trasladar al Parlament una guerrilla urbana”... “Los violentos estaban, los que les dieron cobertura también, y luego había personas ingenuas que, sin querer, también ayudaron” a que los más radicales tuvieran más fuerza. “Si dicen que los violentos no son del movimiento, por qué no los echan?”... “antes se tiraba la piedra y se escondía la mano. Ahora se tira la piedra y se levantan las manos”, aludiendo a los gestos de resistencia pacífica que se han visto durante las últimas semanas en el Movimiento del 15-M», *El Mundo*, “Un operativo «insuficiente y discriminatorio»”, published on June 17th, 2011 (my translation).

³¹⁸ «El Gobierno descalifica la protesta por violenta», *El País*, “Parapetados y aislados”, published on September 26th, 2012 (my translation).

already been firmly established and could simply be recalled in order to disqualify and depoliticise any protest event in which anti-austerity protest actors participated.

The last cases of this subframe occur in instances when there is no violence, but protest is nonetheless framed as a violent attack on the protest target or on the rest of society, as demonstrated by the following examples:

- Protesters who took down a PP banner during the 2000 Galician regional elections political campaign were described in the following terms by the incumbent: “*«It will not be those who are shouting, nor the hooligans, nor the terrorists, nor the murderers, who are going to decide the future of Spain»*”³¹⁹,
- An occupation in Barcelona with no violent incident was described by the judiciary, whose argument is reproduced in the newspaper article, as a violent event: “*«It was not a peaceful... occupation, but a violent one» causing social alarm to the owner and the general population, who find themselves defenceless against this type of attack against private property*”³²⁰.

Additionally, the Catalan referendum was described as a violent protest event (although, as will be exposed in the next chapter, this is nuanced by reports of protest policing) – “*The thousands of people scattered throughout Catalonia did not act peacefully. Peace is the law, and those thousands of people exercised active moral violence and (almost always) passive physical violence*”³²¹.

Finally, “*escraches*” (and protest events referred to as “*escraches*”) are also framed as violence, regardless of the fact that no actual violence takes place: in two occasions, these are framed as both an attack on the traditional family and as a case of gender-based violence – *El Mundo* devotes two covers to “*escraches*” targeting female politicians, one featuring the reaction of the PP president of the Galician regional

³¹⁹ «*“No van a ser los que gritan, ni los gamberros, ni los terroristas, no los que asesinan, quienes van a decidir el futuro de España”*», *El País*, “Independentistas boicotean la pegada de carteles de Fraga”, published on February 25th, 2000 (my translation).

³²⁰ «*“no ha sido una usurpación pacífica..., sino violenta”, causó... “alarma social en la población por lo que tiene de indefensión en este tipo de ataques contra el patrimonio ajeno”*», *El Mundo*, “Los Mossos desalojan por orden del juez la nave ‘okupada’ de Barcelona”, published on December 14th, 2006 (my translation).

³²¹ «*Las miles de personas dispersas por toda Cataluña no actuaron pacíficamente. La paz es la ley, y esos miles ejercieron violencia moral activa y violencia física (casi siempre) pasiva*», *El Mundo*, “La paz, la ley, la fuerza”, published on October 2nd, 2017 (my translation).

government (“*«It was not the house of a politician but that of a baby’s mother»*”³²²), and the other under the title “*Prenatal escrache at Villacís*”³²³, implying that the protest caused the *Ciudadanos* politician, pregnant at the time, who protesters addressed during a public event, to suffer an early delivery. Given the already established hypervisibility of this type of protest events in the media sphere, and the limited reference to any political claim uttered by protesters during these instances of popular mobilisation, this again excludes these instances of popular mobilisation from the political realm.

“*Escraches*” are also an important component of the ‘protest is a threat’ subframe (14.8% in Spain), used to label instances of popular mobilisation as unacceptable “*threats and pressures*”, “*coercion*”, “*violence and intimidation*” and “*harassment*”³²⁴, even when they take place outside a party headquarters or during a public event, or even a campaign rally – an otherwise regular repertoire and locations of a protest event, if it wasn’t for the framing.

As with the ‘non-protest: violence’ subframe, there are also instances in which this frame is used because the protest event constitutes an actual threat and is intrinsically undemocratic – for example, demonstrations outside abortion clinics at the beginning of the series insulting women and practitioners were described as “*constant harassment and coercion*”³²⁵, but these represent a minority of the cases included in this subframe. On most occasions when the ‘non-protest: threat’ subframe is uttered, thus, it serves the purpose of delegitimising protest that is, in every way, legitimate.

This is achieved through two main discursive strategies – framing protest as a form of blackmail (for example, the early 2000s migrant campaign for regularisation was initially

³²² *El Mundo* cover, «No era la casa de una política sino la de la madre de un bebe», published on April 7th, 2013 (my translation).

³²³ *El Mundo* cover, “Escrache parto a Villacís”, published on May 16th, 2019 (my translation).

³²⁴ «amenazas y presiones para que cambien su voto en la ley sobre desahucios», *El Mundo*, “Diputados del PP denuncian ante la Policía acoso en sus domicilios”, published on March 26th, 2013; «los populares tildaron la protesta de coacción», *El País*, “Los antidesahucios protestan ante sedes del PP, el PSC y Ciudadanos”, published on December 15th, 2015; «violencia e intimidación», *El País*, “Estudiantes intentan reventar un acto del PP en Barcelona”, published on April 12th, 2019; «“Hay colectivos que ven en todo la oportunidad de acosar, de hacer un escrache”», *El Mundo*, “Escrache de los antidesahucios a Villacís y Ayuso”, published on May 16th, 2019 (my translation).

³²⁵ «“constante hostigamiento e coacción”», *El País*, “Disuelto un grupo antiabortista ante la clínica Dator en Madrid”, published on June 4th, 2000 (my translation).

described by the regional government of Catalonia as “*unacceptable social blackmail*”³²⁶, the campaign against the Spanish government support for the invasion of Iraq was labelled as an “*«intimidation campaign against PP led by intolerant people»*”³²⁷ and a subway strike in Madrid was framed by the Community President as blackmail³²⁸), or appealing to fear: that was the case in the 2010 general strike (“*Fear of... pickets caused many small businesses... to choose to take the day off*”³²⁹), on the occasion of the oath ceremony of the Valencia government, mentioned above (“*fear of new altercations and more police charges looming*”³³⁰) and was taken to new heights during a protest against the Catholic World Youth Day, celebrated in Madrid in 2011, described as a “*pilgrim hunt*” by *El Mundo*:

*“The tone was one of great menace... The radicals’ faces showed a complete lack of control, they were out of their minds... I have been covering security and terrorism for more than 20 years, but it had been many years since I had seen so much blood in protesters’ eyes... not all, far from it, but some were terrifying... radical, violent people, who behaved like antisocial madmen”*³³¹.

This is not a description of a protest event – this is a description of a violent gathering of extremely violent people, aimed at creating social alarm. What is more, the same reporting unabashedly connects this protest event with the 15-M and the *Indignados* movement: “*The protest organisers had a special interest in this square [Puerta del Sol],*

³²⁶ «*Fuentes de la Delegación del Gobierno dijeron que la huelga es “un chantaje social inaceptable”*», *El Mundo*, “Los inmigrantes de Barcelona endurecen su huelga de hambre”, published on January 31st, 2001 (my translation).

³²⁷ «*“campana de intimidación contra el PP lanzada por gente intolerante”*», *El País*, “Un grupo de manifestantes golpea en Reus al candidato del PP a la alcaldía de Barcelona”, published on March 26th, 2002 (my translation).

³²⁸ «*La presidenta de la Comunidad de Madrid... dijo públicamente que no iba a permitir “que a los usuarios madrileños se les someta a chantaje”*», *El País*, “El paro total del metro colapsa Madrid”, published on June 30th, 2010.

³²⁹ «*El miedo a ...los piquetes provocó que muchos pequeños comercios...optaran por tomarse el día libre*», *El Mundo*, “El miedo obliga a cerrar al 10%”, published on September 30th, 2010 (my translation).

³³⁰ «*Mañana se forman los ayuntamientos con el temor a nuevos altercados y más cargas*», *El Mundo*, “‘Indignados’ contra la corrupción”, published on June 10th, 2011.

³³¹ «*El tono fue adquiriendo un aire amenazador tremendo. Las caras de los radicales estaban completamente desencajadas, fuera de sí... Llevo más de 20 años haciendo información sobre seguridad y terrorismo, pero hacía muchos años que no veía tanta inyección de sangre en ojos de manifestantes. No eran todos, ni mucho menos, pero algunos daban miedo... radicales, violentos, que se comportaron como energúmenos*», *El Mundo*, “Cacería contra el peregrino en Sol”, published on August 19th, 2011 (my translation).

*the main symbol of the 15-M Movement” and “The demonstrators, among whom there were many “Indignados”, turned their protest into a battle royale”*³³².

This frames protest as a dangerous event, and protesters as dangerous outsiders intent on violating the public sphere with violent or, at the very least, unacceptable behaviour. It has a strong dissuading effect, as it effectively takes people off the streets – people who just want to go about their businesses who are actively being dissuaded from doing so, but also people who may agree with the claims and the reasons behind a protest event, but are still made to fear protesters, or, at the very least, cannot identify and create solidarity links, essential for mobilisation, with people described in this fashion.

The third most important component of the Non-protest frame in Spain is the ‘non-protest: crime’ subframe (14.4%), which, too, creates a strong dissuading effect from participating in street politics. It includes several occasions when protesters’ crimes are listed – resisting authority and coercions, occupations, insulting the royal family or even hijacking and crimes against air safety³³³. Interestingly, however, this takes on a new discursive turn from the middle of the series, when some protest events start being described as a form of hate crime.

The first instances of this occur in Catalonia – in 2008, after some young participants burned pictures of the royal family, *Ciutadans* argued that “«Unfortunately, it is not the first nor the last time» that these «hate» crimes take place during the Diada”³³⁴, and, shortly after, during the student mobilisation that same year, when *Ciutadans* described the boycott which targeted the party as a “«moral lynching more typical of times

³³² «Los convocantes tenían un interés especial en esta plaza, el principal símbolo del Movimiento 15-M», *El Mundo*, “Los anti Papa agreden a peregrinos”, published on August 18th, 2011; «Los manifestantes, entre los que había muchos indignados, convirtieron su protesta en una batalla campal», *El Mundo* cover of August 18th, 2011 (my translation).

³³³ «Serán juzgados por resistencia a la autoridad y coacciones», *El País*, “Las protestas contra las autovías en I biza duran ya dos meses y suman 23 detenidos”, published on March 27th, 2006; «“A partir de ahora se ha acabado la impunidad con quienes piensan que ocupar propiedades privadas y alterar el orden público forma parte del paisaje de Barcelona y de Cataluña”», *El Mundo*, “El ‘Govern’ de Mas emplega mano dura contra los okupas”, published on January 24th, 2011; «La Audiencia Nacional investigará un delito de injurias a la Corona», *El País*, “El fiscal pide a la Generalitat datos sobre la quema de fotos de los Reyes”, published on September 15th, 2007; *El País*, “Una juez abre diligencias por secuestro y delitos contra la seguridad aérea en El Prat”, published on August 1st, 2006.

³³⁴ «“desgraciadamente no es la primera ni la última vez” que se protagonizan estos actos “de odio” durante la Diada», *El Mundo*, “Los Mossos investigarán la quema de fotos del Rey”, published on September 13th, 2008 (my translation).

*reminiscent of Nazism or fascism»*³³⁵. During the anti-austerity protest cycle, “*escraches*” are also framed as a hate crime – as argued by a PP politician, and mentioned above, “*«They say they are going to signal at me, but signalling is what the Nazis did to the Jews»*”³³⁶. A few years after, a protest at a *Ciudadanos* campaign rally was not only framed as an “*escrache*”, but also as a hate crime – “*Rivera will file a complaint with the State Attorney General's Office for hate crime, threats and assaults*”³³⁷. The pro-independence strike in Catalonia in 2017 was also framed as a Nazi-like event – and thereby also equated with a hate crime, targeting the rest of Spain.

Protest against over-tourism is also framed as a new type of hate crime: “*tourismphobia*”³³⁸ – in the words of the PSC Barcelona councillor, “*These outbreaks of tourismphobia are xenophobia*”³³⁹, and the power of expertise is again summoned to reinforce this framing: “*The term...has been declared a valid neologism by Fundéu*”³⁴⁰. What is more, “*Tourismphobia*” is firmly placed as a side issue of the pro-independence movement³⁴¹, and used to attack the serving Barcelona’s Mayor, Ada Colau (“*Colau will not take any measures against tourismphobia*”; “*Colau's weakness in the face of attacks on tourism outrages businessmen*”³⁴²), whose role in the PAH, and consequently in “*escraches*”, but also in the anti-globalisation and the *okupa* movement, is recalled on several occasions³⁴³.

³³⁵ «*“linchamiento moral más propio de épocas que recuerdan al nazismo o al fascismo”*», *El Mundo*, “*Agreden a Ciutadans en una marcha contra la ley de Educación catalana*”, published on November 14th, 2008 (my translation).

³³⁶ «*“Dicen que me van a señalar, pero señalar es lo que hacían los nazis con los judíos”*», *El País*, “*Cuando la protesta llega hasta la puerta de casa*”, published on March 23rd, 2013 (my translation).

³³⁷ «*Rivera presentará una denuncia en la Fiscalía General del Estado por delito de odio, amenazas y agresiones*», *El Mundo*, *El acoso en Rentería, a la Justicia*, published on April 16th, 2019 (my translation).

³³⁸ *El Mundo*, “*La turismofobia llega a Baleares*”, published on August 3rd, 2017.

³³⁹ «*“Estos brotes de turismofobia son xenofobia”*», *El País*, “*La tibieza de Colau ante los ataques al turismo indigna a los empresarios*”, published on August 1st, 2017 (my translation).

³⁴⁰ “*El término...ha sido declarado por la Fundéu como un neologismo válido*”, *El Mundo*, “*La excusa de la turismofobia*”, published on August 14th, 2017 (my translation); *Fundéu* (*Fundación del Español Urgente*) is foundation aiming at ensuring the good usage of Spanish in the media, connected with the *Real Academia Española*.

³⁴¹ *El Mundo*, “*Así actúan los 500 ‘borrokas’ del ‘procés’*”, published on August 6th, 2017; *El Mundo*, “*La turismofobia llega a Baleares*”, published on August 3rd, 2017.

³⁴² *El País*, “*Colau no tomará ninguna medida contra la turismofobia*”, published on August 7th, 2017; *El País*, “*La tibieza de Colau ante los ataques al turismo indigna a los empresarios*”, published on August 1st, 2017.

³⁴³ *El País*, “*El gobierno de Colau evita condenar a los okupas de Gràcia*”, published on August 19th, 2016; *El Mundo*, “*Ada Colau reconoce que se pliega ante el movimiento okupa*”, published on November 13th, 2016.

Despite its acceptance by Fundéu as a “*valid neologism*”, it is important to pinpoint that this type of protest events does not constitute a hate crime. The European Network against Racism (ENAR) defines hate crime as

“Any criminal offence, including offences against persons or property, where the victim, premises, or target of the offence are selected because of their real or perceived connection, attachment, affiliation, support, or membership of a group...A group may be based upon a characteristic common to its members, such as real or perceived race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, or other similar factor”³⁴⁴.

The EU also sets a definition for hate speech in its 2008 Framework Decision on combating certain forms of expressions of racism and xenophobia: hate speech is the “*public incitement to violence or hatred based on race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin*”³⁴⁵. Being a tourist is not one of the characteristics advanced by either the EU or ENAR, and certainly does not place an individual or group of people at any particular disadvantage – in fact, traveling for leisure can be considered a privilege, and tourists certainly do not constitute a minority group at risk. The same can be said about being a member of the Royal family, or a Spaniard in Spain, or a politician.

This is precisely what Judith Butler (2009, p. 153; 2015, pp. 2; 50) was referring to when she stressed the importance of securing the meaning of emancipatory, progressive terms relating to human rights, alerting to the fact that these terms can be instrumentalised for non-progressive intents – the expression “hate crime” has been appropriated in this way, becoming a semantically loaded instrument applied to protest events, reinforcing the Manichean worldview of us vs. them in Spain, increasing polarisation, and, ultimately, delegitimising and depoliticising popular mobilisation and activism. This also frames protest as a security problem, as will be exposed in the next chapter.

³⁴⁴ Hate crime definition available at <https://www.enar-eu.org/frequently-asked-questions-1004/> (accessed on 13-09-2023).

³⁴⁵ Available at https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/combating-hate-speech-and-hate-crime_en#:~:text=Hate%20motivated%20crime%20and%20speech,or%20national%20or%20ethnic%20origin (accessed on 13-09-2023).

These two components of the non-protest frame are much less frequent in the Portuguese case, where the 'non-protest: threat' subframe appears in 9% of the occurrences of the frame, and the 'non-protest: crime' subframe is even less frequent, at 7.6%.

The 'non-protest: threat' subframe in Portugal is used primarily by protest targets reacting to strikes, which are depicted as unacceptable forms of pressure, and used both by public and private actors. Management and board of directors often refer to strikes as a threat to ongoing negotiations (for example, on a train conductors' strike in 2001, the board stated "*CP is open to negotiations... but «it is difficult to negotiate with a union that always uses strikes as a throwing weapon»*"³⁴⁶, and a similar argument was used by the management of a garbage collection company in 2007 – "*«ValorSul is willing to negotiate... subject to a prior condition»: the end of the strike and of strike threats*"³⁴⁷.

When government actors frame protest as a threat, however, they tend to follow this utterance with a statement of the ineffectiveness of protest and the fact that popular mobilisation will not signal any negotiations – that was the case of the doctors strike of 2003, when that protest repertoire was described as a constant threat used by labour unions "*«imbued with a guerrilla spirit»*"³⁴⁸, of the 2008 teachers' demonstration outside the Socialist Party headquarters, when the Prime Minister commented the protest constituted an unacceptable and ineffective form of pressure³⁴⁹, an argument that was repeated by the Minister of Education the next year, when she referred to teachers mobilisation as an intimidation act that would not result in any modification in policy³⁵⁰, and, during the anti-austerity protest cycle, and as already mentioned,

³⁴⁶ «Do lado da CP existe abertura para o diálogo..., mas "é difícil negociar com um sindicato que utiliza sempre a greve como arma de arremesso"», *Público*, "Maquinistas param comboios em todo o país", published on June 19th, 2001 (my translation).

³⁴⁷ «"A ValorSul está disposta a negociar... mediante uma condição prévia»: o fim da greve e das ameaças de paralisação"», *Público*, "GNR acusada de agredir membros do piquete da greve da ValorSul", published on November 20th, 2007 (my translation).

³⁴⁸ «Os profissionais não podem estar constantemente a esgrimir o argumento da greve... "os sindicatos estão imbuídos de um espírito de guerrilha"», *Público*, "Ministro defende que «só os utentes ficam a perder»", published on February 1st, 2003 (my translation).

³⁴⁹ «"É lamentável que tenham feito uma manifestação à porta de um partido político, tentando condicioná-lo"», *Público*, "Assobios no Rato", published on February 24th, 2008.

³⁵⁰ *Público*, "Ontem «não foi o pior dia» de Maria de Lurdes Rodrigues", published on November 9th, 2008.

pensioners protesting from the parliament galleries were also framed as threatening – “*«We were not elected to be afraid, to be coerced and not respected»»*”³⁵¹.

This is very different from the Spanish case, as, in Portugal, the discourse is more tamed with no references to blackmail or harassment, and with private actors actually stating popular mobilisation, even when considered a threat, does not signal a break in negotiations.

Similarly, the ‘non-protest: crime’ subframe in Portugal is more restrained, and, at times, it does not include any specification of the illegal activity or criminal offence committed by protesters – for example, Coimbra University professors, during the students’ mobilisation of 2003-4, filed criminal complaints against the student association, but this is reported without stipulating the actual offence, and the rector himself stated he did not agree with taking legal action against protesters³⁵².

In most, cases, however, the offence is mentioned – from assault, as during the aforementioned 2003 attack on a Socialist politician, with the Parliament calling for the “*«identification and exemplary punishment of those responsible for these vile and criminal attacks»»*”³⁵³, to “*the complete block of the bridge*”, as specified by GNR during the roadblock of the international bridge in Valença, for which the protest organisers would be subject to criminal proceedings³⁵⁴, and a young Extinction Rebellion activist who interrupted a prime minister’s speech in 2019 was accused of “*civil disobedience*”. Here, however, the activist was given room to reply to the accusations: “*The institutions that so seriously disobey the laws of nature are the same that waste our taxes in such an unnecessary and ridiculous intimidation action*”, thus inverting the onus of the threat³⁵⁵.

³⁵¹ “*«Não fomos eleitos para ter medo, para ser coagidos e não sermos respeitados»»*”, *Público*, “*«Carrascos» incomodam Assunção Esteves, que ameaça fechar galerias do povo*”, published on July 12th, 2012 (my translation).

³⁵² *Público*, “*Professores da Universidade de Coimbra movem queixa-crime contra estudantes*”, published on November 10th, 2003.

³⁵³ “*O voto pede ainda às autoridades competentes que “se empenhem na identificação e punição exemplar dos responsáveis por estas agressões vis e criminosas”»*”, *Público*, “*AR aprova por unanimidade voto de protesto pelas agressões a Assis*”, published on May 23rd, 2003.

³⁵⁴ “*Comandante da GNR sublinhou a “ilegalidade” desta ação (bloqueio total da ponte), garantindo que vários elementos à civil “identificaram várias pessoas suspeitas de terem fomentado o corte”. Neste caso, “estão sujeitos a processo criminal”»*”, *Diário de Notícias*, “*Protesto contra fecho de urgência ‘corta’ ponte na fronteira*”, published on February 17th, 2007 (my translation).

³⁵⁵ “*A acusação do Ministério Público chegou agora: o jovem foi acusado de desobediência qualificada... “As instituições que desobedecem de forma tão grave àquilo que são as leis da natureza são as mesmas*”

The ‘Non-protest-violence’ subframe in Portugal is much less prevalent than in the Spanish case, at 26.9%, almost half of the Spanish frame (50.2%), which is naturally caused by the lower use of high impact repertoires. Nonetheless, the same three trends compose the subframe – protest events that are actual incidences of violence, protest events when a minor violent incident becomes the focus of the mediatic narrative, and protest events that are described as violent despite the absence of actual violence.

In the first case, this refers mainly to episodes of assault on people, such as the 2003 attack on a PS politician – who, nonetheless, depicted his assailants as “*«innocent people being manipulated»*”³⁵⁶, a very different description than the ones found in Spain during “*escraches*”, for example, which do not feature any violence.

In the second case, two campaigns stand out – the students’ mobilisation of 2003-4 and the anti-austerity protest cycle. In the first case, its final protest event, in which a single student assaulted a policeman, gained hypervisibility in the media, being described through expressions such as “*students’ aggressiveness*”, “*students’ attacks*” or “*students’ violent pressure*”³⁵⁷. This is, however, followed by a counter-frame in one of the media outlets (*Público*), with parties on the left (PCP, BE,, and PS) describing protest policing as disproportionate and, inclusively, calling for disciplinary proceedings against police officers, thus inverting the plot on the perpetrators and the recipients of violence³⁵⁸.

Frame and counter-frame can also be found during the anti-austerity protest cycle – specifically during its most participated protest events:

que usam os nossos impostos para uma acção de intimidação tão desnecessária e ridícula”», Público, “Dois anos após ter interrompido o discurso de António Costa, Francisco é acusado de desobediência civil”, published on April 21st, 2021 (my translation).

³⁵⁶ “*«quem nos agrediu eram pessoas simples que estavam a ser manipuladas»», Público, “Assis agredido em Felgueiras”, published on May 17th, 2003 (my translation).*

³⁵⁷ “*«Face à agressividade dos alunos”... As investidas dos alunos começaram pouco depois das 15.00», Diário de Notícias, “Polícia lança gás paralisante em confrontos com estudantes”, published on October 22nd, 2004; «para aguentar a pressão violenta dos estudantes», Público, “Serenata deu lugar a discurso de protesto em Coimbra”, published on October 22nd, 2004 (my translation).*

³⁵⁸ “*BE apresentou no parlamento um voto de protesto à intervenção policial... reuniu o apoio de toda a oposição e reprovado pela maioria PSD/CDS... PCP pede ao governo para explicar o que consideram ser “contornos desproporcionados” da intervenção da PSP... “impõem-se esclarecimentos claros e concisos” de forma a poder “proceder disciplinarmente sob os agentes infratores”», Público, “PCP e JS exigem explicações do Ministro Daniel Sanches”, published on October 22nd, 2004 (my translation).*

- Incidents outside the Parliament at the end of the general strike of 2011 became hyper-visible: *“the crowd... broke through the iron bars that protected the Parliament’s staircase, continuing to throw ...beer bottles at the police. The police cordon... was unable to contain the strength of the protesters who tried to storm the ... Assembly of the Republic”*³⁵⁹,
- The first general strike of 2012 was primarily described as a protest marked by violence – Público’s cover stated, *“Government tried to silence weak protest marked by violence”*, and *Diário de Notícias* gave prime coverage to the incidents, described in detail and, additionally, presented as a violent continuum – *“protesters... throwing eggs at banking facilities and at people who were withdrawing money from ATMs. Still, last year it was worse: two Finance offices in Lisbon were vandalised, with Molotov cocktails”*³⁶⁰,
- And the transnational general strike of November 14th, 2012, also received a coverage focused on the violent episodes at the Parliament, described *“as the most violent anti-austerity demonstration”*, featuring a high number of detainees and injuries (including police officers), with the involvement of new social movements and organisations:

“As soon as the labour union [CGTP] declared the protest was over, their red flags disappeared from the square in front of the Assembly of the Republic. As in previous demonstrations, the movements Plataforma 15 de Outubro (15O) [Platform October 15th], Sem Emprego (MSE) [Movement Without a Job], 12 de Março (M12M) [March 12th Movement], Que Se Lixe a Troika and Cidadãos pela Dignidade [Citizens for Dignity] remained in the area. A group of around 50 dockers, around 300 higher education

³⁵⁹ *«a multidão... abalroou as grades de ferro que protegiam a escadaria do Parlamento, sucedendo-se uma chuva de mais garrafas de cerveja contra os polícias. O cordão que os agentes formaram ... não conseguiu conter a força dos manifestantes que tentaram tomar de assalto os degraus da AR», Público, “Indignados fizeram voar garrafas sobre o parlamento na manifestação a que os sindicalistas não se quiseram juntar”, published on November 25th, 2011 (my translation).*

³⁶⁰ *Público’s cover, “Governo tentou calar protesto fraco marcado pela violência”, published on March 23rd, 2012 (my translation); «manifestantes ... atirando ovos contra as instalações bancárias e algumas pessoas que estavam a levantar dinheiro no Multibanco. Ainda assim, no ano passado foi pior: duas repartições das Finanças em Lisboa foram vandalizadas, com cocktails-molotov», Diário de Notícias, “Confrontos entre polícia e manifestantes no Chiado”, published on March 23rd, 2012 (my translation).*

*students, and some CP train drivers also joined in. There was also a group of around 50 young anarchists and also many anonymous citizens*³⁶¹.

Although with much less intensity, the tendency to associate new social movements with violent incidents is, thus, also present in the Portuguese case, with labour unions being clearly identified as non-participants in those incidents – this is clearly demonstrated by *Público*'s reporting on the first protest indicated above (*"Indignados throw bottles over Parliament in the demonstration that labour unions did not want to join"*³⁶²) and on the timeline of the November 14th, 2012 demonstration: the violent incidents happened once CGTP declared the protest was over.

In Portugal, then, there is a second good / bad citizens who protest dichotomy, with the good citizens being those associated with traditional actors in the protest sphere (labour unionists and those who follow their guidance) and the bad citizens being those in new social movements who seem unaware of the proper way to conduct themselves during protest events, and whose behaviour is openly condemned as not belonging in the public sphere. The listing of those movements and their associates presented above is an added indicator of their otherness.

It is worth noting, nevertheless, that the same counter-frame that is present in the student mobilisation of 2003/2004 is also very current during the anti-austerity protest cycle, as reports of disproportionate protest policing abound, which will be extensively analysed in the following chapter.

Nonetheless, the framing of new participants in the anti-austerity protest cycle as violent has proven resilient, as it is summoned again to refer to the dockers' strike of

³⁶¹ «A mais violenta manifestação contra a austeridade terminou junto ao Parlamento com pelo menos sete detidos por desobediência às autoridades e 48 feridos, dos quais 21 são polícias... Assim que a central sindical deu por terminado o protesto, as bandeiras vermelhas desapareceram do largo em frente à Assembleia da República (AR). Tal como em manifestações anteriores mantiveram-se, naquela zona, os movimentos Plataforma 15 de Outubro (15O), Sem Emprego (MSE), 12 de Março (M12M), Que Se Lixe a Troika, Cidadãos Pela Dignidade. Juntaram-se ainda um grupo de cerca de 50 estivadores, à volta de 300 estudantes do ensino superior e alguns maquinistas da CP. Havia ainda um grupo de cerca de 50 jovens anarquistas e também muitos cidadãos anónimos», *Público*, "Por uma hora, "profissionais da desordem" foram protagonistas no dia da CGTP", published on November 15th, 2012 (my translation).

³⁶² *Público*, "Indignados fizeram voar garrafas sobre o parlamento na manifestação a que os sindicalistas não se quiseram juntar", published on November 25th, 2011 (my translation).

2016, when there were no actual incidents of violence. Dockers, four years after, are described in the following terms:

“When they began to be noticed, in the anti-troika demonstrations of 2012 and 2013, they were confused with hooligans or with far-right organisations. Some even thought they were police agent provocateurs. Some covered their faces with scarves with an armillary sphere and wore black shirts with “Portugal” in big letters. And their arms were not discreet – buff and tattooed. A display of sheer force that left people in the anti-troika movement perplexed — from the CGTP leadership, who condemned their use of smoke flares, to left wing parties who were not familiar with their small, but fierce, labour union”³⁶³.

This is a description of a highly mobilised group of outsiders, espousing an unclear ideology, not sanctioned by CGTP, and with the lasting potential of behaving violently, and, indeed, their protest was again described as violent in 2018, despite the fact that there was, again, no violent incident: in the words of the board of directors of the Setúbal port: *“We cannot negotiate in this context of strike and violence”³⁶⁴* – a statement that openly equates protest with violence.

The student mobilisation against rise in tuition costs – which, as mentioned above, only included one minor violent incident at the very end, in 2004 – was also described as violent from the beginning, when no high impact protest repertoires were used: the rector stated that he hoped the students would stop resorting to violent protest repertoires, which were not compatible with a democratic politics³⁶⁵. At the end of the series, the aforementioned protest against the housing crisis at the Lisbon City Hall was framed as a violent threat, when it constituted a regular protest event with a low impact

³⁶³ «Quando começaram a ser notados, nas manifestações anti-troika de 2012 e 2013, chegaram a ser confundidos com claques de futebol ou organizações de extrema direita. Houve até quem pensasse que eram agentes provocadores da polícia. Alguns surgiam de cara tapada por lenços com a esfera armilar, camisolas pretas com “Portugal” em letras garrafais. E braços pouco discretos, musculados, tatuados. Uma exibição de força que deixou perplexa parte do restante povo anti-troika — da cúpula da CGTP, que condenou o uso de petardos, aos partidos de esquerda que desconheciam aquele pequeno, mas aguerrido, sindicato», *Público*, “Estivadores: a vitória deles não é igual às outras”, published on July 3rd, 2016 (my translation).

³⁶⁴ «“não podemos reunir-nos neste quadro de greve e de violência”», *Público*, “Protesto em Setúbal já está a desviar navios para Leixões”, published on November 15th, 2018 (my translation).

³⁶⁵ «“Penso que vão progressivamente deixar de utilizar estes métodos violentos... e vão adoptar métodos mais compagináveis com a democracia e a vivência democrática da Universidade”», *Diário de Notícias*, “Cadeados retirados das portas de Coimbra...”, published on November 21st, 2003.

protest repertoire³⁶⁶. There is also one occasion when a protest event against a politician is also framed by PSD as a violent assault on him and his family – despite, again, it being a regular and legal demonstration, not particularly participated, and with no recorded incidents³⁶⁷.

The differences in these three components of the non-protest frame across the border are, therefore, not only numerical – as the crime, threat and violence subframes are significantly more prevalent in Spain, where they constitute just under 80% of the frame (79.4%) than in Portugal (43.5%), but also of substance, as the discourse that composes the frame is more extreme in Spain than in the Portuguese case, where it is also counter-framed by reports of excessive protest policing.

In Portugal, two subframes stand out – ‘protest is invisible’ and ‘protest as business as usual’ (each representing 21.4% of the ‘Non-protest’ frame). These are very close subframes used mostly by protest targets with the goal of rendering the instance of popular mobilisation irrelevant for the political community, by either stating that it has no effect at all on the target’s actions (or even reinforces their strategy or plans) due to its invisibility (the protest is irrelevant because it is not seen) or unimportance (the protest is seen, but considered irrelevant).

The following utterances are demonstrative of the ‘Protest as business as usual’ component of this frame:

- On a 2000 farmers demonstration outside the EU summit of Environment Ministers, the Portuguese minister (and future socialist Prime Minister reacted): *“José Sócrates considered it «natural» for people to demonstrate... it is «tradition» for there to be protests during environmental summits. However, he guaranteed that the Ministry will not abdicate from [its] policy”*³⁶⁸,

³⁶⁶ ³⁶⁶ «“Se há uma ameaça de tomada da assembleia pela força, nós temos de nos precaver”», *Público*, “Medo de uma «invasão» fecha assembleia municipal a cidadãos”, published on March 11th, 2020.

³⁶⁷ «“solidariedade com Rui Rio face ao ataque, à violência e à agressão de que ele e a sua família estão a ser alvo”», *Diário de Notícias*, “Dragões na Praça contra Rio”, published on March 8th, 2002.

³⁶⁸ «José Sócrates considerou “natural” que os populares se manifestassem... é “tradição” dos conselhos do ambiente que haja protestos. No entanto, garante que o Ministério não abdica de [sua] política”», *Diário de Notícias*, “Mau ambiente partidos políticos e agricultura”, published on April 17th, 2000 (my translation).

- He would repeat this positioning when, as Prime Minister, he faced massive labour demonstrations – his reaction to those can be beckoned in one sentence, uttered after 200.000 people took to the streets to protest against changes to the labour code in 2008: *“To protesters and their motives, José Sócrates had one phrase: «I am sorry, but I disagree»”*³⁶⁹,
- The PSD/CDS-PP coalition that governed between 2002 and 2005 would also use this frame on mass labour demonstrations – already in 2002, the Prime Minister considered it *“«normal... for people to express their dissatisfaction with the way politics is going... It's not that serious. Frankly, we give it little importance»”*³⁷⁰,
- And the ‘there is no alternative’ discourse which became the government’s mantra during the austerity governance is also part of this subframe and can be found in the PSD government’s response to one of the first mass demonstrations: *“The Executive «takes note of this signal from civil society», but «it cannot deviate from the essential»”*³⁷¹, and is repeated in relation to the 2011 strike: *“«Austerity has to be accepted as the path and the solution to our current problem»”*³⁷².

The invisibility of protest is also asserted during the anti-austerity protest cycle, but it is present throughout the series. This can be condensed into three strategies, utilised by the government, the primary actor enacting the ‘protest is invisible’ subframe:

1. The government attempts to saturate the media space by holding events, press conferences, issuing special communiqués, etc., simultaneously with the strike or mass demonstration, to avoid labour unions and opposition parties monopolising the media space:

³⁶⁹ «Aos manifestantes e seus motivos, José Sócrates disse uma frase: “Lamento, mas discordo”», *Público*, “Contra a revisão do Código do Trabalho, CGTP juntou 200 mil manifestantes”, published on June 6th, 2008 (my translation).

³⁷⁰ «“É normal nas nossas sociedades que se manifestem pessoas que estão descontentes em relação ao andar da política... Não é grave. Francamente, damos pouca importância”», *Público*, “É normal, diz Durão Barroso”, published on June 21st, 2006 (my translation).

³⁷¹ «Executivo “registra este sinal da sociedade civil”, mas “não pode desviar-se do essencial”», *Público*, “Sindicatos pedem recuo na austeridade após «a maior greve geral de sempre»”, published on November 25th, 2010 (my translation).

³⁷² «“A austeridade tem de ser assumida como o caminho e a solução para o problema a que hoje chegámos”», *Público*, “PS, PSD e CDS compreendem descontentamento”, published on November 25th, 2011 (my translation).

That was the case of the general strike of 2002, with the PSD/CDS-PP government and its ministries issuing hourly updates seeking to prove the low adherence to the strike, constantly reinforcing the message that the protest was unfair and uncalled for, and the Socialist Party called a mass political meeting to correspond with the teachers' mobilisation of 2008, in an effort to saturate the media space and erase the protest³⁷³.

2. The government seeks to render the protest invisible by blocking access to the media or changing authorised protest routes and repertoires to diminish protest's visual and mediatic impact:

During a 2002 strike in the national health system, hospital directors stated the government had ordered them to stop journalists from entering the premises (the Minister of Health confirmed that journalists were not allowed to film the protest)³⁷⁴, a policemen march during the 2007 EU Summit of Justice Ministers was rerouted to avoid the meeting's location³⁷⁵, and, during the first general strike of 2012, the government gave indication to the administrators of public transport not to discuss the strike with the media³⁷⁶.

3. The government simply refuses to acknowledge that the protest has taken place:

The 2002 general strike was described as the “*«European Day without Cars, but backwards»*”³⁷⁷ by PSD and the prime minister guaranteed he did not hear the protests during the second general strike of 2012³⁷⁸.

Other vested actors also resort to this last strategy to minimise a protest event – for example, on a protest campaign by Oporto residents against the suppression of public

³⁷³ *Público*, “Greve entre o oito e o oitenta”, published on december 11th, 2002; *Público*, “Alegre, Seguro e Benavente muito preocupados com as escolas”, published on November 9th, 2008.

³⁷⁴ «Vários jornalistas foram impedidos de entrar nos hospitais para cobrir a greve. Responsáveis dos hospitais apenas disseram que estavam a cumprir ordens, por determinação do ministério da saúde... Ministro indica que a única recomendação foi no sentido de os jornalistas não filmarem o interior dos hospitais», *Diário de Notícias*, “Greve geral na saúde – Apontamentos”, published on July 20th, 2002.

³⁷⁵ *Público*, “Governo escondeu manifestação da PSP dos ministros da justiça e do interior da EU”, published on October 2nd, 2007.

³⁷⁶ *Público*, “Governo proibiu empresas públicas de transportes de falarem sobre a greve”, published on March 23rd, 2012.

³⁷⁷ «“Foi uma espécie de dia sem carros, mas ao contrário”», *Público*, “Greve Geral vista pelos partidos”, published on December 11th, 2002 (my translation).

³⁷⁸ «o primeiro-ministro... garantiu não ter ouvido os protestos», *Público*, “Por uma hora, «profissionais da desordem» foram protagonistas no dia da CGTP”, published on November 15th, 2012.

buses, the local Mayor reacted by stating that the new bus routes were a very positive change³⁷⁹, refusing to acknowledge the existence of the protest or the validity of the demands, and the administration of the public television network stated their satisfaction with viewing ratings during a workers' strike³⁸⁰.

Unlike in Portugal, there are positive instances of the 'protest as business as usual' frame in Spain (where the subframe represents 6.9% of the 'Non-protest' frame):

- during the occupation of his office by migrants seeking regularisation, and even though one worker was assaulted, the Spanish Ombudsman (*Defensor del Pueblo*) stated: "*«I agreed to speak with them... and I received representatives in my office... I promised the assaulters there would be no reprisals or arrests, despite of the presence of the riot police... demonstrations are not against the law if they are peaceful... the only lamentable action was a broken object and a slap to a female office worker... It is over, and it was not a big deal»*"³⁸¹
- the *Indignados* demonstration after the end of the *Acampadas* was described as "*a normal and ordinary demonstration, with a very reasonable success*"³⁸².

In these instances, the protest is seen and acknowledged as an instance of popular mobilisation and described in positive terms, but it does not have any real consequences or effects. That is also the ultimate result of the use of the 'business as usual' frame in negative settings, such as the student mobilisation of 2001 ("*The massive March to Madrid will not change the government's plans*"³⁸³) or on the government's reaction to

³⁷⁹ «O autarca ... elogiou a nova rede de transportes. "Se há um ou outro caso com pessoas prejudicadas, o balanço é muito positivo"», *Diário de Notícias*, "Câmara defende ajustes", published on January 10th, 2007.

³⁸⁰ *Público*, "Segundo dia de greve na RTP com adesão elevada, segundo os sindicatos", published on April 30th, 2005.

³⁸¹ «"Yo acepté hablar con ellos...y recibí en mi despacho representantes.. prometió a los asaltantes que no habría represalias ni detenciones, pese a las fuerzas antidisturbios movilizadas ... las manifestaciones no son contrarias a la legalidad si son pacíficas... no ha habido que lamentar más que un destrozo y un golpe a una funcionaria... Fuese, y no hubo nada"», *El Mundo*, "Cien inmigrantes asaltan la sede del Defensor del Pueblo", published on March 31st, 2001 (my translation).

³⁸² «Fue, en definitiva, una manifestación normal y corriente, con un éxito muy razonable», *El Mundo*, "Los 'indignados' piden ahora una huelga general", published on June 20th, 2011 (my translation).

³⁸³ *El Mundo*, "La masiva Marcha sobre Madrid no variará los planes del Gobierno", published on December 2nd, 2002 (my translation).

the 2012 general strike (*"The Minister of Employment replied that the text will remain intact"*³⁸⁴).

This subframe is also used to minimise discontent – such was the reaction of the Prime Minister after being booed during a national holiday (*"Zapatero downplayed [the incident], pointing out that the booing «have become part of the ritual»"*³⁸⁵) and, additionally, to contradict the narrative framing protest as radical – the same protest event that was described as a *"totalitarian «escrache»"*³⁸⁶ by PP was depicted by Podemos as a simple student protest³⁸⁷ (it is worth noticing, however, that the news article in *El Mundo* clearly frames Podemos' opinion as reproachable).

Protest that is unseen in Spain represents 5.8% of the 'Non-protest' frame. Unlike in the Portuguese case, this subframe emerges on occasions when the protest target declares the protest was a failure – that was the case of a general strike in Galicia, with the regional president declaring *"«Zero strike and all failure – let that be a lesson»"*³⁸⁸, of the PP's 2007 mobilisation on the mitigated sentences, also framed as a mobilisation failure by the PSOE government, in quite brutal terms (*"«Rajoy thought there were many people in the demonstration. There were half of the people who have died in the Iraq war so far»"*³⁸⁹), and a countrywide student protest against austerity cuts in 2012 was reduced to a 30 people demonstration by the Ministry of Education (*"«in the case of Madrid», I only saw «around 30 people» in «the images»"*³⁹⁰).

³⁸⁴ *«La ministra de Empleo respondió que el texto seguirá intacto»*, *El País* cover, "Los sindicatos amenazan a Rajoy con un «conflicto social creciente»", published on March 30th, 2012 (my translation).

³⁸⁵ *«Zapatero le quitó toda la importancia, señalando que los gritos «ya forman parte del rito»*», *El País*, "Zapatero se resigna a ser abucheado durante el desfile militar: «Es un rito»", published on October 13th, 2009 (my translation).

³⁸⁶ *««escrache totalitario que ha sufrido Felipe González en la UAM»*», *El País*, "Decenas de violentos impiden un coloquio en la Universidad Autónoma", published on October 20th, 2016 (my translation).

³⁸⁷ *«Podemos minimizó lo ocurrido por ser una simple «protesta estudiantil»*», *El Mundo*, "«Iglesias señala y los violentos lo reproducen»", published on October 20th, 2016 (my translation).

³⁸⁸ *««De huelga nada, de fracaso todo, y que aprendan»*», *El País*, "La huelga de Galicia no fue general, pero afectó a la actividad de las ciudades y a las grandes empresas", published on June 16th, 2001 (my translation).

³⁸⁹ *««A Rajoy le parecieron muchos los que se manifestaron. Son la mitad de los que han muerto hasta ahora en la guerra de Irak»*», *El País*, "Se manifestaron la mitad de los que han muerto en la guerra de Irak", published on March 12th, 2007 (my translation).

³⁹⁰ *««en el caso de Madrid» solo había visto «alrededor de 30 personas» en «las imágenes»*», *El País*, "Estudiantes y docentes protestan en toda España contra los recortes", published on May 11th, 2012 (my translation).

This is also expressed in terms of refusal to see the protest – that was the case of a journalists protest inside the parliament after two of their colleagues had been killed in the Iraq war: they repeatedly asked for a reaction from the government’s president to no avail³⁹¹, before being expelled from the premises, and is also patent on PP’s reaction to the beginning of the anti-austerity protest movement - “*«these are “antisystem” movements that do not cause any concern to PP»*”³⁹².

As in Portugal, protest can also be purposely rendered invisible – either through a change in protocol to avoid giving central stage to protesters, as in Spain’s National Day celebration in 2010 (referred to by PP, in the opposition at the time, as a limitation on freedom of speech³⁹³), or through protest policing, as in Valencia during the anti-austerity protest cycle, on a protest campaign against education cuts: “*The Spanish Confederation Parents' Associations condemned the «disproportionate» police action... and stated it is «unacceptable that the Valencian Community authorities want to silence critical voices»*”³⁹⁴.

On other occasions, protest can be framed as a party or a farce – this is the closest frame across the border, representing 6.9% of the non-protest frame in Portugal and 7.6% in Spain. In Portugal, this is a strategy used by protest targets – in particular by the PS prime minister between 2005 and 2011 – to, mostly, depoliticise popular mobilisation. For example, he described the teachers’ mobilisation and demonstrations against cuts in public services of 2007 as a celebration on two separate occasions, using similar expressions “*«This is what a celebration of democracy looks like. I think this is very positive»*” and “*«everything [the protest] is a part of the celebration of democracy»*”³⁹⁵.

³⁹¹ «Lo presidente actuó como todas las tardes... Los periodistas gritaban: “presidente, mire-nos” “Presidente, diga algo” pero no pasó nada», *El Mundo*, Plante de los medios al presidente, published on April 10th, 2003.

³⁹² «se trata de movimientos “antisistema que al PP no preocupan”», *El País*, “La indignación inquieta a la izquierda”, published on May 17th, 2011 (my translation).

³⁹³ «El PP asegura que se pretende “limitar la libertad de expresión” ... revisión del protocolo del Día de la Fiesta Nacional para evitar los abucheos a Zapatero», *El Mundo*, “Los grupos rechazan regular el desfile para evitar los abucheos”, published on October 15th, 2010.

³⁹⁴ «La Confederación Española de Asociaciones de Padres y Madres de Alumnos condenó ayer la “desproporcionada actuación policial”... y cree “inaceptable que las autoridades de la Comunidad Valenciana quieran silenciar las voces críticas con su gestión”», *El Mundo*, “Estudiantes en pie de guerra por los recortes”, published on February 18th, 2012 (my translation).

³⁹⁵ «“É assim a festa da democracia. Acho isto muito positivo”», *Público*, “«Há quem proteste, e há quem aplauda”», published on October 10th, 2007; «“tudo faz parte da festa da democracia”», *Público*, “Vaías

On none of these occasions did he acknowledge any of the demands and claims uttered by protesters, and, ultimately, his appreciation of the protest events as a celebration voids them of any seriousness and signals that he considers them absolutely inconsequential. He would amplify the argument during one of the first anti-austerity protest events by *Geração à Rasca*, whose activists interrupted a Socialist meeting, when he referred to the protest as a *Mardis Gras* joke: “*We are celebrating Carnival and during Carnival, everything goes... This is a Carnival joke*”³⁹⁶.

Other occasions when protest is described in similar ways serve the same purpose of depoliticising informal politics – for example, the President of the Madeira Regional Government, in 2014, reacted to a local policemen protest for better working conditions by saying “*I am not interested in these ridiculous jokes*”³⁹⁷ and the director from a Lisbon Faculty referred to the student mobilisation in 2003-4 as a *fad*³⁹⁸.

In Spain, too, the ‘non-protest: party’ frame is utilised mainly to delegitimise popular dissent. The frame is used, for example, during the anti-austerity protest cycle to describe the 2010 general strike – “*The... protest had a festive tone. Participants were delighted; almost euphoric, as if yesterday’s strike had been truly general*”³⁹⁹ – and again after the 15-M demonstration called after the “*Rodea al congreso*” protests: “*Many saw [the protest] as the best way to spend a sunny Sunday: at the end of the demonstration, the Prado boulevard was taken over by dozens of people...who took advantage of the green spaces to take out a tablecloth and a transistor, a Tupperware with tortilla and breaded schnitzel*”⁴⁰⁰.

em Abrantes ou a “festa da democracia”, segundo Sócrates”, published on June 17th, 2007 (my translation).

³⁹⁶ “*estamos no Carnaval e a verdade é que no Carnaval ninguém leva a mal...é uma brincadeira de Carnaval*”, *Público*, “Jovens do Geração à Rasca interrompem Sócrates e são expulsos de sala em Viseu”, published on March 8th, 2011 (my translation).

³⁹⁷ “*Não me interessam essas chachadas*”, *Público*, “Turistas recebidos na Madeira com boas-vindas a “um país que não respeita os polícias”, published on May 10th, 2004 (my translation).

³⁹⁸ “*É uma moda que fere a sensibilidade dos universitários*”, *Público*, “Outras reações”, published on November 11th, 2003.

³⁹⁹ “*La... protesta transcurrió en un tono festivo. Los convocados estaban encantados; casi eufóricos, como si la huelga de ayer hubiera sido general de verdad*”, *El Mundo*, “Miles de personas exigen al Gobierno que rectifique ‘si no quiere suicidarse’”, published on September 30th, 2010 (my translation).

⁴⁰⁰ “*Muchos lo vivieron como la mejor forma de pasar una soleada jornada de domingo: al término de la manifestación, el bulevar del Prado fue tomado por decenas de personas... que aprovecharon los espacios verdes para sacar un mantel y un transistor y almorzar allí con un tupper de tortilla y filete empanado*”, *El Mundo*, “Los ‘indignados’ piden ahora una huelga general”, published on June 20th, 2011 (my translation).

The frame, here, is ambiguous, as it indicates that the citizenry was evidently close to the 15-M movement, as it took to the streets upon their summoning, but it is also depoliticising, as participation in the protest event is described, and quite detailed, as a regular weekend outing, rather than a specifically political event. The frame is repeated – and intensified – to label the 2013 education protests, with the same purpose: *“Participants in the green tide mobilised yesterday as if they were attending a birthday party”*⁴⁰¹.

The frame is also found at the beginning of the series, to depict the protest events against the water plan and the nuclear submarine, both described as a day out (*“an excursion”*) and a celebration⁴⁰², and at the end, to frame the 8-M protest event of 2018 – *“at times, the protest looked like Paris Saint German football stadium”*⁴⁰³, referencing the purple colour used by participants.

It is worth noticing, however, that, unlike in the Portuguese case, this frame is not used by political actors – it is rather the media, and mainly *El Mundo*, that utilises it mainly to pass judgment of protesters’ motivations. The ERC is the one formal political actor that uses this frame, and they do so to counter-frame a protest event described as threatening and violent (a pro-independence protest event when young people burned a photo of the king) – *“ERC defended the protest ... as a «festive and political» occasion”*⁴⁰⁴.

Finally, the last component of the non-protest frame – Protest as personal – only occurs in Portugal (6.9%, and virtually non-existent in Spain – 0.3%). This frame is used both by protest targets and protesters with different objectives. On the one hand, protesters may refer to protest as an emotional response to a situation that is deemed as unfair as

⁴⁰¹ *«Los de la marea verde se movilizaron ayer como si acudieran a una fiesta de cumpleaños»*, *El Mundo*, “Los ‘anti Lomce’ logran paralizar la enseñanza a pesar de su división”, published on October 25th, 2013 (my translation).

⁴⁰² *«El ambiente fuera un de una verdadera fiesta»*, *El Mundo*, “La excursión municipal”, published on January 21st, 2001; *El País*, “Una noche de vigilia por amor al agua”, published on March 12th, 2001; *«La manifestación fue por encima de todo una fiesta»*, *El Mundo*, “Decenas de miles de personas se manifiestan contra la presencia del Tireless en Gibraltar”, published on January 21st, 2001 (my translation).

⁴⁰³ *«aquello pareció a ratos el estadio del PSG»*, *El Mundo*, “«Queremos tu sueldo, no tus piropos»”, published on March 8th, 2018.

⁴⁰⁴ *«ERC defendió la protesta independentista de Girona en contra de la presencia del Rey por “festiva y reivindicativa”»*, *El País*, “El fiscal pide a la Generalitat datos sobre la quema de fotos de los Reyes”, published on September 15th, 2007.

a way of legitimising the protest action and calling for the solidarity of the citizenry – for example, during a police demonstration for labour rights, some policemen through their hats on the floor, an action condemned by the Minister of Interior as undignified and inappropriate; the same action was depicted by protest organisers as an emotional response aiming at capturing the citizenry's solidarity⁴⁰⁵.

On the other hand, when protest targets refer to a protest event as personal, often also framed as emotional, the goal is to delegitimise protest demands and repertoires:

- a strike at a public hospital was described as unbelievable by the protest target as the core reason for the strike was the allocation of parking spaces⁴⁰⁶;
- the Porto Mayor, reacting to a protest event against the privatisation of a theatre, stated he *"respected people's emotions"*⁴⁰⁷.

This section ends with a description of the yearly evolution of the 'Non-protest' frame. In Portugal (figure 117), the 'non-protest: violence' subframe gains traction from the middle of the series – particularly in 2015 (66.7%), 2016 and 2018 (100%). It is, as described above, present, in addition, during the anti-austerity protest cycle and in 2003-2004, due to the framing of the student mobilisation as a violent protest campaign. In the opposite direction, protest framed as invisible or as irrelevant ('business as usual') is more prevalent in the first half of the series – but, anti-austerity protest is also framed as unimportant, particularly at the end of the cycle (2013 – 100%, and 2014 – 60%), and the two last years of the series record 50% of protest framed as invisible. The 'protest is personal' subframe is mainly present during the Socialist government prior to the Great Recession.

If one considers the divide between protest framed as inconsequential ('protest is personal', 'invisible protest', 'protest as business as usual' and 'protest is a party' subframes) and protest framed as a potential security problem ('non-protest: violence',

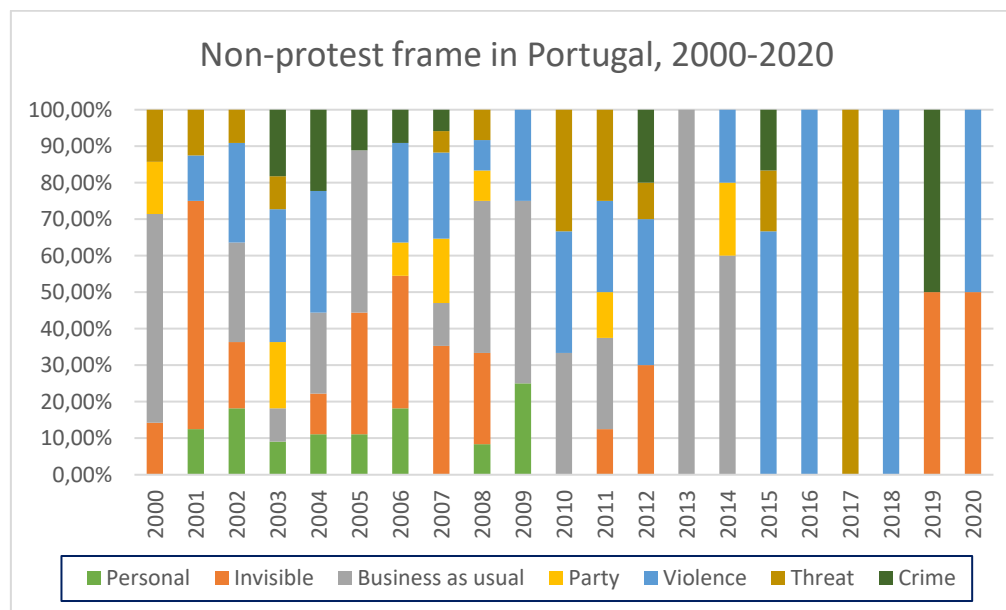
⁴⁰⁵ «A estratégia da ASPP passou ainda por apelar aos cidadãos para o sentido da sua luta... MAI condenou "os actos indignos da condição policial como os ocorridos junto à residência oficial do primeiro-ministro"», *Público*, "PSP lança bonés ao chão em S. Bento e ameaça parar a 30", published on June 9th, 2009.

⁴⁰⁶ «"esta greve inacreditável e devido a uma questão que se deve a um parque de estacionamento"», *Diário de Notícias*, "Greve estaciona no São João", published on April 21st, 2001.

⁴⁰⁷ «"respeito a emoção das pessoas"», *Público*, "Rui Rio disse que tinha o dever de alterar a situação", published on July, 25th, 2006 (my translation).

‘non-protest: threat’ and ‘non-protest: crime’ subframes), one witnesses that the last third of the series – when a strong recoil in the number of protest events is recorded (see chapter 3) – records a higher prevalence of protest framed as a potential or actual risk (100% between 2015 and 2017, and 50% in 2019-2020), but this was also quite relevant between 2010 and 2012 – the height of popular mobilisation in the country (66.7% in 2010, 50% in 2011 and 70% in 2012). The other two years where this is also more prominent are, unexpectedly, 2003 and 2004 (63.6% and 55.6%). The next chapter will be dedicated to explaining the implications of this for securitisation dynamics.

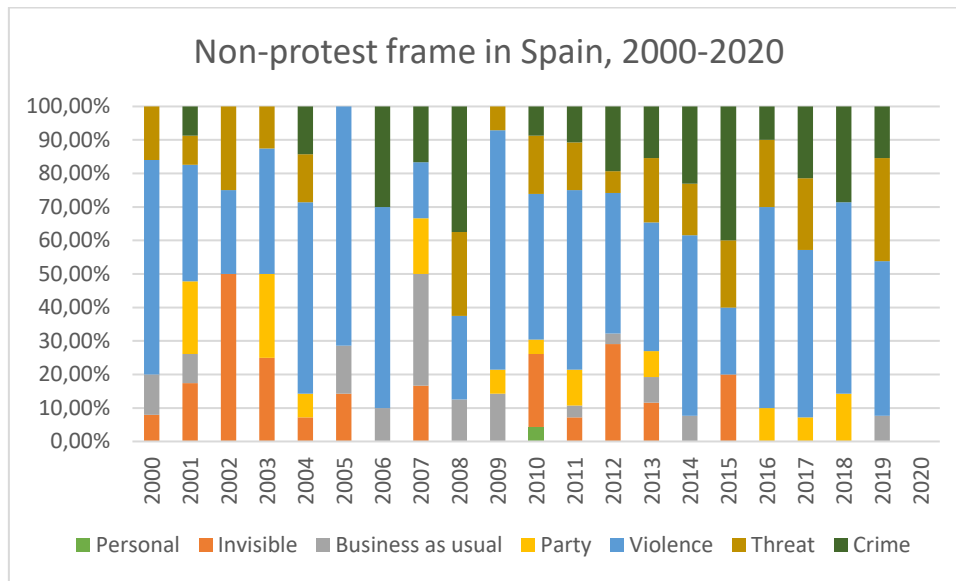
Figure 117. Yearly breakdown of the non-protest frame in Portugal, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

In Spain (figure 118), the ubiquitousness of the ‘non-protest: violence’ subframe across the series is undeniable as represents over 50% of the frames in ten years (the exception would be 2003 – 25%, 2007 – 16.7%, and 2015 – 20%). The second and third most present subframes are the ‘non-protest: threat’ and ‘non-protest: crime’ subframes, and both increase in relevancy in the second half of the series and often appear in tandem with the violence subframe. The division between protest framed as inconsequential and protest framed as a potential security problem is, thus, clearly anchored on the weight of the three last frames, which, considered in combination, represent over 70% of the non-protest frame in most years of the series – and over 80% from 2014 onwards.

Figure 118. Yearly breakdown of the non-protest frame in Spain, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

It is in the first four years of the series that the inconsequential frames appear more frequently – in particular the ‘invisible protest’, which represents 50% of the frame in 2002 and is, in addition, the most prevalent inconsequential frame during the anti-austerity protest cycle (21.7% in 2010 and 29% in 2012).

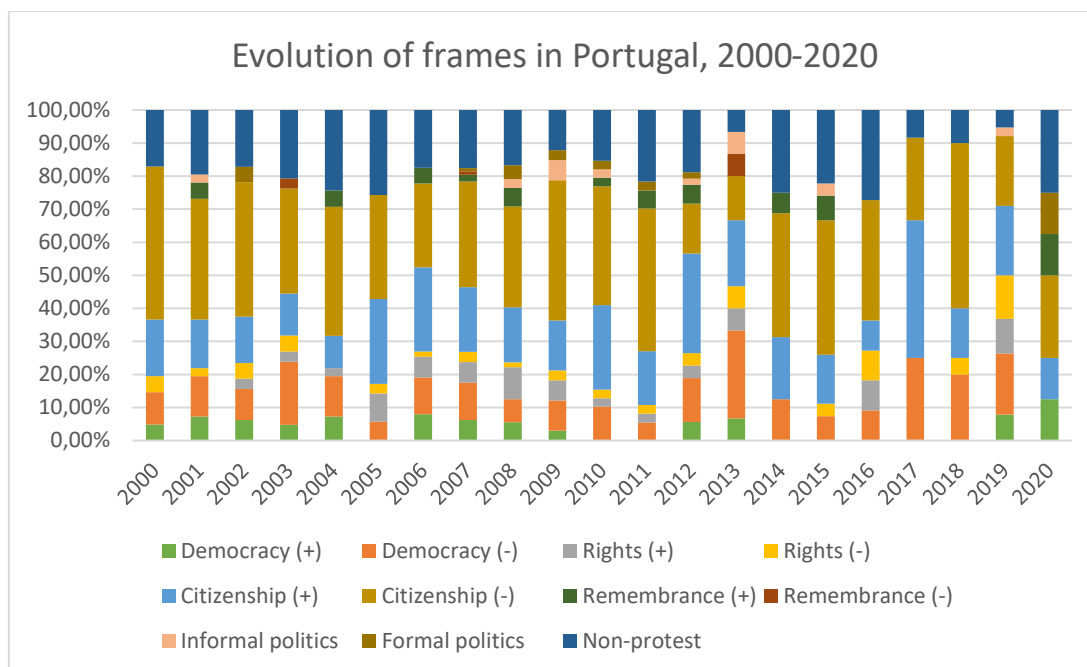
Conclusion

This chapter concludes with a description of the evolution of the legitimacy and politicisation frames across the series in Portugal (figure 119) and Spain (figure 120).

In the first country, the ubiquitousness of the Citizenship and Political Community frame is immediately apparent, averaging at 55.7% when both negative and positive values are considered. The negative Citizenship frame is the most common, averaging at 33.8% and reaching 50% in 2018, 46.4% in 2015 (46.4%) and over 45% (45.6%) in 2000. The exceptions are 2014 (23.5%) and 2017 (27.3%) – in 2017, it is the corresponding positive frame that is more salient (36.4%), while, in 2014, the ‘Non-Protest’ frame emerges as the most important (29.4%). Concomitantly, this is the second most important frame (averaging at 18.4%), and particularly so in 2001 (23.3%), 2005 (26.5%), 2012 (22%),

2014-2016 (29.4%, 21.4% and 27.3%, respectively), and in the last year of the series (25%). This frame, then, gains strength towards the end of the series.

Figure 119. Yearly evolution of frames on protest in Portugal, 2000-2020.



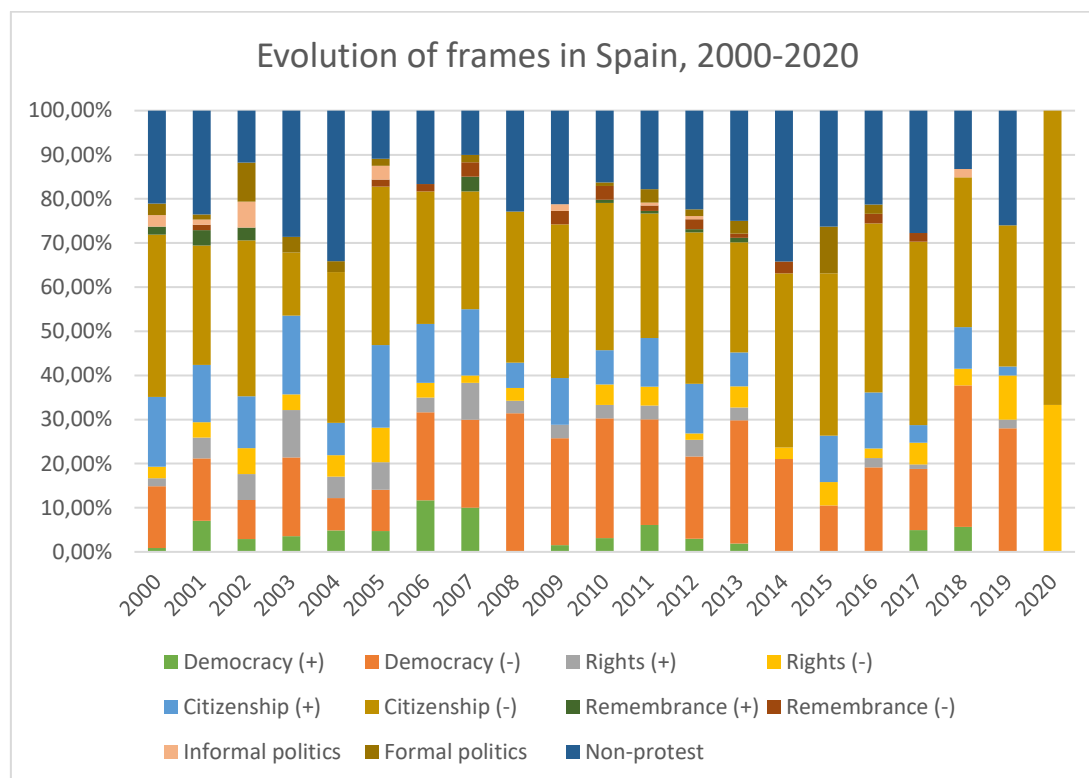
Own elaboration.

The third most important frame is positive – Citizenship (+) (averaging at 17.9% across the series, compared to 9% in Spain), with particular weight immediately before the financial crisis (2005 to 2007: 25.5%, 24.6% and 20.8%) and during the anti-austerity protest cycle (23.7% in 2010 and 2012, and 23.1% in 2013). In the opposite direction, one also sees a higher prevalence of the negative Democracy frame towards the end of the series (30.8% in 2013 and 27.3% in 2017), associated with the negative frame on Rights (9.1% in 2016 and 11.8% in 2019) – these variations will be explored in the next sections.

As in the Portuguese case, the negative citizenship frame is the most important in Spain (averaging at 35%), followed by the non-protest frame (21.2%). The first frame is particularly strong towards the end of the series (over 40% in five years from 2014 onwards – 40.1% in 2014, 40% in 2015, 40.4% in 2016, 45.8% in 2017 and 60% in 2020), but it also represents over a third of the total frames in 2000 (36.5%), 2004 (35.1%), 2008 to 2010 (36.4%, 38.5% and 33.6%) and in 2012 (34.5%). It is then particularly prevalent from the financial crisis onwards and remains so to the end of the series. This

is indicative of the value of frames in shaping the semantic possibilities on popular mobilisation over time, as frames constitute long-lasting blueprints and rhetorical devices that are gradually established in the collective understanding of protest.

Figure 120. Yearly evolution of frames on protest in Spain, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

The non-protest frame is not evenly distributed across the series, oscillating between 35.1% in 2014 and 10.3% in 2007, but there is a higher prevalence in the first five years (21.7% in 2000, 23.3% in 2001, 31% in 2002 and 29.7% in 2004) and at the height of the anti-austerity protest cycle and the immediate years (23.7% in 2012, 23.1% in 2013, 35.1% in 2014 and 25% in 2015). There is, then, a rough correspondence between the years when more protest was recorded and the description of popular mobilisation as non-protest, which is not the case in Portugal.

The main difference between countries, however, lies in the third most important frame – in Spain, this is the Democracy negative frame (averaging at 19.1%, against 12.3% in Portugal). There are two years when this is particularly salient – 2018, corresponding to popular mobilisation following the Catalanian independence referendum (30.9%), and 2008 (30.3%) which, concomitantly, relates to reactions to the popular mobilisation by

Catalonian independentist actors that year, as well as to student protest also in Catalonia. It is also worth highlighting that, with the exception of these two years, it is the anti-austerity protest cycle that sees more reactions to street politics framing it as non-democratic (23.1% in 2009, 26.1% in 2010, 25% in 2011, 18% in 2012 and 27.9% in 2013), which signals a disconnect between the discourse on the street, shaping popular mobilisation as intrinsically democratic and demanding more inclusive democratic practices, and the discourse about it by those in a position of power or with vested interests, creating a contrary narrative. In this country, there are, in addition, years with zero occurrences of the Democracy positive frame (2008, 2014, 2015), and, in most years, this frame does not reach 5% (the exceptions being 2001 – 8.9%, 2004 – 5.4%, 2006 and 2007 – 12.5% and 12.1% respectively, and 2017 and 2018 – 5.2% and 5.4%).

This long chapter explored the way protest is framed in Portugal and Spain between 2000 and 2020. It uncovered how vested actors make use of two master frames – (il)legitimacy and (des)politicisation – to construct a narrative on protest that suits their interests, and explored how the government (and the parties in government), as well as private actors (with much less significance) frame protest mostly negatively (making use of the negative frames composing the master frames), while political parties in the left – and, occasionally, those across the political spectrum when in opposition – as well as civil society organisations (in particular labour unions and in Portugal) are in charge of the corresponding positive frames. It also clearly demonstrated that negative frames on protest are more present across the border and that they tend to gain weight as time progresses.

This investigation, in addition, exposed significant differences in the way that the frames are operationalised, as it clearly identified that Spanish actors frame protest in stronger negative terms than their Portuguese counterparts, and that is particularly the case with the main electoral politics contender on the Spanish mainstream right, *Partido Popular* – although other formal politics actors, including PSOE, also frame protest in a negative way. In that sense, this work finds validity in previous work stating PP's aversion to street politics (Fishman, 2011, p. 241) – and, in fact, that aversion appears to gain discursive strength from the anti-austerity protest cycle.

Nevertheless, the party's turn to mass street politics at the beginning of the 21st century complicates this picture – as, provided they are in the driving seat, PP frames protest as a clearly positive feature of a democratic polity. This framing is, however, instrumental, as the party evidently considers protest as a weapon in partisan politics (as noted by Zapatero's comment welcoming the main electoral competitor to the protest sphere – and, consequently, to democracy). Its very permanence – or lack thereof – also speaks to this instrumentalisation: PP's positive framing of protest is completely inverted when the party is in power, when protest loses all legitimacy and is often framed as a threat to the citizenry and to democracy itself.

The fact that protest is instrumentalised for partisan ends is, of course, a well-known fact, but the nuances found in this work are significant. Indeed, one preliminary conclusion is that protest in Spain is often an opportunity for partisan competition, with opposing political parties wrestling different frames in the media sphere – and using delegitimising frames in relation to protest, expressed in quite extreme terms, when their final goal is to delegitimise their political opponents. But frames are a way of constructing meaningful shared views about specific issues, and when delegitimation and depoliticisation strategies are frequently employed about the specific issue of protest, even if their ultimate goal is to strike actors in formal politics, it is, ultimately, protest that is struck down as illegitimate and anti-political.

The primacy of formal politics in Spain, then, is expressed not only in reactions to protest events that clearly state it, but also by the constant instrumentalisation of street politics by partisan interests. Although one can say that is also the case in Portugal, given CGTP's connection to the PCP, no difference in the party's discourse on protest was found when in opposition or when as a part of the *Geringonça* – and the discourse of Portuguese political parties on popular mobilisation is never as divisive as found in Spain. Nonetheless, this investigation has also shown that the discourse framing protest as intrinsically democratic and as a valid avenue of political participation in the Portuguese political sphere has been eroding, particularly since the end of the anti-austerity protest cycle (and in combination with an escalation of protest policing, both in presence and in intensity).

The negative framing of protest in both countries is also constructed through expressions of hostility towards protesters and protest organisers – which is, again, more strongly marked in Spain than in Portugal. As said in reaction to the “*Rodea al congreso!*” protest events, it appears that a red line has been discursively crossed in Spain from the moment that not highly participated, consensual and, ultimately, normal protest events with low impact protest repertoires are described as the work of Nazis, fascists, conspirators, and terrorists. These are part of a variety of stock expressions used in Spain to describe popular mobilisation that, together, constitute a roster of catchy semantic ‘stop signs’, meant to condensate the framing of protesters and protest organisers as extremist and potentially dangerous ‘others’, firmly placed outside the political community. These discursive tropes act as ‘thought terminating clichés’⁴⁰⁸, erasing the need to consider popular mobilisation from a critical point of view. The bad citizens framing, thus, asserts itself by the use of these rhetorical devices, which create an echo chamber that is constantly reinforced in the Spanish media, creating a discursive space where everything can be said – particularly from the anti-austerity protest cycle onwards.

The Manichean worldview that is typical of populist movements, thus, emerges in Spain before the rise to prominence of populist parties, mainly at the hands of parties on the mainstream right – PP – which actively mainstream divisiveness and polarisation. The *15-M* and the *Indignados* were some of the main protest actors at the receiving end of these rhetorical devices, and the fact that the anti-austerity movement was considered youthful is no coincidence, given that youth who protest (and particularly leftist youth) is consistently framed as (potentially) violent and extremist. And, interestingly, there appears to be an episode of frame bridging between students and educators, as the education strike of 2012 is also similarly framed, with education providers described as potentially dangerous radical leftists – the impact of such framing on public trust in public education is beyond the scope of this work, but would be an interesting research question.

⁴⁰⁸ Thought terminating clichés are defined as “words or phrases that discourage critical thought and meaningful discussion about a given topic” (Dimitrov et al., 2021).

The narrative of the anti-austerity protest cycle is, however, two-sided – the left-right cleavage is absolutely reflected in the *El País / El Mundo* divide, and each newspaper's readers can, at times, get two very different versions of the same protest event. This work is not a media analysis, but this fact confirms the media parallelism identified in the literature as a key feature of the Spanish media system (Hallin and Mancini, 2004, p. 61; Brüggemann *et al.*, 2014, pp. 1056-1057). The description of each media outlet of the first *Acampada* is illuminating in this regard.

And here it is necessary to note that the framing of the *Indignados* movement referred to above, whose purpose was to delegitimise the movement, encountered the obstacle of widespread popular support. Depoliticisation and delegitimation, hence, were not fully achieved – there will be parallels, as I will demonstrate in the next chapter, with efforts to securitise the movement. It is to the last master frame – security – that the following pages are devoted.

Chapter 6. The securitisation of protest in Portugal and Spain

“Não quero um País onde o primeiro-ministro põe o Corpo de Intervenção nas ruas para evitar o contato com as pessoas” [«I do not want a country where the prime minister puts the riot police on the streets to avoid contact with people»], António Guterres, Prime Minister of Portugal, 2001⁴⁰⁹.

“Lo que queremos es controlar el exceso, no el exceso en el control” [«What we want is to control excess, not excessive control»], Jorge Fernández Díaz, Ministry of the Interior of Spain, 2012⁴¹⁰.

This work's introduction provided a concise overview of the transnational anti-austerity protest event of November 14th, 2012, raising inquiries regarding its dual representation: was it, after all, the “day of the rage” or a “day of transnational solidarity”? What explains the opposing depictions of this event? Since this chapter is devoted to those very interrogations, it shall begin with an analysis of that day's protest event in Portugal and Spain.

In Portugal, newspaper articles spanned thirty-seven pages, published over four days, devoted to narrating the days' strike, march, and demonstrations and its preparation by CGTP (the Portuguese convener, in alliance with QSLT, and five other anti-austerity organisations). It was said to be a unique day of mobilisation, precisely on account of its transnational nature⁴¹¹, with demonstrations in all district capitals in the country, and the bulk of popular mobilisation in Lisbon.

This protest event was described as the most violent anti-austerity demonstration in the country, with some protesters repeatedly referred to as “*disorder*” and “*violence*”

⁴⁰⁹ *Diário de Notícias*, “Marcha anti-Judas em Cascais”, published on February 11th, 2001 (my translation).

⁴¹⁰ *El Mundo*, “Interior habla de «excesos» sin aclararse”, published on February 22nd, 2012 (my translation).

⁴¹¹ «CGTP fala em dia inédito, em que Portugal, Espanha, Grécia e Itália se unem para protestar contra a austeridade», *Diário de Notícias*, “Revolta social ameaça para o país”, published on November 14th, 2012.

professionals”⁴¹² by different vested actors, including the Ministry of the Interior, police forces, and two army generals who were called upon to comment on the event – these expressions were, then, extensively repeated by the media. As mentioned in the previous chapter, a clear demarcation was made between labour unionists, leading most of the protest participants, and those from new protest movements, as well as dockers and students, to whom a heightened level of dangerousness was ascribed. To reinforce this dichotomous portrait, the media reported a dislocation of the protest target, which ceased to be the pro-austerity government to become the police forces themselves⁴¹³, and vandalism incidents are said to have spread from the steps of the national parliament to the surrounding area. Half of the pages in both *Público* and *Diário de Notícias* are devoted to describing these incidents – which included throwing rocks at the police, throwing one firecracker, and setting fire to garbage bins – in significant detail, but there is also unprecedented attention given to protest policing.

Police forces are said to have exhibited more contention than could reasonably be expected under such extreme attacks and provocations, and their eventual recourse to the use of force was framed as a last resort, enacted when no alternative tactics remained viable⁴¹⁴. The following day, PSP’ spokesperson described the police charge as an “*«inevitable and indispensable... crowd dispersal action caused by the intensity and duration» of violent acts perpetrated by demonstrators*”⁴¹⁵. Asked whether innocent bystanders could be spared, he replied:

⁴¹² «A mais violenta manifestação contra a austeridade... “ministro da Administração Interna... retratou os que, ontem, causaram distúrbios, como “profissionais da desordem”», *Público*, “Por uma hora, «profissionais da desordem» foram protagonistas no dia da CGTP”, published on November 15th, 2012; «“agressões notoriamente provocadas por profissionais da violência”», *Diário de Notícias*, “«A polícia atuou de forma impecável»”, published on November 15th, 2012.

⁴¹³ «alguns manifestantes montaram uma autêntica linha de montagem: enquanto uns, agachados, retiravam as pedras da calçada, outros pegavam nestas e arremessavam-nas violentamente contra os escudos da PSP... o alvo do protesto passou a ser o corpo de intervenção», *Público*, “Por uma hora, «profissionais da desordem» foram protagonistas no dia da CGTP”, published on November 15th, 2012.

⁴¹⁴ «Depois de demonstrar uma paciência acima da média, a polícia interveio... os protestos iam entrar numa nova dimensão: a da violência. de um lado a provocação, do outro a resistência», *Diário de Notícias*, “Governo acompanhou ao minuto a carga policial”, published on November 15th, 2012; «“Não havia outra hipótese perante extrema violência”», *Público*, “Por uma hora, «profissionais da desordem» foram protagonistas no dia da CGTP”, published on November 15th, 2012.

⁴¹⁵ «vaga de dispersão” “inevitável e indispensável” devido à “intensidade e duração” dos atos violentos de alguns dos manifestantes», *Diário de Notícias* “PSP tem lista de mais de 30 radicais para ‘caçar’ nos próximos dias”, published on November 15th, 2012 (my translation).

“«It is possible, but extremely difficult... The sweeping effectiveness depends on speed and no one can be left behind... The riot police move like a heavy machine that “eliminates” moving targets. In the moment, they can hardly distinguish who is in front of them. Further, it is expected that when police give the order to disperse, people comply or face the consequences»”⁴¹⁶.

In fact, protest policing is reported to have started prior to November 14th, 2012, as police forces had been investigating potential participants and infiltrating convening meetings. It would also continue the following days, with maximum priority – as per *Diário de Notícias*’ title, the PSP had a “list of 30 radicals to ‘hunt’”, described as anarcho-libertarians with a criminal record and violent past, accused of crimes that included disobedience, coercion, and carrying illegal weapons and explosive material⁴¹⁷.

This risk profile was endorsed by one of the army generals who commented on the protest event (“«violence professionals who are only there to cause violence... intent on turning the police forces into villains»”⁴¹⁸), and so was the legitimacy of the police charge, with police corps framed as an integral part of the political community (“«our police were pushed to the limits of tolerance»” – emphasis added; “Protest policing was impeccable”). The second general further stated his expectation that the police charge had been effective and that it would now be up to the judiciary to impose sufficiently dissuading sanctions to avoid similar events in the future⁴¹⁹.

⁴¹⁶ «“Possível é, mas extremamente difícil... A eficácia da limpeza depende da rapidez e ninguém pode ficar para trás. ... O corpo de intervenção funciona como uma máquina pesada que “elimina” alvos em movimento. Nesse momento, dificilmente distinguem quem está na sua frente. Além disso, é expectável que quando a polícia dá uma ordem para dispersar as pessoas cumpram ou tenham consciência das consequências”», *Diário de Notícias*, “PSP tem lista de mais de 30 radicais para ‘caçar’ nos próximos dias”, published on November 15th, 2012 (my translation).

⁴¹⁷ «“polícia suspeita de intenção de usar os materiais para uma bomba improvisada... como medida preventiva, apostar fortemente na investigação... crimes de desobediência e coação, ofensa à integridade física qualificada, dados e posse de armas e material explosivo... operação de investigação tem prioridade máxima... indivíduos ligados a grupos radicais de pequena expressão, de ideologia anarco-libertária... já conotados com episódios de violência e com antecedentes criminais», *Diário de Notícias*, “PSP tem lista de mais de 30 radicais para ‘caçar’ nos próximos dias”, published on November 16th, 2012 (my translation).

⁴¹⁸ «“profissionais da violência que estão ali só para provocar a violência... querem que a polícia seja a má da história... a nossa polícia foi até ao limite da tolerância”», *Diário de Notícias*, “Estamos perante uma violência importada”, published on November 15th, 2012 (my translation).

⁴¹⁹ «“A polícia atuou de forma impecável, tendo aguentado mundo tempo as provocações; agressões provocadas por profissionais da violência. Espero que a carga tenha sido eficaz e que os detidos presentes a tribunal possam ser alvo de sanções suficientemente dissuasoras para evitar tentações a outros profissionais da violência”», *Diário de Notícias*, “A polícia atuou de forma impecável”, published on November 15th, 2012.

But protest policing was not without controversy – *Público* described it in the following terms:

“In less than five minutes, the police advanced, without thinking twice... Caught off guard, many citizens had to flee a violent scenario that they had not expected and for which they were not responsible. Among these was a 70-year-old man who was knocked down and assaulted for about two minutes by police officers... a homeless man, who was sitting on a bench, was surprised by «five or six police officers» who shouted at him «it was you, we know it was you!» and then assaulted him. Later, he told PÚBLICO «I didn’t even know there was a demonstration today»”⁴²⁰.

The protest event received similar media attention in Spain (articles over thirty-two pages published in two different days), with the labour unions (CCOO and UGT) convening the strike also highlighting its transnational nature⁴²¹. The protest event was described in bellicose terms (*“urban guerrilla”, “battle royale”*), and some protesters were said to have organised with the clear intent to perpetrate violence, which, considering their criminal records and association with hooliganism, was to be expected. These were, once more, people associated with new anti-austerity social movements, causing increased concern for citizen security⁴²², leading the police to declare that *“«twentieth century labour unionism is over»”⁴²³.*

⁴²⁰ «Em menos de cinco minutos, os polícias avançaram, sem olhar a meios...Apanhados desprevenidos, muitos cidadãos tiveram de fugir de um cenário de violência com que não contavam e pelo qual nada fizeram. Entre estes, esteve um homem de 70 anos que foi derrubado e agredido durante cerca de dois minutos por membros da polícia... um sem-abrigo, que estava sentado num banco, foi surpreendido por “cinco ou seis polícias” que lhe gritaram “foste tu, nós sabemos que foste tu!” e que o agrediram. Mais tarde, João Pires disse ao PÚBLICO que “nem sabia que havia protesto hoje”», *Público*, “Por uma hora, «profissionais da desordem» foram protagonistas no dia da CGTP”, published on November 15th, 2012 (my translation).

⁴²¹ *El Mundo*, “14-N: triunfan las protestas y fracasan los paros laborales”, published on November 16th, 2012.

⁴²² *El Mundo*, “Batalla campal nocturna en Madrid y Barcelona”, published on November 15th, 2012; «Los radicales, perfectamente organizados, lanzaron piezas de hierro de gran tamaño... No eran unos angelitos... Al menos cuatro de los detenidos, de la veintena que fue apresado por la Policía, cuentan con antecedentes. Desde desórdenes y desobediencia, pasando por robo con violencia, daños, hasta violencia familiar... “Estos radicales están perfeccionando cada vez más sus tácticas de guerrilla urbana”... La preocupación policial es cada vez más grande... del grupo de seguidores radicales del Rayo Vallecano», *El Mundo*, “Guerrilla urbana en Madrid contra los agentes”, published on November 16th, 2012; *El Mundo*, “Arsenal de guerrilla urbana en una sede de hinchas del Rayo”, published on November 16th, 2012.

⁴²³ «“El sindicalismo del siglo XX se ha acabado”», *El Mundo*, “Madrugada de blindaje policial”, published on November 15th, 2012 (my translation).

The same mechanism of dislocation of protest target can be found in Spain, as the police are said to have become the main target of protesters, particularly when labour unions dismissed the protest event. Confrontations between police forces and protesters occurred in several cities, with burnt police cars, garbage cans, and urban furniture, broken shop windows, and attacks on international shopping outlets⁴²⁴. As in Portugal, concerns about the legitimacy of protest policing were reported, particularly in relation to two minors who were assaulted by riot police in Catalonia, a deed vastly condemned by PSC and ICV (*Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds* / Catalonia Green Initiative)⁴²⁵.

Despite some narrative similarities (the transnational nature of the protest event, the heightened risk profile attributed to activists of the anti-austerity protest movement, the justified protest policing), November 14th, 2012, is described differently across the border, and, on this occasion, Spanish reporting is not as severe as in the Portuguese case (Portuguese newspapers, by contrast, exclusively report on violent episodes occurring during the protest event taking place in Spain – and Italy and Greece⁴²⁶). In fact, the main message emerging from the Spanish reporting is that the protest event fell short of the worst expectations of police forces⁴²⁷. It was certainly not the “day of the rage”, neither was it particularly glorified as a “transnational day of solidarity”. Both narratives are, in fact, more relevantly exposed in the Portuguese news, where, however, it is possible to say that the focus is on reporting the “day of the rage”, with much less attention given to the mechanisms of transnational solidarity at play.

A contrasting pattern emerges upon juxtaposing the two protest events elucidated in the introductory section of Chapter 5. The strike orchestrated by Portuguese police forces is characterised as a relatively unremarkable protest event, with demonstrators asserting a commitment to avoiding putting the citizenry in peril. In stark contrast, the

⁴²⁴ *El Mundo*, “Batalla campal nocturna en Madrid y Barcelona”, published on November 15th, 2012; *El País*, “Disturbios y destrozos en el entorno del Congreso con 21 detenidos y 29 heridos”, published on November 15th, 2012.

⁴²⁵ «Durante los altercados ocurridos en Tarragona durante la jornada de huelga general, al menos dos menores fueron golpeados por los Mossos d'Esquadra... El episodio... ha llevado al PSC y a ICV a pedir la dimisión del consejero de Interior», *El País*, “La joven golpeada por los 'mossos': «Pero qué estás haciendo? ¡Si es un niño!»”, published on November 16th, 2012.

⁴²⁶ *Público*, “Centenas de milhares de pessoas nas ruas de Espanha depois de tarde com violência”, published on November 15th, 2012.

⁴²⁷ «Los peores temores policiales no se confirmaron ayer ni de lejos», *El Mundo*, “Madrugada de blindaje policial”, published on November 15th, 2012.

Spanish counterpart is said to pose a serious security risk, notably contributing to elevated fatality rates on Spanish roadways.

The narratives outlined above are indicative of this chapter's focus, which is the third master frame – security / insecurity. It will be argued that these contrasting narratives are the result of different securitising moves that occur with different intensities and are enacted by different actors across the Iberian space. The same methodology employed in chapter 5 was applied to uncover and analyse the final master frame, by focusing on identifying its constituting frames, which, in this case, are securitising moves (section 6.1). As protest policing is considered in this work as the most visible face of the securitisation of protest, this chapter is also concerned with reactions to police intervention in protest events (section 6.2) – positive evaluations of protest policing can also be considered as securitising moves (while negative evaluations can act as desecuritising moves) Findings outlined in the previous empirical chapters informed the analysis presented below.

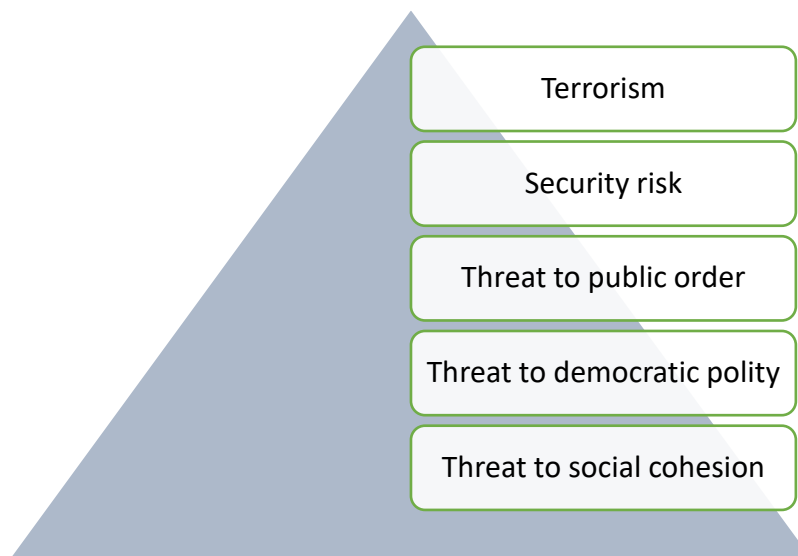
6.1. Securitising protest in Portugal and Spain – securitising moves and security referents

As explained in chapter 1, a securitising move is the process of identification of a given subject – in this case, protest – as a security problem or an existential threat to the political community. Close reading of the newspaper articles revealed the presence of the following securitising moves (or frames):

- The protest event constitutes a threat to social cohesion,
- The protest event constitutes a threat to the democratic polity,
- The protest event constitutes a threat to public order,
- The protest event constitutes a security risk, and
- The protest event is terrorism.

These securitising moves occur on an escalating scale in terms of the urgency of the threat / security problem, as per figure 121.

Figure 121. Seriousness of the security problem / existential threat posed by protest.



Own elaboration.

Each securitising move is linked to security referents – that entity / object / subject that needs to be kept from harm, a relationship clarified in table 5. This systematisation facilitated the identification and subsequent coding of securitising moves found in reactions to protest events.

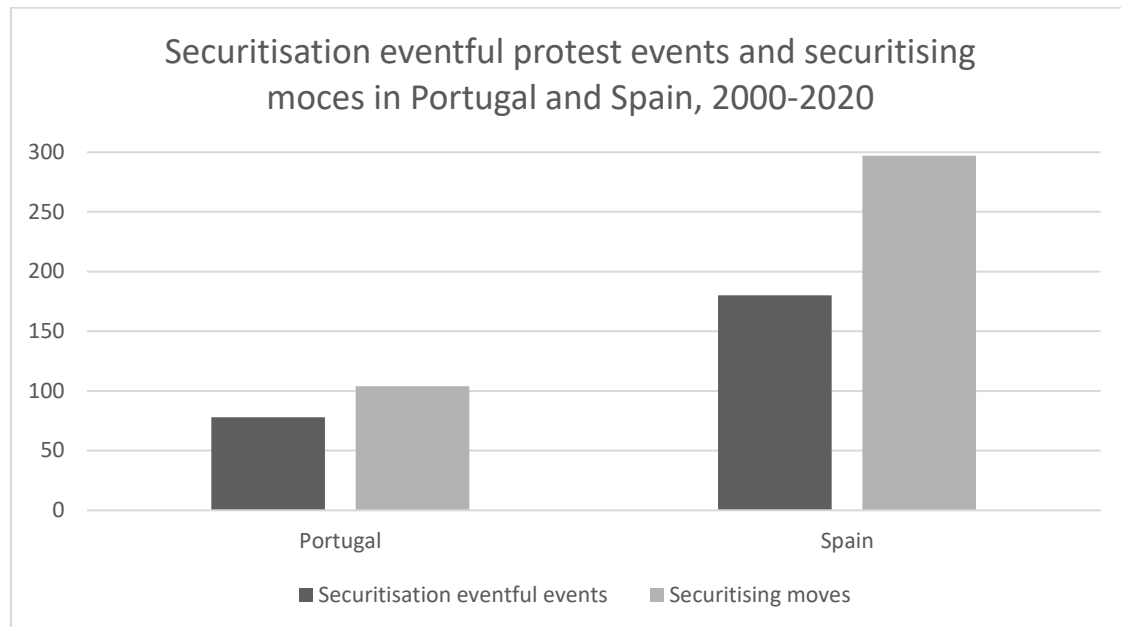
Table 5. Securitising moves and corresponding security referents.

Securitising move	Security referent
Protest as a threat to social cohesion	Political community
Protest as a threat to democratic polity	Political community
Protest as a threat to public order	Political community; Public safety,
Protest as a security risk	Public safety; Political community
Protest is terrorism	Public safety; Political community

In Portugal, 105 securitising moves were identified in 78 eventful protest events, while, in Spain, these figures are significantly higher – 297 securitising moves, identified in 180 eventful protest events (figure 122). These eventful events – those that are relevant for this master frame – constitute below one third of all eventful events in Portugal (30.1%)

and over 50% in Spain – 55.6%. This is indicative not only of a higher propensity for the securitisation of protest in the second country, but also of multiple securitising moves occurring in relation to one protest event, thereby framed as posing multiple threats / security problems to security referents.

Figure 122. Securitising moves in eventful protest events in Portugal and Spain, 2000-2020.

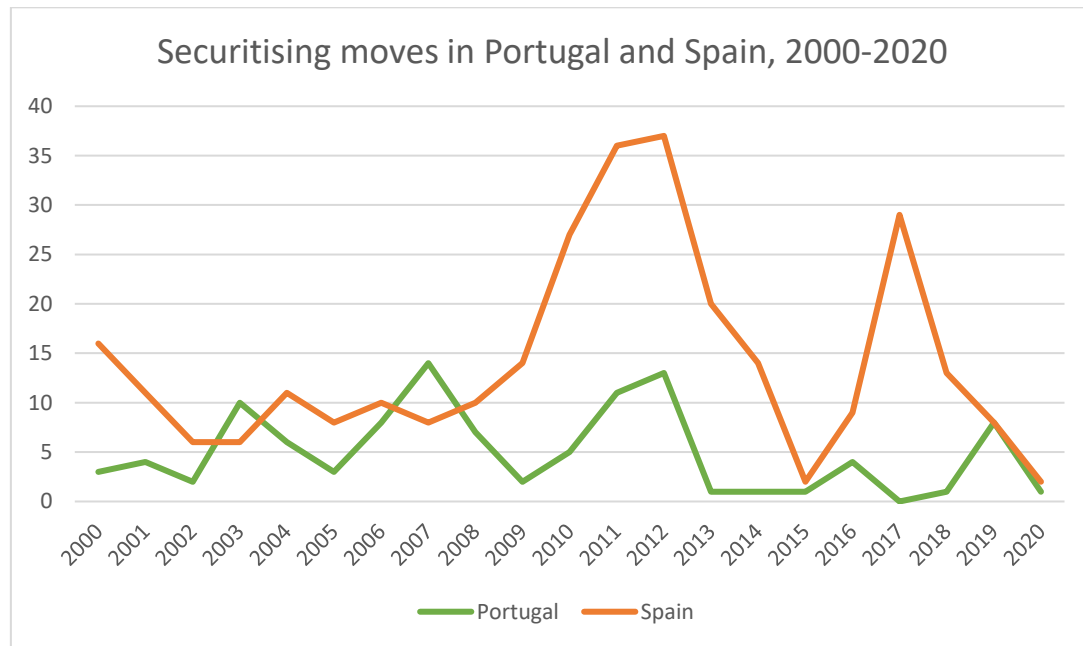


Own elaboration.

Figure 123 informs on yearly securitising moves, indicating a clear correspondence between the number of protest events in Spain and the presence of securitising moves – it is in the periods of higher contention on Spanish streets, both in terms of the number of events and of the level of popular mobilisation (the anti-austerity protest cycle, the Catalanian crisis) that more securitising moves are found in vested actors' reactions to protest. The exception would be 2003 and 2004, the years of higher popular mobilisation in the country. Naturally, more consensual demands expressed in protest events to condemn the terrorist attacks of 2004 were not the object of securitisation (and the proximity of that year's general election is likely to have influenced the absence of securitising moves, unlikely to be well received by their intended audience) but, surprisingly, neither were protest events targeting the national government's support for the invasion of Iraq (which were also not heavily present in the analysis of the two previous master frames). In this last instance, this can relate to the same factors, namely the fact that rejection of Spanish foreign policy was being expressed by a very high

number of citizens and the proximity of the electoral cycle. The fact that the invasion of Iraq was an integral part of the so-called “global war on terror” may also be influential as terrorism is precisely one of the silenced areas identified by the securitisation framework (Buzan *et al.*, 1998, p. 53).

Figure 123. Yearly evolution of securitising moves in Portugal and Spain, 2000-2020.



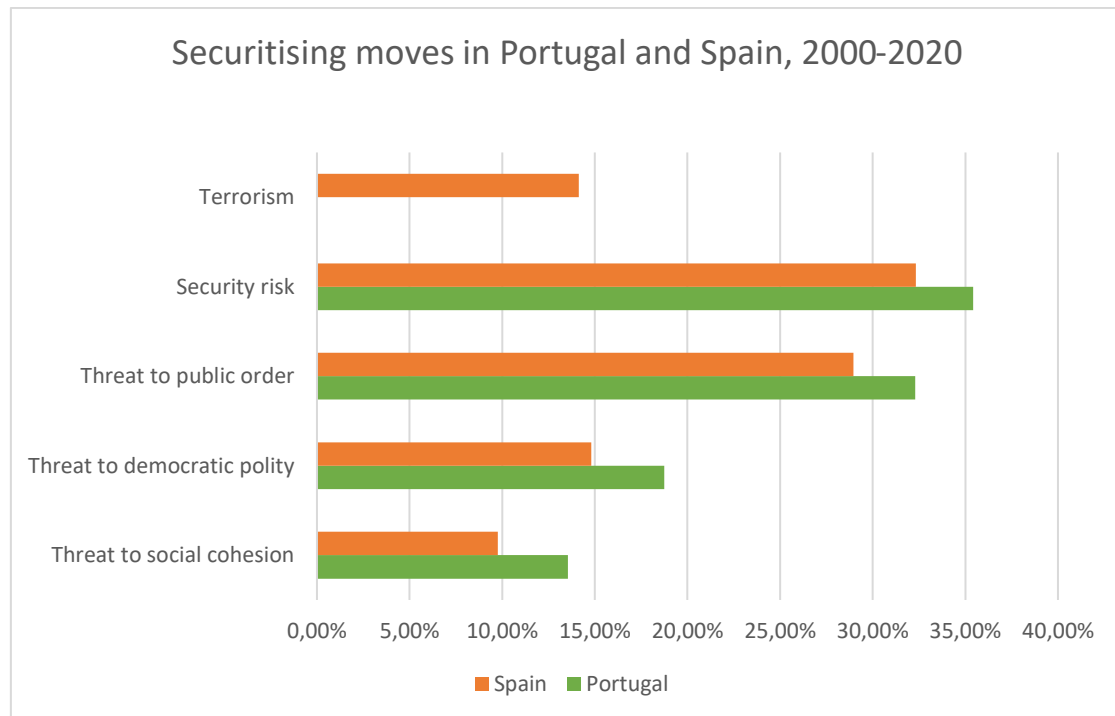
Own elaboration.

In Portugal, more securitising moves occur, too, during the anti-austerity protest cycle, but it is in 2007 that these are most frequent – this was a year of retreat of labour rights and closure of public services imposed by the majority PS government, that caused high levels of participation in protest events. It is only in this year and in 2003 that more securitising moves occur in Portugal than in Spain. It is with this important difference in terms of the presence of securitising moves in mind that the following exploration of their manifestation is offered.

As per figure 124, the most common securitising move is that which equates protest with a security risk hindering the public safety of the political community – this represents over a third of all securitising moves in Portugal (35.4%) and almost a third in Spain (32.3%). A close second is the ‘threat to public order’ securitising move, which is also more important in Portugal than in Spain (32.3% vs. 29%). In both countries, too, protest being described as a threat to the democratic polity is the third most common securitising move – which is, likewise, more frequent in the Portuguese case (18.8%)

than in the Spanish (14.8%). Protest framed as a threat to social cohesion is the least common securitising move – 13.5% in Portugal and 9.8% in Spain. The most important variation between cases is, thus, the complete absence of the securitising move that equates protest with terrorism from the Portuguese case, while, in the neighbouring country, this is the fourth most important frame, at 14.1%.

Figure 124. Securitising moves in Portugal and Spain, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

The ‘protest is a security risk’ securitising move in Portugal is expressed, firstly, through utterances directly invoking security concerns in relation to a protest event. That was the case in 2006, when a city mayor advised his constituents not to participate in a slow drive to protest against the local maternity ward closing down because protesting could be dangerous⁴²⁸, and participants in a fifty-five-day strike in a sewage treatment facility in 2008 were accused of putting public health, as well as the environment, at serious risk, for failing to maintain minimum services⁴²⁹. Madeira Island policemen leafleting at

⁴²⁸ «a acção poderia ser perigosa», *Público*, “Dez carros contra encerramento de maternidade de Santo Tirso”, published on May 6th, 2006.

⁴²⁹ «perigo advém do “incumprimento dos serviços mínimos...danos gravíssimos para o ambiente e para a saúde pública das populações”», *Diário de Notícias*, “Greve na ETAR deixa ambiente em risco”, published on February 27th, 2008.

the airport for better working conditions in 2014 were also accused of jeopardising the security of the political community by the local tourism business association⁴³⁰.

Another common occurrence of this securitising move pertains to the framing of protesters as posing a security risk – which occurs from the anti-austerity protest cycle onwards, running in parallel to the ‘bad citizens’ frame. For example, in the Labour Day demonstrations of 2011, a group of youngsters donning anarchist symbols and black clothing were deemed as a security threat for not following the pre-arranged demonstration route – the police dispersed them by firing a shotgun into the air⁴³¹. And, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the newly elected prime minister had, already in September 2011, expressed his views on popular mobilisation through tropes that are indicative of a heightened risk profile attributed to anti-austerity protesters: he saw them as people intent on burning the streets, burning the country, introducing an element of foreign havoc into the Portuguese public sphere⁴³².

The security risk trope associated with these new participants in instances of popular mobilisation would be repeated across the anti-austerity protest cycle, as demonstrated by the following statements:

- On the general strike of November 2011, *“protesters tried to storm the steps of the Assembly of the Republic”* and posed a particular security threat to Ministries and banks, but also to the general political community (*“Authorities’ predictions for conflict escalation were confirmed yesterday”*); they constituted a source of great concern for citizenry security, as indicated by the president of the national Security, Criminality and Terrorism Observatory, positioning himself as a

⁴³⁰ «acto protestativo poderia colocar em causa “a segurança do destino”», *Público*, “Turistas recebidos na Madeira com boas-vindas a “um país que não respeita os polícias”, published on May 10th, 2014.

⁴³¹ «Confrontos entre um grupo anarquista e forças da PSP durante desfile do 1.º maio... Anarquistas trajavam de negro e seguiram outro percurso...PSP confirmou que foram efectuados “alguns disparos de shot-gun”», *Diário de Notícias*, “Confrontos com a PSP resultam em três feridos”, published on May 2nd, 2011.

⁴³² «deixou um aviso aos que pensavam “que podem incendiar as ruas e ajudar a queimar Portugal...Pode haver quem se entusiasme com as redes sociais e com aquilo que vê lá fora, esperando trazer o tumulto para as ruas de Portugal”», *Público*, “Um Governo não revela preocupação mas fica muito atento”, published on November 24th, 2011.

securitising actor («*If these groups want to continue wreaking havoc, it will not be difficult*»)⁴³³,

- The events of that day would be recalled the following year, during newspapers' reporting of the first general strike of 2012, described in *Público*'s cover as a weak episode of popular mobilisation, whose primary characteristic was violence: *"protesters... throwing eggs at banking facilities and some people who were withdrawing money from ATMs. Still, last year it was worse: two tax offices in Lisbon were vandalised with Molotov cocktails"*⁴³⁴ (repetition is, here, intended, to maintain and intensify protesters' risk profile, even though no such actions were recorded during this specific protest event); PSP, additionally, reiterated its concerns about the heightened security threat posed by new protesters: *"The police have one thesis: the Indignados espouse an extremist strategy that considers police officers as their direct targets"*⁴³⁵,
- As described at the beginning of this chapter, this heightened risk profile was echoed on November 14th, 2012, with police forces stating they were expecting *"«small violent groups [to] spread violence throughout the city»"*⁴³⁶.

Portuguese police forces, then, act as an important securitising actor, not only discursively, as active nomenclators of protesters and by supplying the public with their evaluation of risk levels attributed to them and their protest repertoires, but also

⁴³³ «*manifestantes que tentaram tomar de assalto os degraus da Assembleia da República*», *Público*, «*«Indignados» fizeram voar garrafas sobre o Parlamento na manifestação a que os sindicalistas não se quiseram juntar*», published on November 25th, 2011 (my translation); *Diário de Notícias*, «*Anarquistas extremistas suspeitos de incidentes contra as finanças*», published on November 25th, 2011; «*As previsões das autoridades para uma escalada da conflitualidade tiveram ontem o seu primeiro sinal... «se estes grupos quiserem continuar a causar estragos, não é difícil»*», *Diário de Notícias*, «*Bancos e Ministérios são alvos de maior risco de ataques*», published on November 25th, 2011 (my translation).

⁴³⁴ *Público*, «*Governo tentou calar protesto fraco marcado pela violência*», published on March 23rd, 2012; «*Os desacetos começaram ao início da tarde... manifestantes... atirando ovos contra as instalações bancárias e algumas pessoas que estavam a levantar dinheiro no Multibanco. Ainda assim, no ano passado foi pior: duas repartições das Finanças em Lisboa foram vandalizadas, com cocktails-molotov*», *Público*, «*Governo proibiu empresas públicas de transportes de falarem sobre a greve*», published on March 23rd, 2012 (my translation).

⁴³⁵ «*Há uma tese na polícia de que os Indignados têm uma estratégia extremista que pode tornar os seus efetivos em alvos diretos*», *Diário de Notícias*, «*PSP receia ataques dirigidos a agentes em manifestações*», published on November 24th, 2012 (my translation).

⁴³⁶ «*«pequenos grupos violentos» que poderiam «cultivar a violência pela cidade»*», *Público*, «*Por uma hora, «profissionais da desordem» foram protagonistas no dia da CGTP*», published on November 13th, 2012.

through their practices of protest policing, with different tactics being chosen to contain diverse perceived security risks. which include:

- Keeping protesters away from their protest target: for example, in 2001, riot police stopped colonial war veterans from demonstrating in front of the official residence of the President of the Republic⁴³⁷,
- Deciding to increase the number of agents and to deploy the riot police (in that same event, or in the protest campaign against reduction of bus routes in Porto in 2007 – “*several elements of the PSP Riot Police... they were large in numbers*”; “*presence of many agents from the PSP Riot Police... Large police apparatus... the police appeared. Lots of police*”⁴³⁸), or
- Stating their incapacity to guarantee security in the face of potentially aggressive protesters – as in 2020, when housing rights demonstrators were stopped from attending a Lisbon City Hall council meeting because Lisbon Municipal Police stated its “*inability to guarantee the safety of the assembly*”⁴³⁹.

In Spain, this securitising move appears relative to typologies of protesters and repertoires, and it gains strength during and after the anti-austerity protest cycle, with important nuances.

In the first half of the series, this frame appears most notably in relation to youth and migrant mobilisation. In this last instance, protest is framed as a potential security risk and safety hazard through different securitising dynamics:

- Criminalisation: in a 2000 protest campaign by migrant agricultural workers, it was said that “*farmers were convinced that the strike organisers were “the same*

⁴³⁷ «*presença da polícia de choque manifesto reforço policial... [manifestantes] não terem podido aproximar-se do Palácio de Belém*», *Diário de Notícias*, “Veteranos de guerra exigem a atenção do poder político”, published on October 21st, 2001.

⁴³⁸ «*aproximação de vários elementos do Corpo de Intervenção da PSP... eram em grande número*», *Diário de Notícias*, “‘Manif’ da STCP sob aparato policial”, published on January 13th, 2007; «*presença de muitos agentes do Corpo de Intervenção da PSP... Grande aparato policial... surgiu a polícia. Muita polícia*», *Público*, “Polícia não cala protestos da STCP” published on January 7th, 2007 (my translation).

⁴³⁹ «*Polícia Municipal terá respondido que «não tinham condições de assegurar a segurança desta assembleia*», *Público*, “Medo de uma «invasão» fecha assembleia municipal a cidadãos”, published on March 11th, 2020 (my translation).

*mafias that commit crimes in town*⁴⁴⁰; during the 2001 mobilisation campaign for regularisation, the same concerns were expressed, but concerning civil society organisations supporting migrants, as the Catalan regional government *“warned that «maximalist and demagogic» positions could turn the city into a focus of attraction for illegal immigration and mafias*⁴⁴¹.

- Heightened risk profile: in the 2000 campaign, *“police sources expressed their fear... [of] conflicts between different foreign groups*⁴⁴²; and
- Health risk for the political community: it was reported that there was a possibility of the 2001 protest campaign for regularisation, whose main repertoires were occupation of churches and hunger strikes, becoming a focus of tuberculosis⁴⁴³.

The criminalisation trope is repeated by police forces reacting to a protest event in 2016 at a migrant detention centre (described as a riot, despite the fact that participants had simply climbed to the roof of the building, where they remained for five hours), but expanded to *Podemos*: *“Police unions, which had...warned that a mutiny could occur, attributed it to the fact that the immigrants are aware of the support they have outside from NGOs and political parties such as Podemos*⁴⁴⁴.

Different actors, thus, are involved in these securitising moves – employers, the police, government actors, but also the media. The securitisation of migrant protest is based on three main tropes – constructing the migrant other (closely associated with the ‘bad citizens’ frame), association with organised crime, and criminalisation of civil society. At

⁴⁴⁰ «Los agricultores están convencidos de que los organizadores de los piquetes son “las mismas. mafias de inmigrantes que delinquen” en la localidad», *El Mundo*, “Los invernaderos siguen vacíos en el segundo día de huelga”, published on February 10th, 2000 (my translation).

⁴⁴¹ «tras advertir que las posiciones “maximalistas y demagógicas” pueden convertir la ciudad en un foco de atracción de inmigración ilegal y mafias», *El País*, “Miles de personas se solidarizan con los 400 encerrados en Barcelona”, published on January 27th, 2001 (my translation).

⁴⁴² «Fuentes policiales expresaron su temor... conflictos entre distintos colectivos extranjeros», *El País*, “La huelga agrícola en El Ejido crea crispación entre los inmigrantes magrebíes y los europeos”, published on February 10th, 2000 (my translation).

⁴⁴³ «Dos inmigrantes ya han tenido que ser ingresados, por tuberculosis... Las autoridades sanitarias están haciendo pruebas a los encerrados en ambas parroquias para descubrir si alguien ha contraído la enfermedad», *El Mundo*, “Los inmigrantes volverán a, comer si hay garantías de que se tramitan sus papeles”, published on February 1st, 2001.

⁴⁴⁴ «Los sindicatos policiales, que ya habían advertido... de que podía ocurrir un motín, lo atribuyeron a que los inmigrantes conocen el apoyo que tienen en el exterior por parte de ONG y de partidos políticos como Podemos», *El Mundo*, “Podemos e Interior se enzarzan por el motín del CIE de Aluche”, published on October 20th, 2016 (my translation).

the end of the series – with the criminalisation frame expanded to *Podemos*, thereby reinforcing the idea that the party constituted an outsider to the political community which could, at any point, convene or support protest posing a potential security risk. In this case, thus, it is not only protesters themselves who are the object of a securitising move, but also civil society and actors of formal politics – even when they have no real connection with the instance of popular mobilisation.

This was already hinted at in chapter 5, when *Podemos* was accused of organising a boycott (described as an “*escrache*”) of a Felipe González conference at a university (“*PSOE and the Government blame Podemos for the violent boycott*”⁴⁴⁵) and of being involved in the 2015 strike of *Telefonica* cable and internet installers, despite that not being the case. This last protest event was, actually, framed as a security risk for the political community – as reported in *El Mundo*, “*the ankle monitor system worn by perpetrators [of gender-based violence] and the State Security Forces communication systems were also affected*”. The protest was, in addition, framed as posing a threat to the health of the political community, as it supposedly interfered with the services of a Madrid hospital⁴⁴⁶.

Youth emerges as the second category of protesters which is particularly securitised, and this is significant not only because Spanish youth represent 8% of all participants in popular mobilisation, but also since young people are notoriously present in the second most important category of participants in popular mobilisation in the country – activists (16.3% of all protesters, as per chapter 3). Youth is the object of securitising moves across the series, including in protest related to the Spanish education system:

- During the student mobilisation of 2001, 8000 students at Las Palmas University are said to have participated in conflicts with dozens of police officers⁴⁴⁷ – the security risk thereby amplified by the difference in reported numbers between

⁴⁴⁵ «*El PSOE y el Gobierno culpan a Podemos del violento boicot*», *El Mundo*, “*Iglesias señala y los violentos lo reproducen*”, published on October 20th, 2016 (my translation).

⁴⁴⁶ «*Sabotajes de este tipo llegaron a afectar a servicios del Hospital 12 de Octubre de Madrid. También se vio afectado el sistema de pulseras de alejamiento que llevan los maltratadores o el que da cobertura a las comunicaciones de las Fuerzas y Cuerpos de Seguridad del Estado*», *El Mundo*, “*De arropar a Pablo Iglesias el 1 de Mayo, a detenido por sabotajes*”, published on May 14th, 2015 (my translation).

⁴⁴⁷ «*enfrentamientos entre 8.000 estudiantes y decenas de agentes de la policía nacional*», *El País*, “*Incidentes em Zaragoza, Las Palmas y Madrid*”, published on November 8th, 2001.

students and police officers, implying the latter's inability to control a vast crowd, intent in physical confrontation,

- Students occupying the University of Barcelona in 2009 to protest against the Bologna process were described as particularly bellicose: *"Young people were looking for war, and they found it"*⁴⁴⁸;
- In 2012, the Valencian regional government called a press conference to comment on high school pupils' mobilisation against cuts in education funding. It was the Valencia Community Police Chief who took the floor, and framed young protest participants as a security risk: *"The head of the National Police Corps referred to protesters as «the enemy» and refused to reveal how many agents had participated in the operation so as «not to reveal our strengths and weaknesses»"*⁴⁴⁹,
- The next year, a student strike for Catalan independence was considered a security risk – although the risk profile was inverted, attributed to the act of protesting itself: the Youth Chief Prosecutor ordered police to *"monitor any «risk situations» in which minors could find themselves for participating"* in the protest event⁴⁵⁰.

Activist youth mobilising outside of the education system is also framed as a security risk, posing an increased security problem / existential threat precisely because of their organisation levels, and in relation to one specific repertoire – occupations:

- Activists who, in 2006, occupied a former factory in Barcelona were assessed as an ongoing security risk by the local police (*"«with this group, you have to be very careful»"*⁴⁵¹).

⁴⁴⁸ «Los jóvenes buscaban guerra y la encontraron», *El País*, "El desalojo de estudiantes 'anti-Bolonia' degenera en violencia en Barcelona", published on March 19th, 2009 (my translation).

⁴⁴⁹ «El responsable del Cuerpo Nacional de Policía se refirió a los manifestantes como "el enemigo" y se negó a desvelar cuántos agentes habían participado en el dispositivo para "no revelar nuestras fuerzas y puntos débiles"», *El Mundo*, "La violencia se desborda en Valencia", published on February 21st, 2012 (my translation).

⁴⁵⁰ «El fiscal jefe de Menores dio ayer la orden de vigilar las "situaciones de riesgo" en las que podría colocarse a menores de edad por participar en actos relativos al 1-O», *El Mundo*, "La Fiscalía advierte a padres y profesores", published on September 28th, 2013 (my translation).

⁴⁵¹ «"con este colectivo hay que ser muy cuidadoso"», *El Mundo*, "PP y CiU acusan al 'Govern' y al Ayuntamiento barcelonés de permisividad ante los 'okupas'", published on December 4th, 2006 (my translation).

- Activists (described as anti-system youth) who occupied a former bank building in Barcelona in 2010 caused security concerns as they were said to have access to a fuel container – and the risk factor was increased by police forces’ failure to immediately eject them (*“The anti-system activists who occupied the former headquarters of Banesto... were seen, for hours... manipulating a gasoline tank”*; *“The Mossos did not act even though they knew that the squatters had gasoline”*)⁴⁵²; Their connection to an anarchist group (the Black Bloc)⁴⁵³, was further invoked to further enhance their potential risk, thus reinforcing the securitising move.
- In 2014, during protests against the demolition of an occupied building, again in Barcelona, *El Mundo* published a piece comparing the situation to that in other European countries – it reported that an occupation of a building in Hamburg, Germany, was declared by the local police as a *“danger zone”* and that resistance to the demolition of an occupied cultural centre in Copenhagen resulted in 650 arrests, to reach the following conclusion: *“the script repeats itself: eviction of a squatted centre, resistance and street confrontations”*⁴⁵⁴ – thereby securitising protest by comparison, and alerting its readers to expect an escalation of violence as the obvious development.
- And independentist youth, following the Catalan crisis, was also framed as a growing security risk, with the Ministry of the Interior issuing a declaration warning of increasing radicalisation attributed to organisations such as *Arran* or the CUP youth ward, which were producing an *“extremely complex security question”*⁴⁵⁵ in the region.

⁴⁵² «Los antisistema que okuparon la ex sede de Banesto... fueron vistos... manipulando un depósito de gasolina», *El Mundo*, “Los Mossos no actuaron antes aunque sabían que los ‘okupas’ tenían gasolina”, published on October 1st, 2010 (my translation).

⁴⁵³ *El Mundo*, “Los ‘Black Block’, un paso más allá en los antisistema”, published on October 1st, 2010.

⁴⁵⁴ «Enero de 2014. Distritos ... de la ciudad de Hamburgo...son declarados por la policía “zona de peligro”. centro okupa ... convertido en epicentro cultural de la izquierda radical... en 2007 en Copenhague... por la demolición del centro juvenil... cuyo desalojo provocó disturbios y 650 detenidos... el guion se repite: desalojo de un centro okupado, resistencia y enfrentamientos callejeros», *El Mundo*, “Una violencia heterogénea”, published on May 30th, 2014 (my translation).

⁴⁵⁵ «Ese sector está muy localizado: se trata de Arran, las juventudes de la CUP, y “sus cercanías”... la situación en el plano de la seguridad es extremadamente compleja», *El Mundo*, “Interior advierte del aumento de la radicalización en las calles”, published on December 26th, 2017 (my translation).

Youth protest – including student mobilisation – is also framed as terrorism, a securitising move that will be addressed in the last part of this section. Nonetheless, the analysis offered so far, and when considered in combination with the two previous master frames, paints a bleak picture for youth engaging with the political in the Spanish protest sphere: frequently delegitimised and depoliticised, and, in addition, often framed as a potential security risk.

Young people were also part of the anti-austerity protest movement, which was, as indicated in the previous chapter, a turning point for the (il)legitimacy and (de)politicisation master frames – and the same can be said for the (in)security master frame. For example, “Acampada” Barcelona was equated with a security risk by the Catalan regional government, that ordered its dismantlement by security forces to remove “«*dangerous objects*», and *clean the area*”⁴⁵⁶ (which also implies a risk to public health) – in the words of the *Generalitat* president: “*it was simply a matter of recovering hygiene and safety conditions... police intervention «reduced» the risk posed by protesters... some of whom may have committed crimes of damage, injuries and disobedience*”⁴⁵⁷ (thereby also resorting to the criminalisation of protesters as a securitisation mechanism). The security risk posed by protesters was, additionally, the justification for judicial prosecution (“*now it is about «reviewing all the recorded material» to see if more people involved in the events can be identified and arrested*”⁴⁵⁸).

Protest events across the country during the 2011 opening ceremonies of recently elected local governments were also framed as a security risk, with the Spanish Police Confederation acting as a securitising actor by asking the Interior Minister for a “*strong hand in addressing potential provocations of anti-system activists posing as*

⁴⁵⁶ «El ‘conseller’ Puig ordenó usar la fuerza al impedirse la retirada de “objetos peligrosos” y la limpieza de la zona», *El Mundo* cover, “La torpeza de los Mossos reactiva las acampadas”, published on May, 28th, 2011 (my translation).

⁴⁵⁷ «se trataba sencillamente de recuperar las condiciones de higiene, y también de seguridad... la actuación policial “disminuyó” el riesgo de los concentrados ... algunos de ellos pudieron cometer delitos de daños, lesiones y desobediencia», *El Mundo*, “Los Mossos cargan contra el 15-M”, published on May 28th, 2011 (my translation).

⁴⁵⁸ «ahora se trata “de revisar todo el material grabado”, para ver si se puede identificar a más personas implicadas en lo hechos y detenerlas», *El Mundo*, “La torpeza de los Mossos reactiva el 15-M”, published on May 28th, 2011 (my translation).

Indignados”⁴⁵⁹, and so was the “*Aturem el parlament*” protest event in Barcelona, with calls for more protest policing to “*defend the «safety of the Spanish people»*”⁴⁶⁰, in the face of the “*the violent shift of the Indignados, which, mixed with anti-system groups and the usual troublemakers, had shown its most radical face*”⁴⁶¹ – utterances which frame the anti-austerity social movement as a threat to the security of the whole political community.

This protest event would become a securitisation signifier, with officials referring to it to highlight the need for more protest policing and the judicial prosecution of protesters: “*The serious incidents that occurred in Barcelona... should not be repeated. The message sent by the Catalan Government about the need to eradicate "urban guerrilla" once and for all has reached the judiciary*”⁴⁶².

This would be reinforced following the first general strike of 2012, with the Catalan Minister of the Interior publicly stating the urgency of “*revising the Penal Code so as to put an end to the violent confrontations which took place in Barcelona*”⁴⁶³, describing protesters as “*organised people «with a criminal attitude»... sowing chaos in the city... [intent on] creating in a similar scenario to Greece*”. He further “*announced improvements in «collaboration with the prosecutor's office and the judicial system»*”, and the creation of a multi-party working group to address street violence⁴⁶⁴. In this

⁴⁵⁹ «*Las protestas llegaron a incluir persecuciones por las calles cuando los políticos salían o entraban a los ayuntamientos... ... Confederación Española de Policía... pidió “contundencia” a Interior ante las “posibles provocaciones de los antisistema camuflados de indignados”*», *El Mundo*, “*Miles de manifestantes increpan a los electos en calles de toda España*”, published on June 12th, 2011 (my translation); «*Mañana se forman los ayuntamientos con el temor a nuevos altercados y más cargas*», *El Mundo*, “*‘Indignados’ contra la corrupción*”, published on June 10th, 2011.

⁴⁶⁰ *El Mundo*, “*Un operativo «insuficiente y discriminatorio»*”, published on June 17th, 2011; «*en defensa de la seguridad de los españoles*», *El Mundo*, “*El ministro Rubalcaba promete «firmeza» con los violentos*”, published on June 17th, 2011 (my translation).

⁴⁶¹ «*La deriva violenta del movimiento de los indignados, mezclado con grupos antisistema y alborotadores habituales, mostró ayer su cara más radical*», *El País*, “*La deriva violenta de los indignados bloquea el acceso al Parlamento catalán*”, published on June 16th, 2011 (my translation).

⁴⁶² «*Los graves incidentes ocurridos en Barcelona durante la huelga general del 29-M no deben repetirse. El mensaje lanzado por el Gobierno catalán sobre la necesidad de erradicar de una vez por todas la “guerrilla urbana” ha calado esta vez en los jueces y fiscales*», *El País*, “*Cárcel para prevenir altercados*”, published on April 1st, 2012 (my translation).

⁴⁶³ «*El consejero de Interior catalán... pidió ayer un endurecimiento del Código Penal que permita atajar altercados como los que se vivieron el jueves en la ciudad de Barcelona*», *El País*, “*La Generalitat pide mano dura contra la «guerrilla urbana»*”, published on March 31st, 2012 (my translation).

⁴⁶⁴ «*personas organizadas “con actitud criminal”... sembrando el caos en la ciudad ... “Los violentos quieren situar Barcelona en un escenario similar al griego”... anunció mejoras en “la colaboración con la fiscalía y*

case, the securitisation of protesters was complete by the judiciary, sentencing protesters to jail, some without bail, to “*prevent them from committing crimes again at subsequent protest events...in the coming weeks*”, such as the Labour Day demonstrations, protests against the European Central Bank summit, and, inclusively, a football match⁴⁶⁵ – in a clear example of multiple actors at play in the actualisation of penal populism: political leaders, the police, the judiciary, and the media.

The novelty of the protest cycle itself, with new actors taking to the streets rejecting the guidance of traditional players such as labour unions, created unprecedented considerations for protest policing – in 2012, “*over 1300 agents from 30 of the 52 riot police units from all over Spain, worked*” on a “*Rodea al congreso*” protest event called over the internet: “*The reason for this large deployment was the difficulty of the Ministry of the Interior in calculating attendance at demonstrations convened... via social networks*”⁴⁶⁶. Despite those police numbers, the protest event was still considered to pose a considerable security risk, with the general director of the National Police stating that the police acted with “*«maximum firmness»*” in defence of political institutions, democracy, and constitutional legality, to “*«prevent the assault of the Congress in the face of the extremely violent attitude of «the extreme left, and anarchist and squatter groups»*”⁴⁶⁷.

el sistema judicial”, y un grupo de debate con el resto de partidos sobre la violencia callejera», El País, “La Generalitat pide mano dura contra la «guerrilla urbana»”, published on March 31st, 2012 (my translation).

⁴⁶⁵ *«Una juez envió... a la cárcel, sin posibilidad de fianza, a tres de los detenidos... para evitar que vuelvan a delinquir en acontecimientos multitudinarios que se celebrarán en Barcelona en las próximas semanas. Ayer, otro juez dictó prisión, aunque eludible con fianza de 3.000 euros, para otros cinco detenidos...La juez precisa que hay tres citas en las que es previsible que se produzcan incidentes violentos similares a los de la huelga: las manifestaciones por el día de los trabajadores (1 de mayo); las protestas por la cumbre del Banco Central Europeo (3 de mayo) e incluso la disputa del derbi entre el Barcelona y el Espanyol (5 de mayo)», El País, “Cárcel para prevenir altercados”, published on April 1st, 2012.*

⁴⁶⁶ *«Más de 1.300 agentes procedentes de 30 de los 52 grupos de las Unidades de Intervención Policial... venidos de toda España, trabajaron ayer en Madrid. El motivo de este gran despliegue fue la dificultad del Ministerio del Interior para calcular la asistencia a las manifestaciones convocadas... por redes sociales», El País, “La manifestación para rodear el Congreso acaba con cargas policiales”, published on September 26th, 2012 (my translation).*

⁴⁶⁷ *«el director general de la Policía... aseguró ... que la policía [que] seguirá actuando con la “máxima firmeza” en defensa de las instituciones... “defender la democracia y evitar el asalto al Congreso” ante la actitud extremadamente violenta de “extrema izquierda, grupos anarquistas y okupas... en defensa de la legalidad constitucional», El Mundo, “La Policía seguirá actuando con la «máxima firmeza»”, published on September 27th, 2012 (my translation).*

Additionally, strikes during the anti-austerity protest cycle were also described as a security risk for the citizenry, as indicated by the Ministry of the Interior's reaction to the miners' strike of 2012 – “*«Were it not for the extraordinary professionalism, the exercise of containment, and the prudence [of the security forces], some misfortune would have occurred, which, thanks to God and that professionalism, was not the case»*”⁴⁶⁸ and by the National Police Confederation, that stated that the protest repertoires used by the miners constituted “*«an obvious risk to the physical integrity of police officers and other citizens»*”⁴⁶⁹.

This protest repertoire, however, had previously been framed as a security risk – such was the case of the 2010 policemen strike described at the beginning of chapter 5 (and mentioned above), said to have impacted the number of accidents and deaths in Spanish roads⁴⁷⁰, and considered a “*«risk for people and property... violating the basic rules of public security»*”⁴⁷¹ in a declaration by the Supreme Court, and, prior to that, the government chose to highlight any incidents occurring during the 2002 strike – “*«there have been more than a thousand violent actions... numerous picket actions «with varying degrees of violence», which caused considerable material damage and injuries... There were also direct attacks on members of the Security Forces»*”⁴⁷². On this occasion, the police stressed their role in “*«creating a security environment... discouraging the risk of violent picketing, neutralising, detaining, and bringing [protesters] to justice»*”⁴⁷³.

⁴⁶⁸ “*«Si no fuera por la extraordinaria profesionalidad, el ejercicio de contención y la prudencia con que están operando [las fuerzas y cuerpos de seguridad], se habría producido alguna desgracia, que gracias a Dios y a esa profesionalidad no se ha producido»*”, *El País*, “La marcha minera desemboca en fuertes enfrentamientos con la Guardia Civil”, published on July 7th 2012 (my translation).

⁴⁶⁹ “*«medios empleados por los mineros en sus protestas suponían “un evidente riesgo para la integridad física de los policías y del resto de ciudadanos”»*”, *El Mundo*, “La guerrilla minera vuelve al Pozo Sótón”, published on June 16th, 2012 (my translation).

⁴⁷⁰ “*«Tráfico alerta de que la 'huelga de multas' agrava la siniestralidad... Divulgar que no se multarán las infracciones "supone un grave riesgo"»*”, *El País*, “Tráfico denuncia que la 'huelga de multas' afecta a la seguridad vial”, published on August 8th, 2010.

⁴⁷¹ “*«un "riesgo para las personas y los bienes... se vulneran las reglas básicas del servicio de seguridad pública"»*”, *El País*, “El Supremo ratifica la sanción a un agente que anunció una huelga de celo”, published on August 8th, 2010 (my translation).

⁴⁷² “*«se han producido más de un millar de acciones violentas... numerosas acciones de piquetes «con diversos grados de violencia», que provocaron cuantiosos daños materiales y lesiones... También, se produjeron agresiones directas a miembros de las Fuerzas de Seguridad»*”, *El Mundo*, “Detenidos más de 100 miembros de piquetes y manifestantes”, published on June 21st, 2002 (my translation).

⁴⁷³ “*«crear un ambiente de seguridad... la anulación del riesgo de piquetes violentos y, en su caso, neutralización, detención y puesta a disposición judicial»*”, *El País*, “Doble turno contra los piquetes”, published on June 21st, 2002 (my translation).

Heavy industry strikes have also been described in terms that highlight their potential security risk for the political community – Galician metal workers’ 2009 strike, for example, was described as a battle royal led by workers who were fully prepared for urban conflict, running havoc in the city, pursued by police agents who seemed unable to control them⁴⁷⁴.

Finally, some of the participants in the strike of November 14th, 2012, were described with irony in the opening sentence of an article in *El Mundo*: “*It was not little angels who carried out the incidents at the Madrid demonstration after the strike. At least four of the detainees... have a criminal record. From disorders to disobedience, including robbery with violence, damages, and gender-based violence*”⁴⁷⁵. This sentence is demonstrative of securitisation through the criminalisation of protesters, employed to delegitimise the collective of participants in popular mobilisation, rather than only the few who engaged in high impact protest repertoires (and the four people with a criminal record).

Another type of protest event is also framed as a security risk – those taking place in airports: in 2006, Iberia workers who occupied one of El Prat’s airport runways were said to have jeopardised public safety by hijacking the airport⁴⁷⁶, and, over ten years later (2017), a strike of airport security workers posed, in the words of the PSOE Minister of Public Works, “*«an important security and public order problem»*”, particularly as the country was on high alert in the antiterrorism prevention scale, factors which justified the government’s decision to replace striking workers with members of the *Guardia Civil*

⁴⁷⁴ «La violencia aumentó muchos grados porque en el cuerpo a cuerpo entre los manifestantes y los agentes se llegaron a utilizar cócteles molotov y bombas de palenque dirigidos contra la policía... los huelguistas se dispersaron por distintos puntos del centro urbano... mientras eran perseguidos por los más de 3000 agentes que formaban lo dispositivo de seguridad... Campo de batalla en el que es huelguistas han convertido esta movilización», *El Mundo*, “Sexto día de batalla campal en Vigo por en convenio del metal”, published on June 5th, 2009 (my translation).

⁴⁷⁵ «No eran unos angelitos los que protagonizaron los incidentes en Madrid tras la manifestación por la huelga. Al menos cuatro de los detenidos... cuentan con antecedentes. Desde desórdenes y desobediencia, pasando por robo con violencia, daños, hasta violencia familiar», *El Mundo*, “Guerrilla urbana en Madrid contra los agentes”, published on November 16th, 2012 (my translation).

⁴⁷⁶ «“Cuando se produce una ocupación de la pista... ello conlleva una situación de riesgo” ... El alcalde de Barcelona... calificó de “intolerable” el “secuestro” de un aeropuerto», *El País*, “La huelga salvaje del personal de tierra de Iberia paraliza el aeropuerto de Barcelona”, published on July 29th, 2006.

(“the Government will assign «the necessary guardia civil members» to guarantee security”)⁴⁷⁷.

Pro-independence protest in Catalonia is also framed as a security risk, in particular after the *Procès* sentence – the demonstrations that followed were described as the “worst security crisis” for the regional police force, with a rise in organised violence perpetrated by the usual suspects: *Indignados* students (and this past the anti-austerity protest cycle, demonstrating that the framing of that social movement as “bad citizens” and as a security risk remained current, but also meshing two of the categories of protesters – activists and youth – more often framed as bad members of the political community), anarchist militants, and independentist revolutionary activists, potentially becoming a “pole of international attraction”. New information technologies – namely the use of telegram and a purportedly created app (“the dystopic app”) – to convene popular mobilisation were described as added risk factors to an increasingly complex security problem⁴⁷⁸.

Finally, participants in the protest event against the realisation of the World Catholic Youth Journey were also described as constituting a security risk, even for a journalist used to cover terrorism: “I have been covering...terrorism for more than 20 years, but it had been many years since I had seen so much blood in the protesters’ eyes... some were terrifying”⁴⁷⁹).

⁴⁷⁷ «huelga es “un problema importante de seguridad y de orden pública”», *El País*, “Puente con huelga indefinida en El Prat”, published on August 14th, 2017 (my translation); «“es obligación del Gobierno garantizar la seguridad y el orden público en el aeropuerto estando España en nivel 4 en alerta antiterrorista”», *El Mundo*, “Calma en El Prat, bronca política”, published on August 15th, 2017.; «El Gobierno destinará «los guardias civiles necesarios» para garantizar la seguridad», *El Mundo*, “La holgada victoria del ‘no’ aboca a El Prat a la huelga”, published on August 14th, 2017 (my translation).

⁴⁷⁸ «Los Mossos d’Esquadra hacen frente ... a la peor crisis de seguridad de su historia», *El País*, “La cúpula de los Mossos critica la falta de apoyo institucional”, published on October 18th, 2019; «La policía detecta un incremento de la violencia organizada en la que se mezclan lo independentismo revolucionario, ácratas y estudiantes indignados... La policía teme que lo conflicto se convierta en un polo de atracción internacional», *El País*, “Los 2.000 jóvenes que incendian Barcelona cada noche”, published on October 20th, 2019; *El País*, “La ‘app’ distopica que controla las protestas”, published on October 17th, 2019 (my translation).

⁴⁷⁹ «Llevo más de 20 años haciendo información sobre seguridad y terrorismo, pero hacía muchos años que no veía tanta inyección de sangre en ojos de manifestantes... algunos daban miedo... radicales, violentos», *El Mundo*, “Cacería contra el peregrino en Sol”, published on August 19th, 2011 (my translation).

As in Portugal, multiple players enact this securitising move in relation to protest in Spain, thereby posing as securitising actors – those involved in formal politics, the police, the Judiciary (absent in the Portuguese case) and the media, which is a more potent securitising player than its Portuguese equivalent.

The Spanish police forces, similar to their Portuguese colleagues, are also the utterers of multiple securitising moves relating to the perceived risk of protest, and, in addition, securitise by similar practices of protest policing as found in the Portuguese case. Nonetheless, one important difference emerges – the fact that Spanish police openly espouse their role as the guardians of Spanish democracy, against protesters who, by contrast, attack it. This role, however, can be contested, as when the Security Councillor of the Madrid City Hall referred to local police agents protesting against the extinction of the local riot police unit (during which members of the police forces chased him) in these terms “*«They reminded me of fascist groups we have seen on other occasions»*”⁴⁸⁰.

The ‘threat to public order’ is the second most important securitising move across the border, and it manifests itself in Portugal in relation to typologies of protesters. The first type of protester that is targeted by this securitising move is youth in the education system (university students and high school pupils) – this was particularly present at the beginning of the series, which records higher levels of student and pupil mobilisation. It would culminate in 2004 when riot police were called to intervene during Coimbra University students’ protests to “*guarantee public order*”, threatened by students “*violent pressure*”⁴⁸¹. The previous year, a student march in Lisbon was limited due to concerns related to the preservation of public order, with students stating that the limitation had severely reduced mobilisation, as they “*«were afraid of a police charge»*”⁴⁸². It was also concerns related to the preservation of public order that resulted in protest policing of a pupils’ strike in 2006 which included locking schools down, with one Regional Education Office issuing a directive “*ordering schools’ executive*

⁴⁸⁰ “*«Me han recordado a los grupos fascistas que hemos visto en otras ocasiones»*”, *El País*, “Barbero: «Reconozco que he tenido miedo»”, published on February 17th, 2016 (my translation).

⁴⁸¹ “*para aguentar a pressão violenta dos estudantes, foram acionados meios de reposição da ordem pública, designadamente do Corpo de Intervenção*», *Público*, “Serenata deu lugar a discurso de protesto em Coimbra”, published on October 22nd, 2004 (my translation).

⁴⁸² “*«Os estudantes têm medo que haja uma carga policial»... Sob o olhar atento da PSP, estudantes desfilaram, incorrendo no crime de desobediência qualificada*», *Público*, “Bloco exige demissão da governadora civil”, published on April 3rd, 2003 (my translation).

councils to call the police and identify the perpetrators" (actions which the pupils considered "*rather intimidating*")⁴⁸³).

Citizens protesting about local issues are also frequently framed as a threat to public order, particularly in connection to one specific medium impact protest repertoire – roadblocks. Such was the case in a protest event for the preservation of a green area, framed as a public order issue by *Público*, whose reporting starts with the sentence "*The roadblock organised by residents almost ended in a brawl... one hundred people have a lot of strength*"⁴⁸⁴ (the same protest event is described as rather uneventful in *Diário de Notícias*⁴⁸⁵), and of another occurrence of the same repertoire in 2006 in relation to road safety, with the involvement of mostly women and children. In this case, riot police were called to dismantle the roadblock and, due to the aggressiveness of protesters, were forced to fire shots into the air⁴⁸⁶.

Finally, the protest event which involved the destruction of transgenic corn (repeatedly mentioned in chapter 5) was also framed as a public order issue, out of place in the Portuguese protest sphere⁴⁸⁷, and described as a simple case for the police ("*the Ministry of Agriculture considered that the protest action should be referred to the police authorities*")⁴⁸⁸ and as an attack on the highest institutions of the state: the PSD, in the opposition, stated that "*it concerned the authority of the State*", which had "*failed to*

⁴⁸³ «a Direcção Regional de Educação de Lisboa enviou um ofício que define o que as escolas devem fazer em caso de encerramento das escolas a cadeado, ordenando os conselhos executivos a chamar a polícia e a identificar os autores da ação... estudantes "com algum receio do que nos possa acontecer"...tomada de posição "bastante intimidatória"», *Público*, "Greve de alunos acaba em queixa ao Ministério Público", published on November 18th, 2006 (my translation).

⁴⁸⁴ «la acabando ao murro o corte de trânsito organizado... por moradores... cem pessoas têm muita força», *Público*, "Corte de estradas em defesa da Quinta das Conchas e dos Lilases", published on May 28th, 2002 (my translation).

⁴⁸⁵ *Diário de Notícias*, "Quinta das Conchas não vai ter estrada", published on March 28th, 2002.

⁴⁸⁶ «PSP entrevistou "com força física mas sem excessos"... os manifestantes reagiram arremessando pedras, "pelo que foi necessário disparar dois tiros de intimidação"», *Público*, "Av. de Ceuta cortada em protesto contra atropelamento de protesto", published on April 29th, 2006.

⁴⁸⁷ «nova forma de combate ecológico, ainda inexistente em Portugal, mas já praticada lá fora», *Diário de Notícias*, "Activistas 'ceifam' campo de milho transgénico em protesto", published on June 4th, 2006.

⁴⁸⁸ «O Ministério da Agricultura considerou que a ação de protesto deve ser remetida para as autoridades policiais», *Diário de Notícias*, "Activistas 'ceifam' campo de milho transgénico em protesto", published on June 4th, 2006 (my translation).

comply with its elementary duty of guaranteeing the security” of the political community⁴⁸⁹.

In the protest events described above, locality emerges as a significant feature: these are relatively small instances of popular mobilisation, circumscribed in small locales, using medium impact protest repertoires, and, on one occasion, described as defying the prerogatives of protest acceptable in the Portuguese democratic community. Securitising moves relative to these protest events, thus, target a small part of the polity with limited social capital and whose political demands can be easily dismissed – participants in the destruction of the cornfield were described as young and foreigner and the two roadblocks in Lisbon were enacted mainly by women, children, and the elderly.

That is not the case with the third type of protest that is occasionally framed as a threat to public order – labour related popular mobilisation, in particular strikes during the anti-austerity protest cycle: the 2011 general strike was described as an instance of *“wild discontent and grievances in public view”*⁴⁹⁰ and the first strike of 2012 was a *“day marked by moments of violence and tension that resulted in several injuries and one arrest”*⁴⁹¹. The second strike (November 14th, 2012) was also framed as a threat to public order by the PSD Prime Minister: *“«red lines were crossed... so sovereign bodies, including the police forces, had the obligation... to maintain public order»”*⁴⁹². And a policemen strike during the anti-austerity protest cycle, in 2011, which included refusal to give out fines, was described by the President of the Security, Criminality and Terrorism Observatory as a threat to public order and a break in policing by consensus: *«It is an invitation to citizens to indiscipline and non-compliance with the law. The symbolic authority of the security forces weakens with these attitudes»*. In this instance,

⁴⁸⁹ «[PSD] diz que está em causa a autoridade do estado... [que] “se demitiu de um dever elementar de garantir a segurança de pessoas e bens”», *Público*, “PSD quer reunião extraordinária da AR com ministro para explicar ação da GNR”, published on October 20th, 2007 (my translation).

⁴⁹⁰ «Descontentamento e afronta à solta nas ruas e noticiários», *Público*, “Um Governo não revela preocupação mas fica muito atento”, published on November 24th, 2011 (my translation).

⁴⁹¹ «Um dia marcado por momentos de violência e de tensão que provocaram vários feridos e uma detenção», *Diário de Notícias*, “Uma greve sem balanço”, published on March 23rd, 2012 (my translation).

⁴⁹² «Para o primeiro-ministro, foram ultrapassadas as “linhas vermelhas” e quando isso acontece “é obrigação dos órgãos de soberania, e neste caso também das polícias, actuarem de forma... a manter a ordem no presente”», *Público*, “Carga policial foi “proporcional” ou houve abusos e ilegalidades?”, published on November 16th, 2012 (my translation).

contrastively, the Police National Director guaranteed that citizen security was not at risk⁴⁹³.

In Spain, youth and new (mostly young) social movements are, again, the object of this securitising move, but this is, as with the previous frame, expressed in stronger terms. During the mobilisation of 2003/2004, students and pupils are said to have coordinated to bring Barcelona to its knees: *“The northern part was taken by 30000 university students and the southern part by 20000 high school pupils”*⁴⁹⁴, and the 2012 pupils demonstrations in Valencia were framed as a threat to public order by the Ministry of the Interior and the police forces, who stated, again, the linkages between protest participants and extremism, but also with the 15-M: Police unions *“assured that the «kids» have been «instrumentalised by... the 15-M and anti-system groups”* and that *“most detainees «belong to groups such as squatters, red skins, sharps and left wing independentist groups”*⁴⁹⁵.

Occupations are often described as a threat to public order, *“«causing social alarm to the general population, defenceless against this type of attack against private property”*⁴⁹⁶, with PP, in 2006, calling for more protest policing and judicial action to handle these protest events (*“«It is a disgrace that there is such permissiveness with this type of action”*⁴⁹⁷), a positioning repeated in 2011, whilst at the helm of regional government (*“«those who think that occupying private property and disturbing public*

⁴⁹³ «Direção nacional... confirma que a “segurança dos cidadãos está sempre garantida”... Presidente do Observatório da Segurança, Criminalidade e Terrorismo lamenta a forma de protesto... “é um convite à indisciplina e ao incumprimento da lei por parte dos cidadãos. A autoridade simbólica das forças de segurança enfraquece com estas atitudes”», *Diário de Notícias*, “Indignação deixou esquadras nos mínimos”, published on September 23rd, 2011 (my translation).

⁴⁹⁴ «estudiantes colapsaron a la ciudad. La mitad norte fue tomada por 30.000 universitarios y la mitad sur por 20.000 alumnos de secundaria», *El País*, “Decenas de miles de estudiantes toman la calle”, published on May 21st, 2003 (my translation).

⁴⁹⁵ «Sindicato policial... aseguró que los “chavales” han sido “utilizados por grupos afines al 15-M y a los antisistema”», *El Mundo*, “Interior habla de «excesos» sin aclararse”, published on February 22nd, 2012 (my translation); «la mayor parte de los arrestados “pertenecen a colectivos como los okupas, red skins, sharps y colectivos independentistas de izquierdas”», *El Mundo*, “Estudiantes delante, políticos detrás”, published on February 23rd, 2012 (my translation).

⁴⁹⁶ «causó... “alarma social en la población por lo que tiene de indefensión en este tipo de ataques contra el patrimonio ajeno”», *El Mundo*, “Los Mossos desalojan por orden del juez la nave ‘okupada’ de Barcelona”, published on December 14th, 2006 (my translation).

⁴⁹⁷ «“una vergüenza que haya permisividad con este tipo de actuaciones”... alarma social en la población por lo que tiene de indefensión en este tipo de ataques contra el patrimonio ajeno”», *El Mundo*, “Los Mossos desalojan por orden del juez la nave ‘okupada’ de Barcelona”, published on December 14th, 2006 (my translation).

order is part of the landscape of Barcelona and Catalonia will no longer be treated with impunity»⁴⁹⁸). And in 2016, when the Barcelona City Hall was negotiating with activists about the demolition of an occupied centre, PP warned that any dialogue would be *“considered as a victory for violence by radicals”*, potentially causing other groups to reproduce those actions, and that the building would become a *“«monument for squatters»”* and an *“«anti-system mausoleum»”*⁴⁹⁹. On this occasion, a political party on the other side of the spectrum reinforced the framing: the PSC (*Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya / Catalonia Socialists Party*) stated that *“«When someone burns a garbage bin, the protest ends, and a public order problem begins»”*⁵⁰⁰.

Popular mobilisation in the anti-austerity protest cycle is also the object of this securitising move, starting with the first *“Acampada”*, when the PSOE Secretary of State for Security preventively *“assured that police forces would intervene if the protest event impacted public order”*⁵⁰¹, and a member of the PP government of the Madrid community demanded the eviction of the protest camp, since he considered the situation had escalated to the point where the square had been *“hijacked”*⁵⁰² – a positioning reiterated by the legal experts inquired by *El Mundo*, who, in addition, advocated for forceful police intervention of a non-violent protest: *“According to the experts consulted by this newspaper, «it is absurd to believe that, because the protesters have not used*

⁴⁹⁸ *«“se ha acabado la impunidad con quienes piensan que ocupar propiedades privadas y alterar el orden público forma parte del paisaje de Barcelona y de Cataluña”», El Mundo, “El ‘Govern’ de Mas emplea mano dura con los ‘okupas”*, published on January 24th, 2011 (my translation).

⁴⁹⁹ *«El líder municipal del PP... advirtió a [mayor] que, si cede en el derribo, los radicales lo verían como una vitoria de sus tesis violentas... el alcalde puede generar un “agravio comparativo” con otros grupos “que no queman contenedores”», El Mundo, “El Ayuntamiento de Barcelona cede en Can Vies”, published on May 31st, 2014; «“un mausoleo antisistema” y “un monumento okupa”», El Mundo, “El desafío de Can Vies salta al centro de Barcelona”, published on June 1st, 2014 (my translation).*

⁵⁰⁰ *«“Cuando se quema un contenedor se acaba la reivindicación y empieza un problema de orden público”», El País, “Iceta reprocha al exregidor que «echara dinero» en el local”, published on May 27th, 2016 (my translation).*

⁵⁰¹ *«El secretario de Estado de Seguridad... aseguró que las fuerzas de seguridad “tienen la obligación de actuar si hay afectación al orden público”», El País, “La izquierda intenta captar el voto de los indignados”, published on May 18th, 2011.*

⁵⁰² *«El consejero en funciones de Presidencia, Justicia e Interior de la Comunidad de Madrid reclamó ayer al ministro del Interior... que actúe contra la ocupación de la Puerta del Sol ya que la situación ha “degenerado” y la zona se encuentra “secuestrada”», El Mundo, “Aguirre pide a Interior que desaloje la Puerta del Sol”, published on May 28th, 2011.*

violence, public order is not being altered»... «the Police must evacuate, resorting to force if necessary»”⁵⁰³.

Police intervention would put a stop to the attempt to revamp the “*Acampada Sol*” in August that year, with the Presidency Minister arguing that the decision had been made in order to stop the 15-M movement from becoming a public order problem⁵⁰⁴, and PP putting its full support behind protest policing, presenting it as a dichotomous choice with an obvious answer: “*One must support either the State Security Forces or the Indignados, who are the ones bringing riots to our streets... We support the action of the police forces because they are in charge of guaranteeing public order*”⁵⁰⁵.

The year after, the first anniversary of the protest camp was also projected as a threat to public order, with the government mandating that activists leave the Madrid square before 10 pm, an order openly challenged by protesters, resulting in forceful police intervention with several detainees, risking prison sentences whose length would depend on their “*criminal records. One had damages, attacks on authority, injuries, robbery, theft, threats, home invasion and sexual abuse on the record*”⁵⁰⁶. The mention of this vast criminal record is not innocent, strategically placed to highlight the dangerousness of – all – protesters and contributing to their criminalisation. It is also demonstrative of the media’s active role in constituting penal populism (Gordillo, 2013,

⁵⁰³ «Según los expertos consultados por este diario, “es absurdo creer que, porque los manifestantes no hayan empleado la violencia, no se esté alterando el orden público”... “la Policía debe desalojar, recurriendo a la fuerza si es preciso”», *El Mundo*, “«El derecho a la indignación es de todos, no sólo de unos pocos», published on May 28th, 2012 (my translation).

⁵⁰⁴ «El ministro de la Presidencia... defendió que lo peor que le puede pasar a [15-M] es convertirse en un problema de orden pública», *El Mundo*, “El Gobierno avala la acción policial contra el 15-M”, published on August 7th, 2011.

⁵⁰⁵ «“hay que respaldar a las Fuerzas y Cuerpos de Seguridad del Estado o a los indignados, que son los que han armado la rebuelta en la calle... Respaldamos la acción de la Policía, porque ésta defiende el orden”», *El Mundo*, “El Gobierno avala la acción policial contra el 15-M”, published on August 7th, 2011 (my translation).

⁵⁰⁶ «a las 22.00 horas, la Puerta del Sol indignada se saltaba la prohibición de permanecer en el lugar impuesta por la delegada del Gobierno... cuyo permiso iba de las 12.00 horas a las 22.00. A medianoche, los manifestantes hicieron el grito mudo desafiando la prohibición», *El Mundo*, “El Gobierno frena la ocupación de Sol”, published on May 14th, 2012; «El Código Penal prevé de dos a cuatro años por atentado a la autoridad... La gravedad de las penas dependerá de los antecedentes penales de los detenidos. Uno de ellos los tiene por daños, atentado a la autoridad, lesiones, robo, hurto, amenazas, allanamiento de morada y abusos sexuales», *El Mundo*, “Los detenidos serán acusados de delitos con pena de cárcel”, published on May 14th, 2012 (my translation).

p. 62) and another instance of the strategic use of gender based violence to signify the dangerousness of protesters by the Spanish media (namely, *El Mundo*).

The criminalisation of the movement had previously been uttered, for example referring to 2011 occupations of vacant buildings to house people who had lost their homes by *Indignados*, described at the beginning of an article in *El Mundo* through a metaphor often used to refer to the mafia, thus effectively equating the protest movement with organised crime: “*Like an octopus with infinite tentacles. Indignados... managed to paralyse Barcelona*”⁵⁰⁷.

Unsurprisingly, “*escraches*” were also framed as a threat to public order, particularly as their frequency intensified – according to *El Mundo*, “*both the Police and Partido Popular fear that these episodes... will degenerate into an uncontrollable public order situation*”⁵⁰⁸. Finally, some of the protest events at parliament galleries were also securitised via this move – for example, pro-Saharawi activists were accused of the crime of seriously disturbing public order⁵⁰⁹.

This securitising move, thus, occurs with variations across the border. In Portugal, it is present mainly in relation to protesters deemed young or to citizens protesting local issues, and to medium impact protest repertoires, in smaller protest events, with limited visibility – the exception would be strikes during the anti-austerity protest cycle. This move (as any securitising move) is, however, much less frequently uttered than in the neighbouring country.

In Spain, youth is the most significant target of this securitising move, be it protesting the education system, be it in relation to local issues, when they use one specific repertoire – occupations. But it is during the anti-austerity protest cycle that the securitising move gains traction, associated with newly created protest actors using innovative protest repertoires (“*Acampadas*”, “*Rodea al Congreso*”, “*escraches*”) and

⁵⁰⁷ «*Como un pulpo de infinitos tentáculos. Los indignados... consiguieron paralizar Barcelona*», *El Mundo*, “La marcha de Barcelona acaba con la ‘okupación’ de pisos y un hospital”, published on October 16th, 2011 (my translation).

⁵⁰⁸ «*Tanto desde la Policía como desde las fijas populares temen que alguno de estos episodios... degeneren en una situación incontrolable de orden público*», *El Mundo*, “Más de una veintena de escraches al PP”, published on April 7th, 2013 (my translation).

⁵⁰⁹ «*acusados de un delito de alteración grave del orden público*», *El País*, “Detenidos por interrumpir el pleno con gritos prosaharauis”, published on December 3rd, 2010.

convening channels, and expressed through a variety of securitisation mechanisms, including the criminalisation of protesters, and with the media – mainly *El Mundo* – acting as an important securitising actor, along with the police and actors in formal politics – and the particular role of PP emerges with significance (although the PSOE government at the beginning of the protest cycle also articulated this securitising move, inclusively prior to protest events).

The ‘threat to the democratic polity’ securitising move – the third most common securitising move in Portugal and Spain – occurs in the first country through the securitisation mechanism of dislocation of the protest target, with instances of street politics aimed at different targets being reframed by the targets themselves or by other vested actors as a threat to the whole democratic community. That was the case with the 2003 assault of a PS politician in Felgueiras (mentioned in the previous chapter), when the President of the Republic stated that “*security forces exist «precisely to prevent things as ugly from a democratic point of view» as those that occurred in Felgueiras*”⁵¹⁰ and of the Coimbra University students protest campaign, described as an attack on the democratic rule of law by university professors who lodged a plaint against protesters, arguing they did not wish to live in a failed State⁵¹¹. *Público*’s editor-in-chief, in addition, considered it as an attack on democratic freedoms and asked the question: “*Is Alta de Coimbra a place outside the laws of the Republic, where these do not apply and where no one has the strength, will or authority to apply them?*”⁵¹².

Judiciary and armed forces protest events are also framed as a threat to the democratic polity through the same mechanism – a 2005 week-long strike of the judiciary was framed by the government as an attempt to capture functions of the sovereign state⁵¹³,

⁵¹⁰ «*As forças de segurança existem “precisamente para evitar coisas tão feias do ponto de vista democrático” como as que ocorreram em Felgueiras*», *Público*, “PS quer expulsar Fátima Felgueiras”, published on May 12th, 2003 (my translation).

⁵¹¹ «*Participação [ao tribunal] foi feita “em nome do Estado de Direito democrático... “Não quero viver num Estado falhado”*», *Público*, “Professores de Coimbra movem queixas-crime contra estudantes”, published on November 11th, 2003.

⁵¹² «*Será que a Alta de Coimbra é um espaço fora das leis da República, onde estas não se aplicam e onde ninguém tem força, ou vontade ou autoridade para as fazer aplicar?*», *Público*, “A liberdade sob sequestro”, published on November 11th, 2003 (my translation).

⁵¹³ «*Para o governo, “nenhum grupo tem o direito de capturar durante uma semana o exercício de funções soberanas do Estado de Direito”*», *Público*, “Governo diz que greve captura funções soberanas”, published on September 30th, 2005.

and a (previously mentioned) armed forces protest of 2006 was framed as a threat to the cohesion of the Armed Forces themselves⁵¹⁴, and consequently, to their ability to guarantee the security of the State.

This securitising move was also uttered during the anti-austerity protest cycle, with protesters framed as enemies of the political community by PSD, whilst in government: “*«The real enemy of the country is those who don't let others work»*”⁵¹⁵; and the President of the Republic stated, on November 14th, 2012: “*«These are people... who want to destroy society and that is why the police cannot fail to garner the full support of the Portuguese citizenry»*”⁵¹⁶, thereby removing any possibility of discussing the legitimacy of forceful protest policing prior, during, and after the protest event, and creating the same dichotomy uttered by PP in Spain, with the same obvious choice – all members of the polity must fully support the police forces against people described as potential destroyers of society.

Lastly, this frame is also present during the dangerous load truck drivers protest campaign of 2019, when the President of the Republic asked that “*«the values and principles of democratic rule of law be safeguarded, as well as fundamental rights, security, and constitutional normality»*”⁵¹⁷, thereby equating security with a constitutional right, that was being put at risk due to the strike. It is, thus, actors in formal politics – members of the government or, with particular salience, the President of the Republic – who are the main utterers of this securitising move in the Portuguese public sphere.

The same securitisation mechanism of target dislocation is found in Spanish protest. It also applies to strikes of the police forces – the 2007 demonstration of *Guardia Civil*, for

⁵¹⁴ «O protesto dos militares foi proibido pelo Governo Civil e teve a oposição do Presidente da República, do Governo e das chefias castrenses, que disseram estar em risco a coesão e a unidade das Forças Armadas», *Diário de Notícias*, “Militares elogiam chefias e desafiam governo a tirar ilações do protesto”, published on November 24th, 2006.

⁵¹⁵ “O verdadeiro inimigo do país é quem não deixa os outros trabalhar”, *Público*, “Bancadas da direita têm «ódio e medo» da greve geral, diz PCP”, published on March 22nd, 2012 (my translation).

⁵¹⁶ “São pessoas... que querem destruir a sociedade e por isso a polícia não pode deixar de ter todo o apoio dos portugueses”, *Público*, “Carga policial foi “proporcional” ou houve abusos e ilegalidades?”, published on November 16th, 2012 (my translation).

⁵¹⁷ “pedindo que fossem “salvaguardados os valores e princípios do Estado de direito democrático e, neles, os direitos fundamentais, a segurança e a normalidade constitucional”, *Público*, “Governo recorre às forças armadas para repor mínimos nos transportes”, published on August 13th, 2019 (my translation).

example, was considered a serious offence against the State (used as a signifier for the polity):

“The first precept considers it serious that police officers, who have sworn to defend and respect the institutions, skip «their duty of political neutrality, carrying out disrespectful acts or publicly issuing expressions contrary to the constitutional order, to the symbols, institutions or authorities of the State, of the autonomous communities or local corporations, to parliamentarians or representatives of other States»”⁵¹⁸.

In addition, a judiciary strike of 2008 against what was perceived as government interference threatening its independence was also framed as a direct attack on the State by the government, with a nuance meant to increase the risk perceived by the political community: in the words of the PSOE Minister of Justice, published in the cover of *El País*, and repeated in the article, “«*In rule of law, if there is such serious negligence [the non-execution of a sentence against a paedophile], the mechanisms work and a sanction is imposed*»”⁵¹⁹ (emphasis added). On the other side of the electoral spectrum, 2010 protest events against the judiciary’s decision to remove a judge were considered by the PP as an attack on democracy itself⁵²⁰.

Protest during the anti-austerity protest cycle was also framed as a threat to the democratic polity – as previously mentioned, that was the case of the first “*Aturem el parlament*” in Barcelona, condemned by *Ciutadans* as an attack on democracy⁵²¹), as well as by the Catalan Interior Minister: “«*Serious crimes were committed, very serious in a democracy*»... citing parliamentary obstruction and aggression against deputies in articles 494 and 498 of the Penal Code”⁵²²). A subsequent “*Rodea al Congreso*” protest

⁵¹⁸ «El primer precepto considera grave el que los guardias, que han jurado defender y respetar las instituciones, se salten “su deber de neutralidad política, realizando actos irrespetuosos o emitiendo públicamente expresiones contrarias al ordenamiento constitucional, a los símbolos, instituciones o autoridades del Estado, de las comunidades autónomas o de las corporaciones locales, a los parlamentarios o a los representantes de otros Estados”», *El País*, “Interior estudia sancionar a los convocantes de la manifestación de guardias civiles”, published on January 25th, 2007 (my translation).

⁵¹⁹ «“En el Estado de derecho, si hay una negligencia tan grave [la no ejecución de una sentencia contra un pederasta], funcionan los mecanismos y se sanciona”», *El País*, “El Gobierno planta cara al pulso de los jueces: “No son intocables”, published on October 22nd, 2008 (my translation).

⁵²⁰ *El Mundo*, “Un atentado contra la democracia”, published on April 14th, 2010.

⁵²¹ «“Hacerlo de forma violenta, contra la ley y la propia democracia es intolerable”», *El Mundo*, “En Lecheras”, published on June 16th, 2011 (my translation).

⁵²² «“Se cometieron delitos graves, muy graves en una democracia”, dijo, citando la obstrucción parlamentaria y la agresión a diputados de los artículos 494 y 498 del Código Penal», *El Mundo*, “Un operativo «insuficiente y discriminatorio”», published on June 17th, 2011 (my translation).

event was similarly framed, with the general director of the national police describing it as an attack on democracy, which the police forces were actively defending.

These are, however, not the only protest repertoires employed during the anti-austerity protest cycle which were framed as a threat to the democratic policy, as the 2013 demonstration convened by hundreds of civil society organisations (mentioned in the previous chapter) was similarly framed by a PP spokesperson as a “*«tsunami against liberties»*”⁵²³. This is demonstrative of frames – or securitising moves – gaining salience and expanding the discursive space, enlarging the locutory spectrum of terms which are considered acceptable and pertinent to describe a protest event. If the protest at the Catalan parliament can indeed be considered as a threat to the democratic polity (and as a threat to public order and a security risk), that was not the case with the 2013 anti-austerity march, which constituted a clear democratic practice and a rather normal protest event. The same securitising move could be appealed to by PP to frame this last instance of popular mobilisation as posing an equivalent security problem / existential threat, precisely because the discursive arena had been expanded to accommodate this type of utterance, which, ultimately, framed a protest event that was simultaneously delegitimised and depoliticised, as a risk and a threat to the security referents (the political community and its safety).

“*Escraches*”, too, were described by PP as attacks on popular sovereignty – and the party warned that protesters would eventually target democratic freedoms (namely freedom of expression and freedom of the press), and the independence of the Judiciary – “*«Tomorrow they will do it to judges and the next day to journalists»*”⁵²⁴. The securitising move, here, expands into the future, as such protest events need to be contained not only on account of their immediate effects but also because of the risk they pose to the future of the polity. Again, the police stepped in, stating that their role in policing such protest events was to guarantee democracy: “*The director of the Police... has announced that he will take «all necessary measures» so that no citizen or political official suffers*

⁵²³ “*«un tsunami contra las libertades»*”, *El País*, “Como los golpistas del 23-F”, published on February 24th, 2013 (my translation).

⁵²⁴ “*ataques a “representantes de la soberanía popular... Mañana lo harán con los jueces y pasado con los periodistas»*” *El País*, “Cuando la protesta llega hasta la puerta de casa”, published on March 23rd, 2013 (my translation).

attacks during protests in front of their offices or homes, since this «perverts the democratic system»»⁵²⁵.

Other protest events were, too, securitised by being equated to an attack on the democratic polity, in particular a 2010 unauthorised air traffic controllers strike, framed by the PSOE government as an attack on Spain itself, and deserving of the highest punishment (in the words of both the Justice and Public Works Ministers, “*«the full weight of the law will fall on them»»⁵²⁶*), which, in this case, included being charged with sedition: “*«a group of citizens has abandoned their obligations and, taking a stand against the State, has seriously harmed...Spain itself...Those guilty must lose all hope against the Spanish people and the Constitution»»⁵²⁷*. This statement is also evidence of the criminalisation of protesters, who are deemed guilty of a serious offence before the Spanish citizenry, condemned in the public sphere before being presented to a court of law. What is more, in order to contain the strike, the PSOE government declared a “state of alarm” (the first time this legal figure was appealed to since the Transition), a mechanism predicted in the Constitution (article 116) that corresponds to an attenuated state of exception. The state of alarm created the lawful conditions for governmental actors to militarise air traffic control (members of the military were called upon to replace striking workers) and invoke the Military Penal Code to charge protesters with the crimes of disobedience (article 44) and sedition (article 38), which carry potential prison sentences. The harsh discourse, part of the penal populism tendency (Gordillo, 2013, p. 62) describing the protest as an attack on the country, then, corresponded, then, in practice, to a deployment of the actors who would be called upon in a war scenario – the armed forces – creating a situation of full securitisation.

⁵²⁵ «*El director de la Policía... ha anunciado que tomará “todas las medidas necesarias» para que ningún ciudadano ni cargo político sufra agresiones durante protestas ante sus trabajos o domicilios, pues eso «pervierte el sistema democrático»»*, *El País*, “La delegada del Gobierno en Madrid vincula a los antidesahucio con proetarras”, published on March 26th, 2013 (my translation).

⁵²⁶ «*“Caerá sobre ellos todo el peso de la ley”»*, *El País*, “Los controladores no serán juzgados con el Código Penal Militar”, published on December 7th, 2010 (my translation).

⁵²⁷ «*“Un grupo de ciudadanos ha abandonado sus obligaciones y, echando un pulso al Estado, ha perjudicado gravemente...a España misma... Los culpables deben perder toda esperanza frente a los españoles y la Constitución”»*, *El Mundo*, “Bono: «Quienes recurren al chantaje para defender privilegios son los culpables»”, published on December 7th, 2010 (my translation); *El País*, “El Gobierno amenaza con acusar de sedición a quienes desobedezcan”, published on December 4th, 2012.

As expected (and cued in the previous chapter), pro-independence protest is also framed as a threat to the democratic polity. Prior to the Catalanian crisis, this was achieved through the same mechanism of target dislocation in a specific type of protest event: independentist, republican youth burning pictures of the monarch and of the royal family, framed as an attack on the State, and, by consequence, on the whole citizenry (*“serious insults to the highest representation of the State”; “attack on the symbols of the State”*⁵²⁸), passive of criminalisation through direct referencing of the Penal Code articles penalising such behaviours (*“article 543 establishes: «Offences or outrages in words, in writing or in actions against Spain, its autonomous communities or its symbols or emblems, carried out publicly, will be punished with a fine of seven to 12 months»”*) and through reporting that other protesters had been previously convicted of that crime (*“Last July, two young independence supporters... were sentenced to pay a fine of 2700 euros for burning a photo of the King”*)⁵²⁹. In 2017, the Catalanian referendum, naturally, was also framed as an attack on the democratic polity, with the Prime Minister commenting that protest policing during the day was proof that the State had the ability to defend itself⁵³⁰ from such an assault.

Once again, this securitising move is more frequently uttered to frame Spanish protest, although the same mechanism of target dislocation is found across the border. Commonly, too, this is frequently voiced with regard to the anti-austerity protest cycle, which is unsurprising, given the scale and repetitiveness of popular mobilisation occurring most frequently at the seat(s) of government. It is also found in both countries in relation to popular mobilisation of the judiciary and of police forces, said to be betraying their mission – but these actors are also utterers of this securitising move,

⁵²⁸ *«injurias graves a la más alta representación del Estado»*, *El Mundo*, “El Gobierno condena la quema de la imagen del Rey para cree pue se trata de un incidente «menor»”, published on September 15th, 2007 (my translation); *«ataque a los símbolos del Estado»*, *El Mundo*, “Grupos de independentistas queman fotos del Rey mientras éste apela a la «unidad»”, published on September 14th, 2007 (my translation).

⁵²⁹ *«delito en el Código Penal, cuyo artículo 543 establece: “Las ofensas o ultrajes de palabra, por escrito o de hecho a España, a sus comunidades autónomas o a sus símbolos o emblemas, efectuados con publicidad, se castigarán con la pena de multa de siete a 12 meses”... El pasado mes de julio, dos jóvenes independentistas... fueron condenados a pagar una multa de 2.700 euros por quemar una foto del Rey»*, *El Mundo*, “La ‘Diada’ culmina con la quema de una foto de los Reyes y de varias banderas de España”, published on September 12th, 2008 (my translation).

⁵³⁰ *«“Se ha demostrado que el Estado tiene recursos para defenderse”»*, *El Mundo*, “Rajoy recurre a la fuerza policial para descabezar el referéndum ilegal”, published on October 2nd, 2017 (my translation).

specifically in Spain. In addition, here, as expected, independentist protest events are also the target of this securitising move.

The last securitising move present in both countries is the one equating protest with a threat to social cohesion and is the least prevalent frame across the border. In Portugal, this occurs exclusively in relation to labour conflicts, with unions being identified as the architects of the threat:

- During a doctors' strike in 2004, the Minister of Health stated that *“«labour unions are imbued with a guerrilla spirit»”, adopting an “«uniquely destructive and disinforming stance»”*⁵³¹,
- The government stated that the 2007 TAP pilots' strike was harmful and admitted suing the labour union (without specifying the potential crime committed)⁵³²,
- The dangerous loads truck drivers' strikes of 2019 were described as a risk to social cohesion, for threatening essential features of daily life, including food security (*“There is still no shortage of essential products on supermarket shelves, but logistics experts say everything could fall apart «in a matter of hours»... «we will reach the point where there will be a lack of basic amenities on supermarket shelves»”*) and access to emergency healthcare (*“Public authorities' first concern must necessarily be related to public health and access to hospitals”*)⁵³³,
- That same year's nurses' strikes were said by the government to *“have put the lives and health of thousands of citizens at risk”*, including of those members of the political community suffering from cancer⁵³⁴.

⁵³¹ *«os sindicatos estão imbuídos de um espírito de guerrilha... postura unicamente destrutiva e desinformadora»*, *Público*, “Ministro defense que «só os utentes ficam a perder»”, published on February, 1st, 2003 (my translation).

⁵³² *«greve inoportuna e prejudicial”... e admitiu mesmo processar o sindicato»*, *Diário de Notícias*, “Greves vão custar à Tap 6 milhões”, published on October 24th, 2007.

⁵³³ *«Bens essenciais ainda não faltam nas prateleiras dos supermercados, mas especialistas em logística dizem que tudo se pode desmoronar “numa questão de horas”... “vamos chegar ao ponto de faltarem bens de primeira necessidade nas prateleiras dos supermercados”... a primeira preocupação das autoridades tem necessariamente de estar relacionada com a saúde pública, os acessos aos hospitais»*, *Público*, “Greve provoca efeito dominó «crítico» na economia”, published on April 18th, 2019 (my translation).

⁵³⁴ *«sucessão de greves prolongadas que “colocaram em risco a vida e a saúde de milhares de cidadãos”»*, *Público*, “Greve adiou cirurgias de doentes com cancro em estado avançado”, published on February 21st, 2019 (my translation).

In Spain, labour conflict is also framed as a threat to social cohesion (the Cadiz shipbuilders' strike was said to affect over half of the city's population, putting their access to healthcare, education, and daily commodities at risk⁵³⁵; the 2010 air traffic controllers' strike was said to have "*seriously harmed many Spanish citizens*" by the Congress President⁵³⁶), but this is not the most current occurrence of this securitising move, which is, in fact, often used most frequently in partisan competition:

- Demonstrations in 2001 against the stationing of the British nuclear submarine were described by PP as a display of great irresponsibility on the part of PSOE, causing unnecessary social alarm⁵³⁷.
- The same accusation was uttered during Labour Day in 2012: "*The PP accuses the socialists of creating social alarm for mobilising against the Government... generation of «distrust and social alarm... the Left intends to create fear in Spanish society»*"⁵³⁸.
- A 2005 demonstration for water management in Murcia was described by the local PSOE as a "*«grave mistake for the future of the Region, for it placed it on a direct collision course with the Spanish Government»*"⁵³⁹.
- And PP's demonstrations against the PSOE's government on account of its policy towards the dissolution of ETA were criticised by the General State Attorney, who "*censured PP for convening a demonstration for «political reasons» when*

⁵³⁵ «La Bahía tiene cerca de 700.000 habitantes. En torno a unos 400.000 padecen directa o indirectamente estas protestas... El cerco a Cádiz afecta especialmente a las ambulancias y a los enfermos graves, que son evacuados de Cádiz en helicóptero; a los estudiantes del campus universitario de Puerto Real; a los transportistas, que no entregan las mercancías», *El País*, "El sitio de Cádiz", published on September 15th, 2004.

⁵³⁶ «"Un grupo de ciudadanos... ha perjudicado gravemente a muchos españoles"», *El Mundo*, "Bono: «Quienes recurren al chantaje para defender privilegios son los culpables»", published on December 7th, 2010 (my translation).

⁵³⁷ «la gran irresponsabilidad del presidente de la comunidad, que está procurando con su presencia una alarma que consideramos innecesaria», *El Mundo*, "El PP dice que sólo es «un mitin del PSOE»", published on January 21st, 2001.

⁵³⁸ «generación de "desconfianza y alarma social"... la izquierda política pretende "azuzar el miedo en la sociedad española"», *El País*, "El PP acusa a los socialistas de crear alarma social por movilizarse contra el Gobierno", published on May 2nd, 2012 (my translation).

⁵³⁹ «"la manifestación "es un grave error para el futuro de la Región, porque la enfrenta con el Gobierno de España"», *El País*, "El PSOE censura que el PP «busque enfrentar a Murcia con el Gobierno de España»", published on July 15th, 2005 (my translation).

*«there are practically no victims of terrorism»*⁵⁴⁰ – implying that the political party was keeping the terrorism frame alive for political gain.

Pro-independence protest, as expected, was also framed as a threat to social cohesion, with the Catalanian referendum described as a *“shameful journey imposed on Catalan citizens... a defeat for the country, for the interests and rights of all Spaniards... for the future of the system of coexistence”*⁵⁴¹. Defending peaceful coexistence was also an argument used by the Prime Minister during the protest events following the *Procès* sentence: *“«I will not consent that violence is imposed over coexistence»”*⁵⁴² – in both these cases, the Transition is invoked as a discursive instrument constituting the securitising move.

Finally, the Women’s Strike of 2018 was also, initially, framed as an attack on social cohesion by PP, before its change of pace: *“a strike that, in its foundations, intended to end “the western way of life»”*⁵⁴³.

This frame, thus, is used in Portugal exclusively in labour related conflict, with the government acting as the sole securitising actor, but in Spain, this frame is more commonly utilised as a weapon in partisan conflicts related to various issues – including labour, the environment, gender equality, and pro-independence claims.

The securitising move equating protest to terrorism, standing at the vertex of the risk / threat triangle, is only present in Spain, emerging as particularly relevant from the Great Recession onwards. ETA supporters are, firstly, said to have been involved in the high impact protest repertoires occurring during the 2010 general strike (*“Among them, members of a group that called a tribute to ETA collaborator Laura Riera”*⁵⁴⁴) and, in the

⁵⁴⁰ *«El fiscal general del Estado censuró a los populares por convocar una manifestación por “razones políticas” cuando “ya prácticamente no hay víctimas del terrorismo”»*, *El País*, “El fiscal general acusa al PP de usar el terrorismo con fines políticos”, published on March 10th, 2007 (my translation).

⁵⁴¹ *«vergonzante jornada que los ciudadanos de Cataluña se vieron obligados a vivir... derrota para nuestro país, para los intereses y los derechos de todos los españoles... para el futuro del sistema de convivencia»*, *El Mundo*, “Frente a la insurrección, la ley, pero no solo la ley”, published on October 2nd, 2017 (my translation).

⁵⁴² *«“No consentiré que la violencia se imponga a la convivencia”»*, *El País*, “Sánchez: «No consentiré que se imponga la violencia»”, published on October 17th, 2019 (my translation).

⁵⁴³ *«una huelga que en sus fundamentos pretendía terminar con “el modo occidental de vida”»*, *El País*, “El Gobierno no tiene un plan global tras el 8-M”, published on March 10th, 2018 (my translation).

⁵⁴⁴ *«Entre ellos, los miembros de un colectivo que convocó el acto en homenaje a la colaboradora de ETA»*, *El País*, “Los violentos agitan Barcelona”, published on October 1st, 2010 (my translation).

general strike of 2012, protesters (described as “*radical anarchists*”) are said to have used “*kale borroka methods in the centre of the city*”⁵⁴⁵, with “*the PP spokesperson in the Barcelona City Council... demanding that kale borroka anti-terrorist legislation be applied*” to participants in the protest cycle⁵⁴⁶. The education strike of 2012 would also be connected to terrorism when the PP spokesperson in Congress stated that when “*«he was in high school, strikes were organised by... Batasuna*»”⁵⁴⁷.

As with the ‘threat to the democratic polity’ securitising move, this is demonstrative that the terrorism frame can be uttered by those in power to refer to protest events that are very different, in terms of protest repertoires, protest participants, and organisers, with the clear intention of delegitimising, and ultimately criminalising, street politics, by mobilising the polity’s collective memory of the experience of terrorism, through the utterance of discursive tropes that are widely familiar – “*kale borroka*”, *Herri Batasuna*, ETA – serving as thought terminating clichés (Dimitrov *et al.*, 2021) meant to create a negative evaluation of a protest event, its participants and conveners without any critical reflection.

This frame would be repeated in a 2012 protest event against rise in prices in public transportation when three activists pressed the emergency brake buttons in the Madrid subway. Despite the fact that the only consequence of the action was a simple delay of a few minutes, the protest event was equated with terrorism (“*the regional vice president... found certain similarities between the saboteurs and «the agitation or street violence of the kale borroka*»”), and, because of that, framed as a heightened security risk for the citizenry, worthy of the potential prison sentence of one to five years risked by protesters⁵⁴⁸.

⁵⁴⁵ «*La jornada de huelga general en Madrid terminó con 57 detenidos. De ellos, 12 están considerados anarquistas radicales a los que detuvieron utilizando métodos de kale borroka en pleno centro de la ciudad*», *El Mundo*, “Detenidos 12 anarquistas con cócteles molotov”, published on March 31st, 2012 (my translation).

⁵⁴⁶ «*El portavoz del PP en el Ayuntamiento de Barcelona... exigió que se aplique la legislación antiterrorista de la kale borroka a los alborotadores*», *El País*, “La Generalitat pide mano dura contra la «guerrilla urbana»”, published on March 31st, 2012 (my translation).

⁵⁴⁷ «*el portavoz del PP en el Congreso... añadió: "Yo cuando iba al instituto, las huelgas las organizaban los de Batasuna"*», *El País*, “Wert sugiere en plenas protestas que hay margen para recortar más”, published on October 18th, 2012 (my translation).

⁵⁴⁸ «*Los activistas contra el 'tarifazo' podrían enfrentarse a penas de uno a cinco años... El vicepresidente regional... encontró ciertas semejanzas entre los saboteadores y "la agitación o violencia callejera de la*

“Escraches” were also framed as terrorism, with the PAH being the target of the securitising move – in the words of the PP Madrid government delegate, *“the PAH and its leader... seem to be concerned with supporting ETA friendly or pro-ETA groups... groups that have a lot to do with ETA”*, an opinion also shared by an *El Mundo* journalist during a TV emission (*“journalist from El Mundo... accuses activists of supporting terrorists”*) – this allegation, however, was strongly condemned by PSOE, acting, on this occasion, as a desecuritsing actor: *“PSOE considers it «an outrage» to conflate the anti-eviction movement with ETA”*⁵⁴⁹.

And one of the latest events of the protest cycle, a march against cuts in 2014, also had some of its participants equated with terrorists connected to independentist movements, this time from Galicia:

*“The young people who carried out most serious incidents... including the attacks on numerous police officers, are linked to Resistencia Galega, a group... whose members have even been convicted in the National Court for terrorism... they are heirs of the former Exército Guerrilleiro do Pobo Galego Ceibe, a terrorist plot that was dismantled by the State Security Forces”*⁵⁵⁰.

In fact, independentist protest is also frequently framed as terrorism – a 2009 sabotage of a public transmission of a Spanish national team football match (that involved an attack on property, a high impact protest repertoire, as activists set fire to the screen) was described by *El Mundo* as an instance of *“kale borroka”*: the title of the article reads *“‘Kale Borroka’ goes without punishment”*, as the newspaper laments the absence of police intervention during and after the event: *“There were no injuries or arrests. Why*

kale borroka.... pone en riesgo la seguridad de los ciudadanos” ... Los activistas tiraron de los frenos de seguridad de los trenes... lo que impidió durante unos minutos su marcha y provocó leves retrasos», El País, “Tres detenidos por el sabotaje en el metro de Madrid en hora punta”, published on April 27th, 2012 (my translation).

⁵⁴⁹ *«“la PAH y su lideresa últimamente parece que tienen ciertas inquietudes de apoyos a grupos filoetarras o proetarras... A Bildu, a Sortu y a grupos que tienen mucho que ver con el entorno de ETA”... periodista de El Mundo... acusara a los activistas de apoyar a terroristas... PSOE ha considerado “una barbaridad” relacionar al movimiento contra los desahucios con ETA», El País, “La delegada del Gobierno en Madrid vincula a los antidesahucio con proetarras”, published on March 26th, 2013 (my translation).*

⁵⁵⁰ *«Los jóvenes que protagonizaron los incidentes más graves... incluyendo los ataques a numerosos policías, están vinculados con Resistencia Galega, un grupo... cuyos integrantes han sido incluso condenados en la Audiencia nacional por terrorismo... son herederos del antiguo Exército Guerrilleiro do Pobo Galego Ceibe, una trama terrorista que fue desmantelada por las Fuerzas de Seguridad del Estado», El Mundo, “Resistencia Galega está tras los incidentes más graves del 22-M”, published on March 26th, 2014 (my translation).*

*act then? This is how the Mossos understand it, having chosen not to investigate or identify the perpetrators... It does not matter that some 200 people – including a good number of children – had to flee”*⁵⁵¹, and a *Guardia Civil* general who was called to comment on a protest event with limited participation in 2012 in Catalonia, when a few business owners refused to celebrate Spain’s national day by keeping their businesses open, expressed his concerns that these type of actions were the stepping stone for “*a new terrorism*”⁵⁵².

And a “*new terrorism*” was indeed found – or discursively constructed – at the end of the anti-austerity protest cycle, when PP and the hierarchy of the Spanish National Police raised the alarm on the growing risk of “*anarchist terrorism*” in the country, enacted by a new actor – “*Grupos Anarquistas Coordinados* (GAC – Coordinated Anarchist Groups) – precisely composed of those very young people who had actively participated in the anti-austerity protest cycle and in ensuing student mobilisation, and equally framed as radical, anarchists, agitators, and dangerous outsiders to the political community (including some foreign youth). During 2014-2015, the police would deploy extensive means to investigate this newly found terrorist danger, with multiple police operations resulting in a high number of arrests and of people sentenced to preventive detention – as well as in intense media attention. In the end, however, most cases were archived and there were no convictions in those which reached the courts.

Although an analysis of these events is beyond the scope of this work, it is worth noticing that the discursive opportunity structure that allows for the framing of these supposed organisations and activists as terrorists is based on the same discursive strategies and employment of thought-terminating clichés which were frequently used to refer to participants in the anti-austerity protest cycle (and in student mobilisation, mostly in the second half of the series). And the fact that the most common victims at the receiving end of the framing – politically engaged youth, mostly leftist – is no coincidence, and can be interpreted as another way of delegitimising, depoliticising and, ultimately,

⁵⁵¹ «No hubo heridos ni detenidos. Por qué actuar entonces? Así lo entienden los Mossos, que han optado por no investigar ni proceder a la identificación de los responsables... Poco importa que unas 200 personas – incluido un buen número de menores – tuvieron que huir», *El Mundo*, “‘Kale borroka’ sin castigo”, published on June 22nd, 2009 (my translation).

⁵⁵² «Un general teme un nuevo terrorismo», *El Mundo*, “Pocas tiendas y algunos colegios abrieron puertas”, published on October 13th, 2012 (my translation).

securitising the anti-austerity protest movement (or what was left of it, at the end of the protest cycle). But there is also a prescribing function attached to these discursive constructions, which is to signal that informal political action – including any form of direct action repertoire (such as average and high impact forms of collective action) – can and will be framed as illegal, and that participants will reckon with the legitimate consequences of their actions, serving, thus, as a way of the state reaffirming its firm hold on the monopoly of violence.

The public consultation trials that preceded the Catalanian referendum of 2017 were also likened to terrorism: in 2010, it was reported that former members of *Herri Batasuna* had been invited as international electoral observers to that year's referendums⁵⁵³, which was considered another proof of the illegitimacy of the protest, directly connected to an organisation linked to Basque nationalist terrorism. And after the referendum, "*Comitès de Defensa de la República*" were compared to a terrorist group whose members tried to murder the king of Spain in 1925⁵⁵⁴. Participants in the demonstrations following the *Procès* sentence were also framed as criminals and terrorists, described as "*Batasuna-looking gangs*"⁵⁵⁵ – a clear othering mechanism.

Finally, protest events against over-tourism led by pro-independence organisations, whose membership was mostly young people, were also framed as instances of terrorism. The same semantic leap present in the creation of a new type of hate crime ("*tourismphobia*", described in chapter 5), was employed relatively to the "*kale borroka*" signifier, with the creation of the term "*tourism borroka*", used to describe the actions of activist groups in the Balearic Islands and Catalonia – "*tourism borroka: a planned attack against the main economic engine of the Balearic Islands and other autonomous communities*", presented as the result of the "*chronic fascination of Catalan separatism with ETA*", personalised in the "*mimicry, even aesthetic, of the kale borroka typical of*

⁵⁵³ «Nutrida visita de cargos abertzales... tres dirigentes de la formación ilegalizada Batasuna acudieron a Cataluña en calidad de "observadores internacionales de Euskal Herria"», *El Mundo*, "Pinchazo independentista pese al 'Estatut'", published on April 26th, 2010.

⁵⁵⁴ «los CDR arriaron una bandera negra... símbolo del grupo terrorista Bandera Negra. En mayo de 1925, sus miembros intentaron asesinar a Alfonso XIII», *El Mundo*, "Los descontrolados de Torra", published on October 2nd, 2018.

⁵⁵⁵ «cuadrillas de activistas con aspecto batasuno», *El Mundo*, "Muera la inteligencia", published on October 17th, 2019 (my translation).

the Basque Country”⁵⁵⁶. This framing would also be employed by PP: “«Arran and CUP’ satellites... have created an authentic tourism borroka»”⁵⁵⁷.

The securitising move can, naturally, also be found in the Basque Country, in demonstrations and marches for the relocation of ETA prisoners, also framed as terrorism or terrorism adjacent:

- A 2012 demonstration was reminiscent of the glory days of *Herri Batasuna*⁵⁵⁸,
- A 2013 march was said to be a defence of ETA assassins⁵⁵⁹, and
- A 2014 demonstration was reported to be convened by an organisation that had been an integral part of ETA, involved in financing and the apology of terrorism – “It was Herrera, the organisation accused of a crime of integration into ETA, which summoned the demonstration... it was Herrera, accused of two crimes of financing and glorifying terrorism”⁵⁶⁰ (the repetition is intent on aggravating the accusations).

Finally, in this region, student mobilisation at the end of the series was also framed as terrorism, with the term “*kale borroka*” extensively repeated, often in association with another signifier, the word “*abertzale*”: “‘*kale borroka*’ reappeared strongly yesterday in the streets of Vitoria and Pamplona as a weapon of the ‘*abertzale*’ left”; “‘*abertzale*’ left recovers ‘*kale borroka*’”; “‘*Kale borroka*’ against Lomce reform”⁵⁶¹; “*anti-system youth committed... actions similar to ‘kale borroka’*”), and the following rationales:

⁵⁵⁶ «turismo borroka: un ataque planificado contra el principal motor económico de Baleares y de otras comunidades autónomas», *El Mundo*, “La turismofobia llega a Baleares”, published on August 3rd, 2017; «crónica fascinación del separatismo catalán por ETA... mimetismo, incluso estético, de la *kale borroka* propia del País Vasco», *El Mundo*, “Colau y los ‘jemeres’ de Arran”, , published on August 3rd, 2017 (my translation).

⁵⁵⁷ «“los satélites de la CUP, Arran y Endavant... han creado una auténtica turismo borroka”», *El Mundo*, “Colau no tomará ninguna medida contra la turismofobia”, published on August 8th, 2017 (my translation).

⁵⁵⁸ «manifestación multitudinaria que recordó a las décadas de mayor gloria social de Batasuna», *El Mundo*, “Una gran marcha presiona a Rajoy pide la amnistía de los presos de ETA”, published on February 8th, 2012.

⁵⁵⁹ *El Mundo*, “Los socios de CIU en la marcha en pro de los asesinos etarras”, published on January 13th, 2013.

⁵⁶⁰ «Fue Herrera, la organización acusada de un delito de integración en ETA, la que organizó la manifestación... fue Herrera, acusada de dos delitos de financiación y enaltecimiento del terrorismo», *El Mundo*, “Herrera organizó la marcha antes de ser ilegalizada”, published on January 14th, 2014 (my translation).

⁵⁶¹ «La ‘*kale borroka*’ reapareció ayer con fuerza en las calles de Vitoria y Pamplona como arma de la izquierda ‘*abertzale*’», *El Mundo*, “La izquierda ‘*abertzale*’ recupera la ‘*kale borroka*’”, published on March 18th, 2016; *El Mundo*, “‘*Kale borroka*’ contra la Lomce”, published on March 18th, 2016 (my translation).

“A high command of the Ertzaintza warned a few years ago, when ETA’s terrorism was approaching its end, that the street violence that accompanied it, kale borroka, was going to be converted, little by little, into social and anti-capitalist vandalism... The serious incidents recorded yesterday... attest to the veracity of that statement”⁵⁶²;

“Anti-system youth... committed... actions similar to ‘kale borroka’... They espouse anti-system causes, in defence of the working class or against the capitalist bourgeoisie to behave in similar ways to when kale borroka was justified under «the sacred mantle of the motherland»”⁵⁶³.

In addition, this frame is also found in partisan conflict:

- A counter-protest at a *Ciudadanos* rally in the Basque Country is only mentioned to inform that former ETA members were present (*“‘the Butcher of Mondragón’, an etarra who perpetrated seventeen murders, was present at the boycott”⁵⁶⁴*) – a phrase which acts as an ever-present reminder of the crimes committed by the terrorist group, questioning the legitimacy of their presence in the shared public sphere;
- Another counter-protest at a *Ciudadanos* rally was described by the party as an episode of *“kale borroka”* supported by PSOE (which had no direct involvement in the protest event, demonstrating that the framing of Podemos as an illegitimate political actor had been bridged to apply to the main electoral contender on the Spanish left) – an argument repeated by the PP (*«Casado accuses Sánchez of “allying himself with those who justify the ‘kale borroka’”...*

⁵⁶² «Advertía un alto mando de la Ertzaintza hace unos años, cuando el terrorismo de ETA tocaba ya a su ocaso, que la violencia callejera que lo acompañaba, la kale borroka, se iba a reconvertir poco a poco en un vandalismo de corte social y anticapitalista... Los graves incidentes registrados ayer... dan fe de esta deriva», *El Mundo*, “‘Kale borroka’ contra la Lomce”, published on March 18th, 2016 (my translation).

⁵⁶³ «Jóvenes antisistema cometen... actuaciones similares a la ‘kale borroka’... Enarbolan causas antisistema, en defensa de la clase obrera o contra la burguesía capitalista para comportarse de un modo semejante a cuando la kale borroka se justificaba con “el manto sagrado de la patria”», *El País*, “Herederos de la violencia en la universidad vasca”, published on April 7th, 2017 (my translation).

⁵⁶⁴ «El etarra..., ‘el Carnicero de Mondragón’, autor de 17 asesinatos, estuvo en la concentración que intentaba boicotear el acto de Cs», *El Mundo*, “«Venimos sin pedir permiso»”, published on November 5th, 2018 (my translation).

*the PP leader [stated] «either the PSOE is with freedoms or with those of the kale borroka»*⁵⁶⁵.

- And a 2020 assault on a Vox politician was described by the party leader as the work of the extreme left, ETA and its supporters, and the “*abertzale*” left⁵⁶⁶.

The framing of protest events as terrorism or terrorism-adjacent activities has, thus, been a recurring and concerning phenomenon in Spain gaining strength since the anti-austerity protest cycle. It is characterised by the deliberate use of well-known discursive tropes, connected to the recent history of separatist terrorism (“*kale borroka*”, “*Herri Batasuna*”, “*abertzale*” or “*ETA*”), to create a negative evaluation of popular mobilisation. This framing strategy has been applied to a wide range of protests, including those related to public transportation fare hikes, anti-eviction movements, cuts in public services, student demands, over-tourism, and pro-independence demands, demonstrating the far-reaching potential of the securitising move. The framing is, in addition, increasingly appealed to in partisan conflict, with both mainstream and far-right political parties using these accusations to further their agendas and discredit their opponents.

In essence, the use of the terrorism frame to refer to popular mobilisation is a powerful tool employed by those with discursive power to delegitimise, stigmatise, and, ultimately, criminalise street politics, effectively mobilising the collective memory of past terrorist experiences. And, in spite of its clear national flare, the use of this frame in Spain can, ultimately, be related to the populist usage of the term by USA governments and by NATO, as posited by José Gordillo Ferré (2013, p. 88), who highlights the term’s ability to, firstly, generate negative emotions towards the people described as terrorist, and, secondly, and in relation to that, be easily manipulated by mass media to perpetuate those emotions. This emphasizes the need for critical analysis

⁵⁶⁵ «*Casado acusa a Sánchez de “aliarse con los que justifican la ‘kale borroka’”... el líder del PP...: “O el PSOE está con las libertades o con los de la kale borroka”*», *El Mundo*, “El acoso en Rentería, a la Justicia”, published on April 16th, 2019 (my translation).

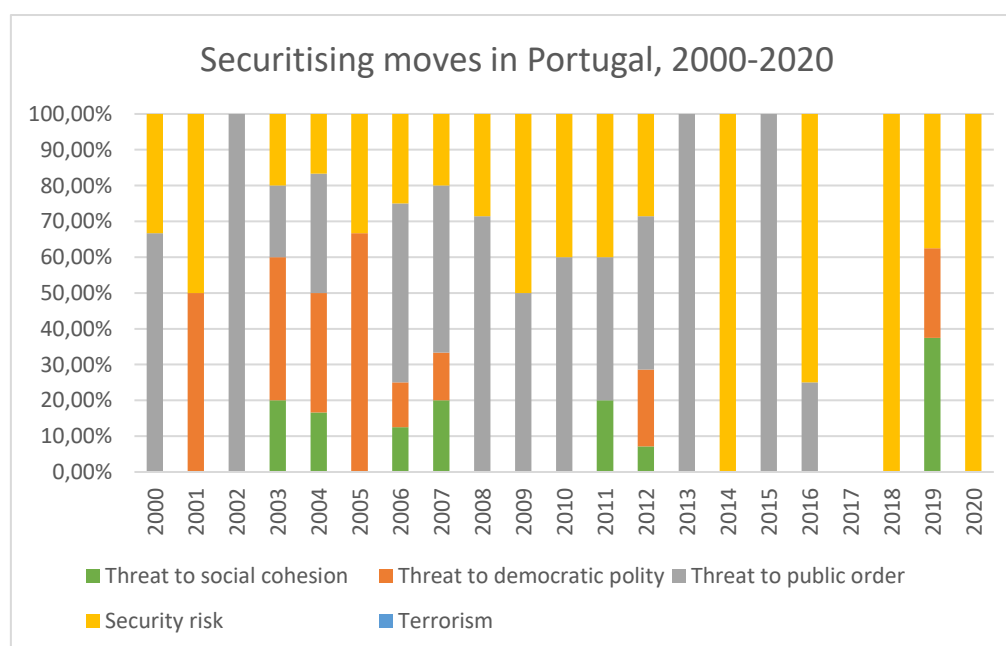
⁵⁶⁶ «*Ese es el discurso de la mafia de ETA*», *El Mundo*, “Una diputada de Vox, herida de una pedrada en un mitin en Sestao”, published on June 27th, 2020; «*la diputada fue atingida por “manifestantes de extrema izquierda, proetarras y abertzales”*», *El País*, “La policía vasca promete blindar los mítines de Vox para evitar agresiones”, published on June 28th, 2020.

and responsible discourse in evaluating and addressing protest movements to ensure a fair and balanced assessment of their objectives and actions.

This investigation, then, finds parallels with Loadenthal's (2018, pp. 36-38, p. 50) conclusions relating to the US context on the "terrorisation of dissent", but it also expands them, as it uncovers the partisan nature of the strategic use of the 'protest is terrorism', with Spanish rightist political parties using it not only to discredit civil society actors involved in street politics, but also their political opponents in the ballots – which may, or may not, have been involved in the protest event in question (their involvement appears, in fact, to be completely un consequential). In those instances, then, actual protest becomes secondary to the framing of protest as terrorism.

Securitising moves are, thus, manifested in diverse ways across the series and between cases, differences that are further clarified with a breakdown of their yearly occurrence. In Portugal (figured 125), the prevalence of the 'security risk' and 'threat to public order' securitising moves is clear, with the first move gaining strength from the end of the anti-austerity protest cycle (being the only securitising move present in 2014, 2019 and 2020, and representing 75% of the total moves in 2016), while remaining significant during the Great Recession (50% in 2009, 40% in 2010-2011, and 30% in 2012).

Figure 125. Securitising moves in Portugal, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

It is precisely the ‘threat to public order’ securitising move that emerges as the most important during the Great Recession (75% already in 2008, 50% in 2009, 60% in 2010, 40% in 2011 and 42.9% 2012, and the only securitising move presence in 2013) – in fact, this frame is the most present in the years prior to the crisis (50% in 2006 and 46.7% in 2007), which were years of cuts in health provision and labour rights, resistance to which was, as indicated above, framed on occasion as a public order issue.

Protest is framed as a threat to the democratic polity primarily in the first third of the series – and particularly between 2003 and 2005 (40% in 2003, 33.3% in 2004 and 66.7% in 2005), corresponding, as previously indicated, to popular mobilisation by students and of the Judiciary. In 2001, when this securitising move also represents 50% of the total moves, it relates to an episode of destruction of ballots, which was, however, described in ambiguous terms (in an article entitled “*The co-incineration of democracy*”, it is said that “*in good humour, the civil governor... recalled that the electoral law does not allow security forces to defend polling stations*”⁵⁶⁷).

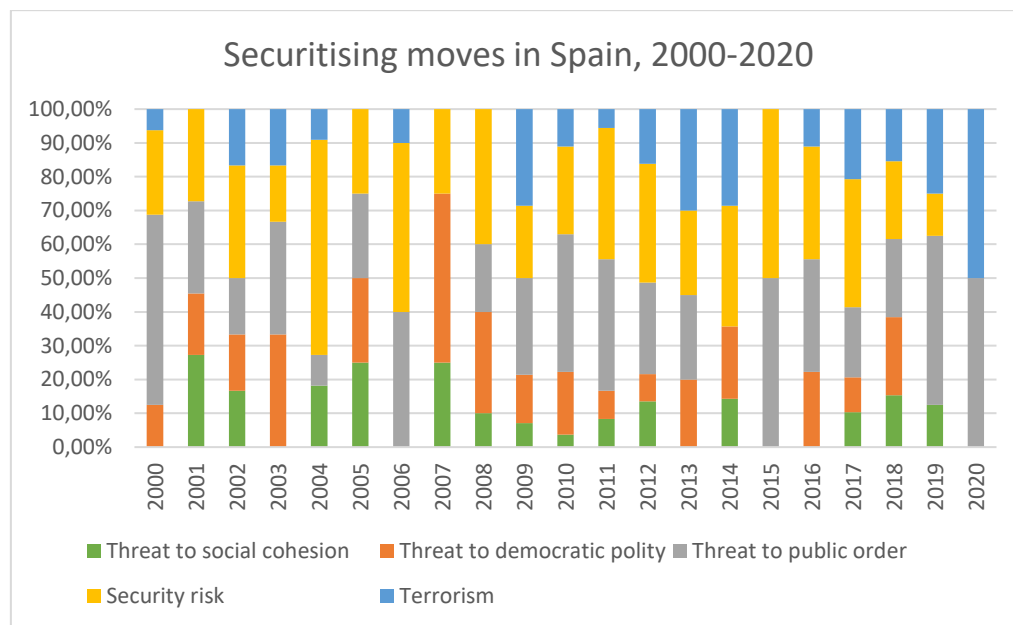
It is also significant that the most escalated securitising moves present in Portugal – ‘protest is a security risk’ and ‘protest is a threat to public order’ represent, in combination, over 50% of all securitising moves reported in the media in fifteen years of the full twenty-one years under analysis and 100% in eleven years, and that is particularly the case from the Great Recession onwards. This is accompanied, as per chapter 4, by an escalation of police intervention in instances of popular mobilisation. Nonetheless, it bodes repeating that securitising moves in Portugal are few and far between, and their presence is not enough to affirm that protest is being securitised in the country. There are, however, securitising tendencies that gain traction, mostly uttered by the parties in government, the main party on the right – the PSD –, and the police forces themselves.

In Spain, (figure 126), the most important securitising move – ‘protest is a security risk’ – is more present in the first half of the series (63.6% in 2004 and 50% in 2006), but it is also important in the years immediately following the anti-austerity protest cycle (50%

⁵⁶⁷ «Bem-humorado, o governador civil... lembrou que a lei eleitoral não permite às forças de segurança defenderem as mesas de voto», *Diário de Notícias*, “A co-incineração da democracia”, published on January 17th, 2001 (my translation).

in 2015 and 37.9% in 2017). At the height of the cycle, though, it is the second most important frame (25.6% in 2010, 38.9% in 2011 and 35.1% in 2012). In the majority of these years, it is the second most important securitising move overall – ‘protest is a threat to public order’ – that occurs more often (28.6% in 2009, 40.7% in 2010, and 38.9% in 2011). This frame is also particularly important towards the end of the series (60% in 2015 and 2020, and 50% in 2019) and in the first year considered here (56.3% in 2000).

Figure 126. Securitising moves in Spain, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

The most intense securitising move – that equating protest with terrorism – occurs mostly in the second half of the series, starting at the beginning of the Great Recession (28.6% in 2009), growing between 2012 and 2014 (16.2% in 2012, 30% in 2013, and 28.6% in 2014), and from the Catalan referendum crisis onwards (20.7% in 2017, 15.4% in 2008, 25% in 2019 and 50% in 2020). There is, then, a tendency to normalise the use of this securitisation tactic as it increasingly becomes an accepted discursive weapon in electoral competition, used by parties on the mainstream and far right to delegitimise and criminalise their political opponents, be it social movements, be it other actors in formal politics. This frame is also consistently used to refer to young activists and young protesters – both inside and outside of the education system – reinforcing their exclusion from the legitimate political sphere.

As for the security move equating protest to a threat to the democratic polity, this occurs more frequently in the first half of the series (33.3% in 2003, 50% in 2007 and 30% in 2008), years during which there were fewer securitising moves in the country.

Lastly, and considering the three securitising moves located at the top part of the risk / threat triangle in combination ('protest is terrorism', 'protest is a security risk' and 'protest is a threat to public order'), it emerges that these represent at least 50% of all securitising moves throughout the series (the exception being 2017), gaining traction from the Great Recession onwards. This is indicative of a discursive escalation on the framing of protest as a security problem / existential threat in the country, a finding that will be solidified by the following analysis of reactions to protest policing.

6.2. Reactions to protest policing in Portugal and Spain

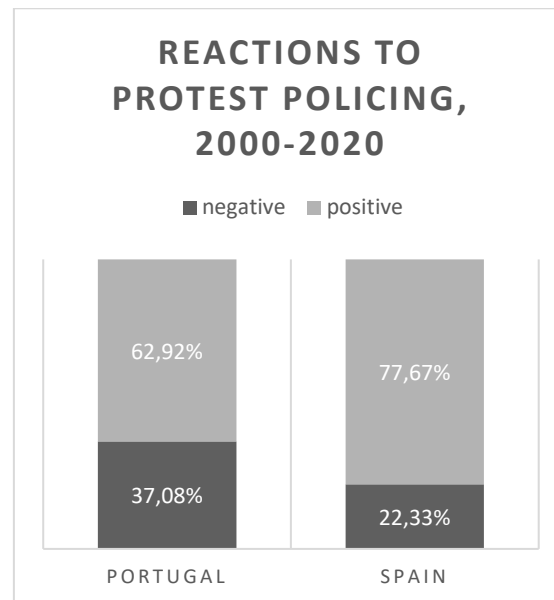
The last section of this chapter is devoted to an analysis of reactions to protest policing in Portugal and Spain at the beginning of the 21st century. Understanding discursive tropes on protest policing provides an added value to this investigation, as police intervention in protest events is, as posited in chapter 4, a proxy for the perceived legality of a protest event. A positive evaluation of protest policing by vested actors can reinforce that message, thus framing protest policing as legitimate (in contrast with a protest event that is not), while a negative view frames protest policing as illegitimate (in contrast with a protest event whose legitimacy is, in this case, reinforced). This work considers positive appraisal of protest policing as an additional securitising move, and, on the contrary, when protest policing is negatively framed, that may constitute a desecuritising move⁵⁶⁸.

Figure 127 presents the division between positive and negative evaluations of protest policing in both countries, demonstrating that this is mostly favourable, but much more so in Spain: almost 80% of reactions approve of protest policing – 77.7% – against 22.3%

⁵⁶⁸ This investigation did not exclude reactions to protest policing uttered by police forces themselves – although it is aware that these are mostly, if not exclusively, positive. The fact that the media allows the police forces room to comment on protest policing is, in and of itself, significant, as that is a strategic choice which contributes to the understanding of legitimacy attributed to popular mobilisation by the media.

of adverse evaluations of police intervention in protest events. In Portugal, less than two thirds of reactions to protest policing frame it positively (62.9%), against 37.1% of negative assessments.

Figure 127. Positive and negative reactions to protest policing in Portugal and Spain, 2000-2020



Own elaboration.

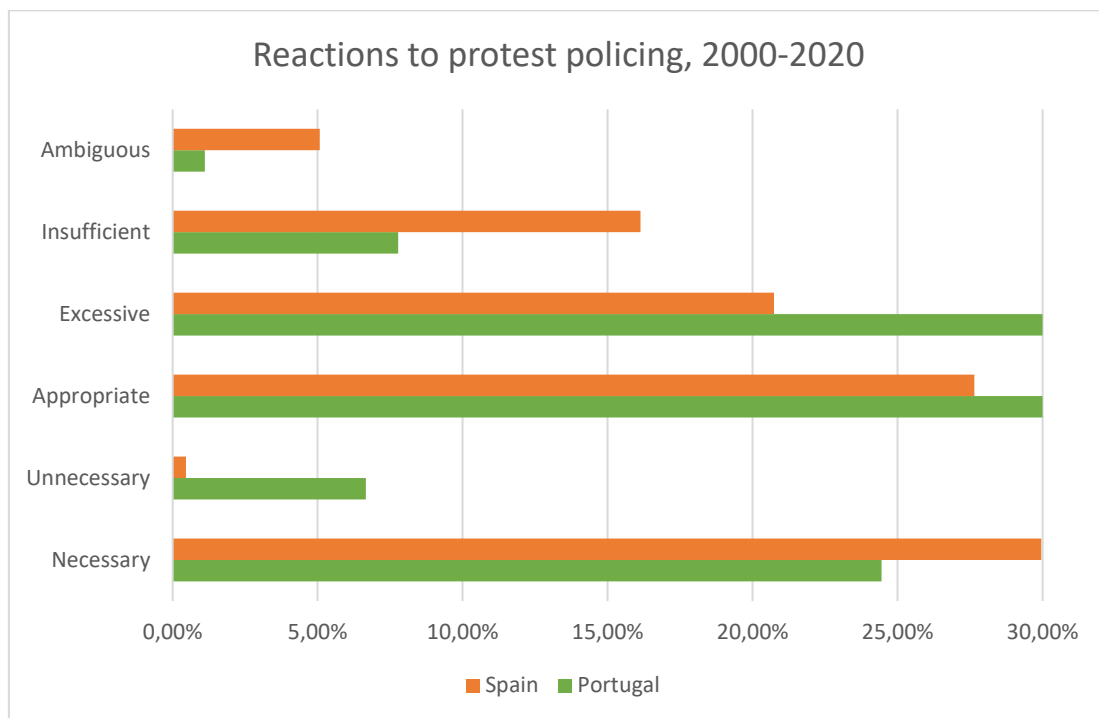
A similar methodology was followed to identify the main discursive tropes used in the evaluation of protest policing, considering the positive / negative dichotomy, with the following emerging:

- Protest policing is necessary (+),
- Protest policing is unnecessary (-),
- Protest policing is appropriate (+),
- Protest policing is excessive (-), and
- Protest policing is insufficient (+).

The last trope captures those occasions when protest policing is described as not able to cope with the number of protesters or the impact of protest repertoires, but also occasions when the need for the increase in numbers of police agents involved in patrolling and actively intervening in protest events, or the intensification of crowd control tactics is explicitly stated. I consider this a positive evaluation of protest policing, given that this trope is most frequently present to validate protest policing and imply – or expressively demand – that more means are devoted to it.

Figure 128 illustrates the presence of these tropes. In Portugal, protest policing is described as appropriate in 30% of reactions by vested actors, a similar proportion to the Spanish case (27.7%). Notably, the same percentage of reactions framing protest policing as excessive was found in Portugal (30%), while this represents 20.7% of the reactions to police intervention in popular mobilisation in Spain. This highlights a substantial concern about the use of force and tactics employed by law enforcement during protests that is more frequently expressed in Portugal, suggesting that there are multiple actors framing protest policing as going beyond what is necessary, potentially raising questions about possible civil liberties infringements.

Figure 128. Reactions to protest policing in Portugal and Spain.



Own elaboration.

Protest policing is framed as necessary in more Spanish cases than Portuguese (30% vs. 24.4%), but the proportions are, again, rather similar. A significant portion of vested actors reacting to protest policing, thus, actively declare the clear need for police presence during popular mobilisation. In contrast, Portuguese actors do, at times (6.7%) consider that protest policing was unnecessary, a trope virtually absent in Spain (0.5%). This indicates a stronger consensus in the last country around the fact that protest policing is generally needed, while in Portugal, this is, at times, contested. What is more, and considering protest policing framed as insufficient, this is also considerably more

current in Spain – here, 16.1 % of the reactions to protest policing describe it as insufficient to contain and control protesters in the public sphere, in contrast with less than half that proportion in Portugal (7.8%)⁵⁶⁹.

In Portugal, police forces often describe their actions in protest policing as appropriate, highlighting their function of public order enforcers, while informing of their non-interference in the unfolding of popular mobilisation:

- GNR attended a protest camp outside a factory by licensed workers in 2003, *“solely to maintain public order, so they did not interfere with the entry and exit of former workers at the company”*⁵⁷⁰,
- A 2008 teachers’ demonstration, reported as illegal, was described by the police as *“«rather normal, with no incidents»”*, with protest policing focusing on garnering information (including the identification of protest participants) for their formal report, with no diligences taken to dismiss the protest⁵⁷¹,
- And, reacting to the 2013 coordinated sit-in at a few Ministries during the anti-austerity protest cycle by labour unionists, PSP guaranteed that *“«[t]he normal policing that already existed will continue. Especially because the actions took place peacefully and without any incident» ... no protester was identified by the PSP, «since the demands took place peacefully and no crime was committed»”*⁵⁷².

In the police’s view, thus, these constitute “normal”, non-eventful protest events, and protest policing is equally framed as normal and non-eventful, with variations, however, on the police tactics employed – which, nonetheless, are not aimed at dismissing or

⁵⁶⁹ A small share of reactions to protest policing is ambiguous, as the opinions voiced on protest policing are neither positive nor negative (1.1% in Portugal and 5.1% in Spain) – these are not considered in this investigation.

⁵⁷⁰ *«Ontem a GNR compareceu no local, mas, segundo fonte policial, apenas para manter a ordem pública, pelo que não interferiram com as entradas e saídas dos ex-trabalhadores na empresa. Durante a noite, os dois efectivos abandonaram o local»*, Público, “Trabalhadores despedidos acampam à porta da Eurovela”, published on May 3rd, 2003 (my translation).

⁵⁷¹ *«os agentes “identificaram pessoas que seriam os organizadores para relatório para o governo civil... tudo normal, sem nenhuns incidentes”»*, Diário de Notícias, “Professores na rua em protesto espontâneo”, published on February 24th 2008 (my translation).

⁵⁷² *«A PSP garante que o policiamento normal aos ministérios não será reforçado... “Continua a existir o policiamento normal que já antes existia. Até porque as acções decorreram de forma pacífica e sem qualquer incidente” ... nenhum manifestante foi identificado pela PSP, “uma vez que as reivindicações ocorreram de forma pacífica e não houve a prática de qualquer crime”»*, Público, “PSP nega reforço nos ministérios e garante que ocupação era ‘expectável’”, published on November 28th, 2013 (my translation).

interfering with the protest event. This regular, business as usual protest policing is neither contrasted nor reinforced by any other vested interest in the media sphere.

Other actors can also attest to the appropriateness of protest policing. There are instances when police intervention is described as appropriate by protest organisers – be it by highlighting the fact that security forces did not interfere with popular mobilisation (on a 2004 drive against tolls, protest organisers stated the police had done “*a good job*”, since they had not placed any obstacles in the way of protesters⁵⁷³), be it by stating that protest policing guaranteed the realisation of the protest event (the organiser of a 2012 taxi drivers slow drive declared: “*«the march went well and without any incident. I would like to thank PSP for their work»*”⁵⁷⁴). Again, appropriate protest policing is, for these actors too, that which does not interfere with or that guarantees the smooth realisation of a protest event. In this sense, police and protest organisers appear, at times, rather close in their evaluation of police control.

Contrastively, the government asserts that protest policing is appropriate, particularly in cases when that may be contested:

- On the 2007 garbage collection workers’ strike, with forceful protest policing, the Minister of the Interior stated that “*«GNR acted within the scope of its powers and with scrupulous respect for the law / rights, freedoms and guarantees, including the right to strike»*”. He further added that any criticism of protest policing was “*«unfair and absolutely unfounded»*”, in response to labour unions’ assessment, describing it as violent, disproportionate, and illegal⁵⁷⁵,
- That same year, when police agents visited a labour union prior to a national teachers’ demonstration, the local civil governor asserted that this was normal protest policing and the PS Prime Minister added: “*«The explanation that the*

⁵⁷³ “*«a GNR e a PSP fizeram um bom trabalho, não colocando qualquer entrave à marcha»*”, *Diário de Notícias*, “Viagem antiportagens no IC1 registou grande adesão popular”, published on November 28th, 2004 (my translation).

⁵⁷⁴ “*«a marcha correu bem e sem incidentes. Agradeço o trabalho feito pela PSP»*”, *Diário de Notícias*, “Taxistas prometem nova concentração nacional em Lisboa”, published on July 3rd, 2012 (my translation).

⁵⁷⁵ “*«a GNR atuou no âmbito das suas competências e no respeito escrupuloso pela lei, pelos direitos, liberdades e garantias, incluindo o direito à greve... críticas à GNR “injustas e absolutamente infundadas”... “carga policial de brutal ilegalidade”... “presença policial ilegal e desproporcionada”*”, *Público*, “GNR acusada de agredir membros do piquete de greve da Valorsul”, published on November, 20th, 2007 (my translation).

*police have given us is that they intended to organise the demonstration... we cannot assume that this is not true»*⁵⁷⁶; this positioning was, however, contested by PCP, that accused the Prime Minister of attempting to criminalise legitimate protest⁵⁷⁷, as well as by PSD, that considered “*«the actions of the police... completely unacceptable»*”, and added that “*the case is all the more serious... because it involves a security force, an institution “whose actions must never be tarnished by partisan objectives, or it may be confused with the political police that democracy has eradicated»*”⁵⁷⁸ (thus referencing the political police of the authoritarian regime).

Considering these last instances, two aspects emerge: the fact that the law – in particular, the rights and freedoms established in the constitution on the right to demonstrate – is invoked to frame protest policing as appropriate, and the fact that appropriateness can also be the focus of partisan competition. In addition, the last utterance demonstrates that the remembrance frame can also be invoked in relation to protest policing, in this case to question its legitimacy.

One eventful event that stands out is the destruction of the transgenic cornfield by activists in 2007 – while the police stated that police intervention had been perfectly appropriate (the press release stated that the police had taken “*«all measures aimed at restoring public order, defending people and property, with respect for the principles of necessity and proportionality»*”), PSD requested an extraordinary audience at the National Parliament with the Interior Minister, so he could explain what they considered as insufficient police control in face of a serious crime (“*«GNR’s passive and complacent behaviour in the face of an act of banditry»*”), a position mirrored by the national farmers confederation: “*«We consider unacceptable the way [GNR] watched the actions*

⁵⁷⁶ «Governadora civil... o procedimento teria sido “normal”... “a visita dos agentes ao sindicato destinava-se a saber a localização do protesto”... Sócrates... “A explicação que a polícia nos dá é que pretendeu organizar a manifestação... não podemos partir do princípio que isso não é verdade”», *Público*, “Ninguém assume ter dado ordens aos agentes da PSD da Covilhã”, published on October 10th, 2007 (my translation).

⁵⁷⁷ *Público*, “Sócrates quer «criminalizar» os protestos legítimos, diz PCP”, published on October 10th, 2007.

⁵⁷⁸ “*«a atuação das forças de segurança... totalmente inadmissível”... E o caso é tanto mais grave... por envolver uma força de segurança, entidade que “não pode nunca ver a sua atuação manchada por desígnios político-partidários, sob pena de se verem confundidas com as polícias políticas que é democracia erradicou»*», *Público*, “Requerida «audição urgente» de Rui Pereira”, published on October 10th, 2007 (my translation).

of a group of individuals»”. And the President of the Republic also declared his hope that the case would be thoroughly investigated, adding that “*«there can be no doubt that the law must be complied with and that whoever has the power to enforce it cannot fail to use it»*”.

On this occasion, too, the dispute over protest policing became a partisan issue, with the Interior Ministry issuing a neutral statement – “*«Security forces have legal obligations and precise instructions, from the Government and their hierarchy, to react to these illicit acts, obeying constitutional principles and taking into account the operational conditions of each case»*”, contrasting with that of PSD, the main party in the opposition, demanding that the Interior Minister clarified “*«whether or not the GNR had acted to prevent a crime»*”⁵⁷⁹.

Other protest events when protest policing was described as insufficient include the assault on a PS politician in 2003, when the President of the Republic censored the absence of police forces, a concern that, in his view, was shared by the Portuguese citizenry (“*«[the police] will have to explain to the country why... they took so long to reach the MP»*”). This was also expressed by the Ministry of the Interior, who contacted GNR to demand explanations for delayed protest policing, which was, in contrast, described as appropriate by the police forces themselves, highlighting they had not resorted to high intensity protest policing – “*«if we hadn’t acted quickly... [the rioters] would have finished him off... GNR managed to control the situation without resorting to force»*”⁵⁸⁰. In this case, two contrasting versions of protest policing occur, diverging

⁵⁷⁹ “*«comportamento passivo e complacente da GNR perante um acto de banditismo»... “As forças de segurança têm obrigações legais e instruções precisas, do Governo e dos respectivos comandos, para reagirem a esses atos ilícitos, obedecendo aos princípios constitucionais e tendo em conta as condições operacionais de cada caso”... “GNR tomou “todas as medidas tendentes a repor a ordem pública, defendendo pessoas e bens, com respeito pelos princípios da necessidade e proporcionalidade”... “se a GNR actuou ou não de forma a prevenir o crime”... “espero bem que as autoridades competentes não deixem de fazer as investigações necessárias. Não podem restar quaisquer dúvidas de que a lei é para ser cumprida e que quem tem o poder para a fazer cumprir não pode deixar de utilizá-lo”... “consideramos inaceitável a forma como [a GNR] assistiram à atuação de um grupo de indivíduos”», Público, “PSD quer reunião extraordinária da AR com ministro para explicar ação da GNR”, published on August 20th, 2007 (my translation).*

⁵⁸⁰ “*«terão de esclarecer o país porque é que... demorou tanto tempo a que as forças da ordem pudessem chegar junto do deputado”... Ministro da Administração Interna... pediu explicações às autoridades locais pela “demora” na sua actuação... GNR... “se não tivéssemos actuado com rapidez... [os revoltosos] tinham dado cabo dele”... a GNR conseguiu controlar a situação sem recurso à força”», Público, “PS quer expulsar Fátima Felgueiras”, published on May 12th, 2003 (my translation).*

on the basic level of timing (tardy vs. quick), and on the understanding of police deployment (insufficient vs. appropriate). This is also an instance when one vested actor – the President of the Portuguese Republic – claims to invoke the Portuguese citizenry's opinion on protest policing.

Police intervention during the truck drivers' strike of 2007 was also described as insufficient – when the government decided to buttress protest policing, it was argued that this was, *“for many, a late reaction to the continuation of protest actions and pickets”*⁵⁸¹ (emphasis added). There is no specification of who that “many” would be, with the media, thus, passing the message that this was the widespread belief of the political community, mirroring the assertion of the President in the case above. This is also an instance of protest policing as a governing strategy, as the government is said to have made a deliberate choice in timing police actions.

The student mobilisation of 2003-2004 is another instance of the media calling for more police intervention in protest events, with *Público's* editor-in-chief espousing the opinion that the rector's resistance was unjustifiable, as students were committing a crime prohibited by the constitution⁵⁸². This is a case of oscillating views on protest policing, with the rector first asserting that police intervention was not necessary, given that this was not a public conflict⁵⁸³, but also taking into account the established democratic practice in the University (*“«Students know that under no circumstances will I call the police»”*⁵⁸⁴). Eventually, however, police intervention would be requested by the university's highest authority, justified precisely because students had broken that democratic pact – *“The rector requested police intervention because «We cannot agree*

⁵⁸¹ «O reforço da resposta policial é uma reação, para muitos, tardia à continuação de ações de protesto e piquetes», *Diário de Notícias*, “Polícias com ordem para remover camiões”, published on June 11th, 2007 (my translation).

⁵⁸² «Fechar a universidade não é fazer greve... é organizar um lock-out, o que a Constituição proíbe. É crime punido pelo código penal. As autoridades académicas têm de fazer mais do que enviar uns bombeiros», *Público*, “A liberdade sob sequestro”, published on November 11th, 2003.

⁵⁸³ «“O que eu disse é que não chamaria a polícia para resolver um problema interno da universidade. E não chamei.”», *Público*, “Greve causa conflito entre estudantes e o reitor da Universidade de Coimbra”, published on March 15th, 2003.

⁵⁸⁴ «“Os estudantes sabem que em nenhuma circunstância chamarei a polícia”», *Público*, “Professores da Universidade de Coimbra movem queixas-crime contra estudantes”, published on November 11th, 2003 (my translation).

*with the anti-democratic actions of the students»*⁵⁸⁵. Protest policing was, thus, framed as a last resource by the dean, but as necessary and insufficient by other vested actors – in particular the media, as the narrative of the protest event became centred around what was depicted as the clear need for police intervention in light of the rector's refusal to abide.

Once – forceful – protest policing took place, protesters framed it as excessive: the students association (the protest organiser) described it as “*«an absurd disproportion of means, batons, gases, and handcuffs»*” and an attack on students' dignity and on the democratic university⁵⁸⁶. All parties on the left would share this positioning: BE presented a protest vote on protest policing at the parliament, supported by all other leftist parties (and rejected by the PSD/CDS-PP majority), PCP demanded that the government explained what they consider disproportionate police intervention, and PS's youth ward “*strongly condemned police's use of «totally disproportionate and inappropriate means»... such as pepper spray, beatings and arrests*”, demanding that disciplinary proceedings were taken against offending police officers⁵⁸⁷. The use of force and of less lethal weapons would also become a contested issue, with the Ministry of the Interior stating that “*there was no police charge*” and that “*he was unaware that pepper gas had been used*”, a statement condemned by PCP⁵⁸⁸.

This is not the only occasion when leftist parties framed protest policing as excessive:

⁵⁸⁵ «Reitor pediu a presença da polícia porque “não podemos pactuar com a intervenção anti-democrática dos alunos”», *Público*, “Estudantes de Coimbra encerram Reitoria e Faculdade de Direito”, published on November 3rd, 2003 (my translation).

⁵⁸⁶ “*«absurda desproporção de meios, os cassetetes, os gases e as algemas... um estudante foi agredido, algemado no chão, ofendido barbaramente no mais profundo da sua dignidade»*», *Público*, “Serenata deu lugar a discurso de protesto em Coimbra”, published on October 22nd, 2004; “*«atentado à universidade democrática»*», *Diário de Notícias*, “Polícia lança gás paralisante em confrontos com estudantes”, published on October 22nd, 2004 (my translation).

⁵⁸⁷ «*BE apresentou no parlamento um voto de protesto à intervenção policial – reuniu o apoio de toda a oposição e reprovado pela maioria PSD/CDS... PCP pede ao governo para explicar o que consideram ser “contornos desproporcionados” da intervenção da PSP... Juventude Socialista... condena com veemência a forma como a polícia utilizou “meios totalmente desproporcionados e inadequados...”*», como gás pimenta, bastonadas e detenções. Para a JS, “*impõem-se esclarecimentos claros e concisos*” de forma a poder “*proceder disciplinarmente sob os agentes infratores*”», *Público*, “PCP e JS exigem explicações do ministro da administração interna”, published on October 22nd, 2004 (my translation).

⁵⁸⁸ «*Ministro da Administração Interna afirmou que não houve qualquer carga policial e disse desconhecer que tivesse sido usado gás neutralizante*», *Diário de Notícias*, “Polícia lança gás paralisante em confrontos com estudantes”, published on October 22nd, 2004 (my translation); «*PCP condena ... declarações do ministro da adm. Interna que admitiu desconhecer a utilização pelos polícias de gás pimenta*», *Público*, “PCP e JS exigem explicações do ministro da administração interna”, published on October 22nd, 2004.

- During a 2000 pupil demonstration, PCP asked the government about what they considered excessive protest policing: “*«Several pupils approached by individuals who identified themselves as PJ agents... Such clearly intimidating actions were added to those of several PSP agents who photographed and filmed young protesters»*”, an allegation considered “*false and offensive*” by the PJ⁵⁸⁹.
- This was repeated by the party (“*government’s intimidation manoeuvres include use of GNR and PSP forces against strikers*”), BE (“*BE denounces alleged cases of police pressure on striking workers*”) and the Green Party (“*«unacceptable interference and pressure exerted by police forces on strike pickets... in an attempt to intimidate and demobilise workers»*”) commenting on the 2002 general strike⁵⁹⁰.
- Forceful protest policing during the 2003 sewage treatment centre strike was considered abusive by PCP, which called for penalties against those responsible⁵⁹¹.
- And protest policing during a drive against tolls in 2008 was described by the PCP as an illegal boycott⁵⁹².

This would be recurrent during the anti-austerity protest cycle, specifically during the most participated protest events, and, at times, included the allegation that the police resorted to agents provocateurs:

⁵⁸⁹ *«acusando a PJ de ter exigido e registado a presença de alguns alunos e até questionado sobre a sua filiação política. “Vários estudantes foram abordados por indivíduos que se identificaram como agentes da PJ... Tais ações de clara intimidação somaram-se às de vários agentes da PSP que fotografaram e filmaram jovens manifestantes”... A PJ considerou “falsa e até atentatória do seu prestígio e dignidade a alegação”», Diário de Notícias, “PJ nega presença em manifestação estudantil”, published on December 1st, 2000 (my translation).*

⁵⁹⁰ *«manobras de intimidação do governo incluem uso das forças da GNR e da PSP contra grevistas... BE denuncia alegados casos de pressão policial sobre trabalhadores em greve... “inaceitável a ingerência e a pressão que as forças policiais procuraram fazer junto dos piquetes de greve... numa tentativa de intimidar e desmobilizar os trabalhadores”», Público, “Greve geral vista pelos partidos”, published on December 11th, 2002 (my translation).*

⁵⁹¹ *«PCP lamenta violação do direito à greve e carga policial sobre trabalhadores... “apurar responsabilidades desta intervenção da GNR e... punir os responsáveis pelo seu uso abusivo”», Diário de Notícias, “Denunciada carga da GNR sobre trabalhadores em greve”, published on March 7th, 2008 (my translation).*

⁵⁹² *«“forças policiais fizeram tudo para impedir a manifestação”... “boicote à manifestação”... “isto é absolutamente ilegal”», Público, “«Marcha lenta» paralisou a baixa do Porto”, published on May 25th, 2008.*

- On the 2011 general strike, a BE MP, along with new social movements spokespeople, “denounced the existence of several «agent provocateurs infiltrated in the demonstration»... which the PSP... did not deny”⁵⁹³.
- In the first general strike of 2012, BE denounced protest policing as disproportionate, framed it as “«gratuitous violence...against journalists and people demonstrating peacefully»”⁵⁹⁴ and mentioned, again, the presence of agents provocateurs: “«In the last general strike, in Lisbon, there were plainclothes police among the protesters. And there were assaults»”⁵⁹⁵.

The media would also raise the alarm on what it described as excessive protest policing:

- *Diário de Notícias* published images of police agents assaulting a journalist under the title “*The images of police violence that outraged the country*”⁵⁹⁶ – in another instance of the media claiming to speak for the whole citizenry.
- On November 14th, 2012, and as exposed at the beginning of this chapter, *Público* pinpointed police intervention as excessive: “*the police advanced... many citizens had to flee... a 70-year-old man who was knocked down and assaulted for about two minutes by police officers... a homeless man... was surprised by «five or six police officers» who... assaulted him*”⁵⁹⁷.

These were counterbalanced, however, by police narratives – on the first occasion, the article also featured the police’s official statement, in which they called for the “«need for the correct identification of all journalists and their proper placement in the [protest

⁵⁹³ «Organizadores do protesto denunciaram também a existência de diversos “agentes provocadores da polícia infiltrados na manifestação”... o que a PSP... não desmente... A cena foi presenciada pela deputada... do BE, que disse ao PÚBLICO que o incidente teve início quando o grupo agressor – supostamente os polícias à paisana», *Público*, “Direcção da PSP está a averiguar agressões que terão envolvido agentes à paisana”, published on November 26th, 2011 (my translation).

⁵⁹⁴ «“Violência gratuita e intervenção desproporcionada sobre jornalistas e pessoas que se manifestavam pacificamente”», *Diário de Notícias*, “PSP and IGAI abrem inquéritos”, published on March 22nd, 2012 (my translation).

⁵⁹⁵ «O militante do BE... [t]eme que haja alguma tendência: “Na última greve geral, em Lisboa, havia polícia à paisana entre os manifestantes. E houve agressões”», *Público*, “A tensão subiu no Porto e acabou em confronto entre polícia e manifestantes”, published on March 23rd, 2012 (my translation).

⁵⁹⁶ *Diário de Notícias*, “As imagens de violência policial que indignaram o país”, published on March 22nd, 2012 (my translation).

⁵⁹⁷ «os polícias avançaram... muitos cidadãos tiveram de fugir... um homem de 70 anos que foi derrubado e agredido durante cerca de dois minutos por membros da polícia... um sem-abrigo... foi surpreendido por “cinco ou seis polícias”... que o agrediram», *Público*, “Por uma hora, «profissionais da desordem» foram protagonistas no dia da CGTP”, published on November 15th, 2012 (my translation).

space], so that this type of situation does not happen again»⁵⁹⁸ – a statement that shifts the responsibility to the assaulted journalists, as it implies that they were not showing their professional identification and had failed to follow police instructions.

But it would preventive and information-based protest policing that would receive more mediatic attention. This is particularly expressed in a piece published in *Diário de Notícias* on the date of the first 2012 general strike, under the title “PSP studies violence in Greece to avoid conflicts in Portugal”, which describes how PSP had been preparing for protest policing, through research, exchange of information with the Portuguese Intelligence Services, and deployment of infiltrated officers. It was also registered that police forces were making use of a confidential report entitled “Perspective assessment of social contestation”, which recommended the anticipation of violent actions in the protest sphere to predict the need for police control⁵⁹⁹.

This narrative is intended on supporting high intensity protest policing, framing it as necessary and appropriate given the shifting of the protest sphere towards high impact protest repertoires (and the reference to the Greek example is meant to amplify the risk associated with protest). Additionally, it serves as a validation for police practices that can be the object of contestation, namely information-based protest policing, involving intelligence tactics and / or the presence of infiltrated officers in convening meetings and during protest events. Justifications of protest policing following the protest event would also find their way to the newspapers’ pages after November 14th, 2012, when it was said that “*hunting*” protesters was the police’s maximum priority given the heightened level of dangerousness attributed to these people – an expression that is both othering and dehumanising.

Protest policing would, on this latter protest event, be justified on the following terms, uttered by PSP’ spokesperson: “*force should only be used as a last resort and, as a*

⁵⁹⁸ «PSP... reitera a “necessidade da correta identificação de todos os jornalistas e da sua devida colocação no terreno, para que este tipo de situações não se volte a repetir”», *Diário de Notícias*, “As imagens de violência policial que indignaram o país”, published on March 22nd, 2012 (my translation).

⁵⁹⁹ «Corpo de intervenção treina para controlar fenómenos como os de Atenas ... troca de informações ... e trabalho com SIS... “Há que trabalhar na antecipação de ações violentas para saber como nos colocar no terreno e reagir”... relatório confidencial “Avaliação perspectiva da contestação social”... Agentes infiltrados em manifestações para recolher informações sobre indivíduos e grupos violentos», *Diário de Notícias*, “PSP estuda violência na Grécia para evitar conflitos em Portugal”, published on March 22nd, 2012 (my translation).

preventive measure, [the police] invest heavily in criminal investigations to isolate, identify, and capture the perpetrators of acts of violence». This is accompanied by a lament: *“The crime (of which protesters are accused) does not lead to prison. None of the suspects arrested in previous demonstrations... remained in custody. This will only happen when the police... are able to prove that... violence is prepared and organised in advance”*⁶⁰⁰. This grievance would be echoed by one of the two army generals who were asked to comment on the day’s general strike (and having the armed forces commenting on popular mobilisation is, in and of itself, a securitising move), who hoped, as previously mentioned, for the effectiveness of the police intervention and the imposition of sanctions on detainees, with an emphasis on the dissuasive nature of such penalties⁶⁰¹. Further, on this occasion, the police and the Prime Minister also defended protest policing as appropriate and necessary, and the President aimed at terminating all possible discussion, by stating all Portuguese people stood behind it⁶⁰².

This analysis reveals the presence of diverse and often conflicting perspectives on the appropriateness and effectiveness of protest policing in the country. Police forces, at times the armed forces, protest organisers, the government, political parties, and the media all express their own viewpoints on the matter, which frequently differ. On the part of the police forces, they generally describe their actions as appropriate and focused on maintaining public order without interfering with the right to protest, stressing their adherence to the principles of necessity and proportionality. That view is, at times, shared by protest organisers (particularly in the first half of the series), who evaluate protest policing as positive when it does not obstruct popular mobilisation, allowing it to proceed without incident. However, there are also instances when protest

⁶⁰⁰ «*“a força só deve ser utilizada em última instância e, como medida preventiva, apostar fortemente na investigação criminal para se conseguir isolar, identificar e capturar os autores dos atos de violência”... Crime (de que são acusados) não dá prisão. Nenhum dos suspeitos detidos em anteriores manifestações... ficaram presos. Só acontecerá quando a polícia... consiga provar que ... violência é preparada e organizada previamente»*, *Diário de Notícias*, “PSP tem lista de mais de 30 radicais para ‘caçar’ nos próximos dias”, published on November 16th, 2012 (my translation).

⁶⁰¹ «*“Espero que a carga tenha sido eficaz e que os detidos presentes a tribunal possam ser alvo de sanções suficientemente dissuasoras”*», *Diário de Notícias*, “A polícia atuou de forma impecável”, published on November 15th, 2012 (my translation).

⁶⁰² «*PSP e primeiro-ministro falam de actuação “adequada e necessária”... “a polícia não pode deixar de ter todo o apoio dos portugueses”*», *Público*, “Carga policial foi “proporcional” ou houve abusos e ilegalidades?”, published on November 16th, 2012.

organisers criticise police intervention, framing it as excessive and posing an obstacle to democratic participation (mainly from the anti-austerity protest cycle onwards).

That perception of excessiveness is often expressed by leftist political parties (particularly PCP, accompanied, during the Great Recession, by BE), which openly condemn what they consider as disproportionate use of force, referring to the employment of less lethal weapons, but also to other tactics, such as the identification of protesters or the presence of agents provocateurs. At times, this results in accusations of police violence, calls for investigations into police conduct, or disciplinary actions against officers.

The media plays a more ambiguous role – while at times framing protest policing as excessive, it openly calls for more police intervention in protest events or describes protest policing as obviously necessary. The latter positioning is shared by the government, that, irrespective of affiliation, on the occasions when it reacts to protest policing, asserts its appropriateness and necessity. This is particularly relevant, as these utterances are only present when police intervention is particularly challenged in the public sphere. And when the President of the Republic reacts to protest policing, it is, more often than not, to put his institutional support behind security forces. This highlights the political dimension of protest policing, as different political actors may have vested interests in how it is portrayed – in fact, protest policing can, as demonstrated above, become the subject of partisan competition, with various political parties interpreting it through their own lenses, and creating public debates on the legitimacy of police actions.

Finally, police's own declarations suggest a move toward preventive policing, with a number of police tactics employed to tame protest before it takes to the streets – with more or less contestation: such tactics were extensively contested when police agents visited a union prior to a national demonstration of teachers in 2008, but no such reaction was found in reaction to the deployment of infiltrated agents to convening meetings of the anti-austerity protest cycle. This indicates a certain normalisation of preventive and information-based protest policing and raises questions about the balance between security and civil liberties.

The analysis is also revealing of the presence of actors – the President of the Republic, the media – who claim to speak for the citizenry on protest policing, normally by providing a positive opinion of it, said to be that of the whole political community. This has the effect of closing the public discussion on the matter, as the ultimate evaluation of police intervention has been uttered by those individuals at the pinnacle of political and /or discursive power.

The utterances above are, thus, indicative of the presence of some securitisation dynamics. One witnesses how law enforcement portrays itself as enforcers of public security and keepers of public order during protest events, while emphasising their adherence to security imperatives, such as necessity and proportionality. The government can, too, act as a securitising actor, as it intermittently securitises protest by portraying protest policing as necessary for maintaining public security and order, thereby framing protesters as potential security risks to be managed by State' security forces. Media outlets, too, act as key securitising agents, influencing public perception of protest policing, framing police actions as essential, at times calling for more protest policing and allowing the security forces to present their narrative on those actions, thereby positioning themselves as the police's mouthpiece, providing an avenue for the legitimisation of diverse tactics of protest policing.

There are, however, instances when the media decries excessive security measures (in which case, they act as desecuritisng actors). In fact, it is necessary to stress that, in Portugal, there is a relatively balanced evaluation of protest policing – while it is true that this is mostly positive, protest policing is particularly contested during highly visible protest events (such as the student protest campaign of 2003-2004, general strikes, or the anti-austerity protest cycle), which ensures that the framing of protest and of protest policing from a security standpoint remains rather diverse.

In Spain, three moments stand out in terms of reactions to protest policing: labour conflicts (particularly heavy industries strikes and those taking place in critical infrastructures – namely airports –, as well as general strikes), the anti-austerity protest cycle, and the policing of protest events around independentist claims, peaking at the Catalanian referendum and subsequent mobilisation.

Strikes at mines, metal manufacturing, and shipyards are often the object of protest policing, and this is frequently framed as both necessary and appropriate given protesters' recourse to high impact protest repertoires – that was the case in 2004, when, during a Basque shipbuilders' strike, workers were described as fully prepared for and actively engaging in violent standouts with police forces⁶⁰³. That same year, it was Cadiz shipbuilders who were described in a similar fashion, justifying police intervention; protest policing, however, was, in this case, also framed as excessive – not only on account of the use of less lethal weapons, but also due to its impact in, ultimately, limiting popular mobilisation: *“More than a hundred agents entered the factory... preventing a thousand workers... from cutting off the main access to the city of Cadiz. The unions denounced the «repressive and provocative attitude» of the police and accused... the government of «treating workers as terrorists»”*⁶⁰⁴.

Police were also said to have limited the right to protest in Seville, on the same protest campaign, when it stopped a workers' march from leaving the industrial premises. On this occasion, too, labour unions accused police agents of initiating and escalating any violence (*“The president of the workers council... described the demonstration as a “pitched battle”... and blamed it on the intervention of the riot police... Workers were stopped from leaving the factory due to the action of the police, that prevented the protest... police used with “extreme virulence”*⁶⁰⁵).

The same negative evaluation of protest policing in a metal workers' strike can be found at the beginning of the series, uttered by labour unions, but also by *Izquierda Unida*,

⁶⁰³ «*protegidos por escudos metálicos, una veintena de trabajadores encapuchados utilizaron tirachinas para arrojar tuercas, tornillos, piedras o canicas ... contra los ertzainas*», *El Mundo*, “Los trabajadores de La Naval de Sestao, en pie de guerra al sentirse engañados por Zapatero”, published on September 17th, 2004.

⁶⁰⁴ «*Los obreros, parapetados tras una barricada de grandes dimensiones a la acabaron prendieron fuego, la emprendieron tirando tornillos y tuercas a los agentes policiales, que respondieron arrojando pelotas de goma y botes de humo*», *El Mundo*, “16 heridos en las protestas de los astilleros de Cádiz”, published on February 13th, 2004; «*Más de un centenar de agentes se introdujeron en el interior de la factoría... impedir al millar de trabajadores... cortar el principal acceso a la ciudad de Cádiz. Los sindicatos denunciaron la “actitud represiva y provocadora” de la policía y acusaron ... el gobierno de “tratar a los trabajadores como terroristas”*», *El País*, “Las protestas de astilleros se extienden y radicalizan por varias comunidades”, published on February 13th, 2004 (my translation).

⁶⁰⁵ «*El presidente del comité de empresa de Astilleros de Sevilla... calificó de “batalla campal” la manifestación... y culpó de ello a la intervención de los agentes antidisturbios de la policía... La plantilla no puede salir de la factoría ante la acción de la policía, que impidió la protesta... Sindicatos... agentes se emplearon con una “virulencia extrema”*», *El País*, “Trabajadores de Izar endurecen su protesta contra el plan de la SEPI”, published on October 7th, 2004 (my translation).

which had joined a protest event by Huelva metal workers – the police were accused of charging after workers stopped them from accessing the premises, an action considered as disproportionate, regrettable, and out of place. By contrast, the government considered that police intervention was justified since strikers had assaulted elements of the police forces⁶⁰⁶.

The government would also assert the need for – more – protest policing in 2006, during a metal workers' strike, by requesting police reinforcements, "*deemed as necessary due to serious conflicts in the first days*" of mobilisation⁶⁰⁷. And the miners' strike which took place during the anti-austerity protest cycle, involving multiple roadblocks and confrontations with police forces, was, too, subject to a contradictory narrative on what concerns protest policing – while one local mayor (elected by PSOE) was "*very critical of the actions of the police*", deemed to have caused material damages and risked the security of civilians⁶⁰⁸, the Minister of the Interior placed his full support behind protest policing, praising their professionalism and the proportionality of their actions⁶⁰⁹. There was also an open call for more police intervention on the part of the regional government delegation, and of the main Asturian freight association, that asked for enhanced surveillance and more judicial actions against protesters. This was justified by the intensification of the miners' profile as a rising security risk that the police were not

⁶⁰⁶ «carga policial ... cuando los manifestantes impidieron la entrada al Polo... Sindicatos calificaron ... la actuación de los antidisturbios de "desmesurada"... Según... el Gobierno... los incidentes fueron provocados por los huelguistas, que "respondieron con el lanzamiento de piedras y objetos contra la policía"... IU, que participaba en la... protesta... hechos que calificó de "absolutamente lamentables y fuera de lugar"», *El País*, "Once heridos y 31 detenidos durante una protesta laboral en Huelva", published on October 20th 2000.

⁶⁰⁷ «La Subdelegación del Gobierno... reclamó el envío de refuerzos..., debido a la importancia de los disturbios de los dos días anteriores», *El País*, "Miles de trabajadores colapsan Vigo por la huelga del metal", published on May 6th, 2006 (my translation).

⁶⁰⁸ «El alcalde de Aller fue muy crítico con la actuación de las fuerzas de seguridad. "Hay daños materiales en vehículos de vecinos que no tienen nada que ver con la protesta"... "no se puede tolerar que se entre en una población de esa forma y mucho menos habiendo gente civil presente"», *El País*, "Los mineros extienden su guerra de escaramuzas", published on June 9th, 2012 (my translation).

⁶⁰⁹ «el ministro del Interior...habló sobre el asunto: "Si no fuera por la extraordinaria profesionalidad, el ejercicio de contención y la prudencia con que están operando [las fuerzas y cuerpos de seguridad], se habría producido alguna desgracia, que gracias a Dios y a esa profesionalidad no se ha producido"», *El País*, "La marcha minera desemboca en fuertes enfrentamientos con la Guardia Civil", published on July 7th, 2012 (my translation).

able to control (“[t]he seniority of some miners combined with their organisational abilities seem to be throwing law enforcement agencies for a loop”⁶¹⁰).

Protest events taking place at airports frequently elicit strong reactions, and that is also the case when it comes to protest policing. During the 2006 strike at El Prat, when workers occupied one of the runways, controversy arose over the (lack of) action of police forces: while the Interior Minister stated that protest policing had been appropriate given the circumstances (“*The Minister of the Interior... explained... the Guardia Civil did not intervene... to avoid a pitched battle*”), PP condemned protest policing as lacking, guaranteeing that would not have been the case if they were in government (“*«With a PP Government this would not have happened, the runways would have been cleared and that would be it»*”⁶¹¹) – clearly placing itself as the ‘law and order’ party.

Protest policing in subsequent protest events would be the object of similar narratives by both PSOE and PP governments: during the air traffic controllers strike of 2010, military intervention to replace striking workers was justified by the PSOE Minister of Development so as to attend to an emergency situation⁶¹², and the *Guardia Civil* was called upon to replace striking workers during the 2017 El Prat security staff strike, an option justified by the PP government to guarantee security and safety conditions at the airport⁶¹³. The PSOE would publicly denounce the latter, by stating that resorting to the *Guardia Civil* was “*«a form of knobsticking»*” which violated the right to strike, a positioning shared by UGT and CCOO (“*the Government is «completely» violating the right to strike of El Prat security guards... «very serious violation of the right to strike»*”),

⁶¹⁰ «A la veteranía de algunos mineros se une la estrategia a la hora de organizarse que están demostrando y que parece traer de cabeza a las fuerzas del orden... Delegación del Gobierno de Asturias ha recibido refuerzos... para hacerles frente... principal patronal asturiana del transporte de mercancías... pidiendo más vigilancia en las carreteras y más “persecución a las acciones ilegales” de los mineros», *El Mundo*, “Asturias pide refuerzos policiales”, published on June 13th, 2012 (my translation).

⁶¹¹ «“Con un Gobierno del PP esto no hubiera ocurrido, se despejan las pistas y punto”... El ministro del Interior... explicó... la Guardia Civil no intervino... para evitar una batalla campal que podría haber causado males mayores», *El País*, “Interior explica que la Guardia Civil no cargó contra los huelguistas para evitar un mal mayor”, published on August 1st, 2006 (my translation).

⁶¹² «“El Ministerio de Defensa ejercerá el control de la circulación aérea general cuando se den situaciones de emergencia”, apunta la ley», *El Mundo*, “Los controladores alegan ahora «acoso»”, published on July 21st, 2010.

⁶¹³ «El Gobierno destinará “los guardias civiles necesarios” para garantizar la seguridad», *El Mundo*, “La holgada victoria del ‘no’ aboca a El Prat a la huelga”, published on August 14th, 2017.

and seconded by the *Guardia Civil* professional organisation, which expressed its solidarity with striking workers⁶¹⁴. Finally, police intervention on the 2013 Iberia workers' strike was described by labour unions, which hinted at the use of kettling (a controversial method of crowd control in which police form lines around protesters to prevent them from leaving a particular area), as excessive: *"Iberia employees were cornered... with multiple police cordons that prevented their free mobility"*⁶¹⁵.

In addition, protest policing during general strikes has commonly been described as appropriate and necessary – that was the case in 2002 when the police forces espoused their role as guarantors of public security (*"the mission was perfectly defined... «create an environment of security»"*⁶¹⁶), and the PP Ministry of the Interior extensively described police intervention as the one factor guaranteeing public order (as mentioned in the previous section), while expressing his gratitude to police forces: *"Rajoy...congratulated the State Security Forces for their performance"* and posited that *"«The security forces have risen to the occasion and have made the greatest effort they were capable of»"*⁶¹⁷, in an instance of securitisation by praise, contrasting members of the police forces as the quintessential good citizens, against protesters who, as indicated in the previous chapter, were framed as bad members of the political community. In this instance, however, labour unions would present a contradictory narrative, denouncing the *"«enormous police pressure all their pickets endured... and claiming agents used excessive force»"*, an argument supported by IU, which argued that the government was criminalising the party's and labour unions' presence in protest events (*"a*

⁶¹⁴ «el uso de la Guardia Civil para garantizar la operatividad del aeropuerto de El Prat "no deja de ser una forma de esquirolaje" que atenta contra el derecho a la huelga... UGT... el Gobierno está violando "completamente" el derecho de huelga de los vigilantes de seguridad de El Prat al sustituir con guardias civiles "a trabajadores que están ejerciendo el derecho a huelga"... CCOO... "vulneración gravísima del derecho de huelga"... Asociación Unificada de Guardias Civiles... mostró su solidaridad con los huelguistas», *El Mundo*, "Calma en El Prat, bronca política", published on August 15th, 2017 (my translation).

⁶¹⁵ «Los empleados de Iberia han sido acorralados... con múltiples cordones policiales que impedían la libre movilidad de los trabajadores», justificó UGT en un comunicado», *El Mundo*, "Boicot sindical a los servicios mínimos en Iberia", published on February, 19th, 2013.

⁶¹⁶ «su misión quedaba perfectamente definida... "crear un ambiente de seguridad"», *El País*, "Doble turno contra los piquetes", published on June 21st, 2002 (my translation).

⁶¹⁷ «Rajoy... felicitó a las Fuerzas y Cuerpos de Seguridad del Estado por su actuación», *El Mundo*, "Detenidos más de 100 miembros de piquetes y manifestantes", published on June 21st, 2002; «"Las fuerzas de seguridad han dado la talla y han hecho el mayor esfuerzo de que han sido capaces" sentenciaba... Mariano Rajoy», *El Mundo*, "Doble turno contra los piquetes", published on June, 21st, 2002 (my translation).

«premeditated and perfectly orchestrated campaign" by the government... to... «criminalise the leaders of IU and labour unionists who exercise their right to freely, peacefully, and democratically inform the workers about the importance of supporting the strike»”⁶¹⁸).

Additionally, protest policing during two of the strikes of 2010 was contrastively described by different actors: while police forces reported it as a success, given that they were not forced to arrest anyone⁶¹⁹, labour unions considered it excessive – *“UGT and CCOO... complained about the «extraordinary police deployment». «Never before has there been so many police officers, such violent charges, nor such a high number of detainees»”⁶²⁰*. This stands in contrast with the media’s assertion of police intervention as appropriate, if fairly insufficient: *“The passivity of the riot police is explained by the fact that, probably, police deployment was based on containment... police agents acted with less forcefulness than in the demonstrations by university students against the Bologna Plan”⁶²¹*.

Divergent positionings on protest policing would be a staple of the anti-austerity protest cycle. The first enactment of the *Acampada* Madrid was framed as a potential public order problem even prior to the protest event, requiring the intervention of police forces – the Security State Secretary assured that police forces would act if the protest impacted public order⁶²², a message reiterated by both Vice-Prime Minister and Interior

⁶¹⁸ *«Los sindicatos denunciaron la “enorme presión policial que durante la jornada sufrieron todos sus piquetes. Incluso, aseguraron que los agentes se emplearon con excesiva dureza”... Alcaraz... dijo que responde a una “campana premeditada y perfectamente orquestada” por parte del Gobierno... para “criminalizar a los dirigentes de IU y a los sindicalistas que ejercen su derecho a informar libre, pacífica y democráticamente a los trabajadores sobre la conveniencia de secundar la huelga”», El Mundo, “Detenidos más de 100 miembros de piquetes y manifestantes”, published on June 21st, 2002 (my translation).*

⁶¹⁹ *«“En el ámbito policial, la huelga ha sido un éxito... no hay ni un solo detenido”», El Mundo, “Los policías reducen notablemente los arrestos”, published on June 9th, 2010.*

⁶²⁰ *«UGT y CCOO ... se quejaron del “inusitado despliegue policial”. “Nunca antes había sido tan numerosa la presencia de agentes ni las cargas habían sido tan violentas ni hubo tantos detenidos”», El Mundo, “El Gobierno va a seguir adelante”, published on September 30th, 2010 (my translation).*

⁶²¹ *«la pasividad de los antidisturbios se explica en que, probablemente, el dispositivo policial se basó en la contención... los agentes actuaron con menos contundencia que en las manifestaciones de universitarios contra el Plan Bologna», El Mundo, “Los okupas' inflaman la huelga”, published on September 30th, 2010 (my translation).*

⁶²² *«El secretario de Estado de Seguridad... aseguró que las fuerzas de seguridad “tienen la obligación de actuar si hay afectación al orden público”», El País, “La izquierda intenta captar el voto de los indignados”, published on May 18th 2011.*

Minister: *“the Government is prepared to respond forcefully if the marches called for tomorrow in Madrid by the Indignados of the 15-M Movement and Democracia Real Ya lead to acts of violence... the Police will act with «prudence»..., but will show «firmness if there is someone who wants to do any wrong»”*⁶²³.

When protesters moved to camp in Puerta del Sol, the narrative would shift, with the government justifying the absence of police intervention to dislodge the protest, arguing that police agents were copiously fulfilling their role – *“Security Forces should use «opportunity, congruence and proportionality» criteria, ensuring they do «not create two or three problems where there is only one»”*⁶²⁴. This would be echoed by the police themselves, positing that protesters’ numbers and diversity, and their choice of a peaceful protest repertoire did not justify any forceful eviction: *“«[i]t would have been nonsense to evacuate the square, because we are talking about a peaceful demonstration with no incidents!»”*⁶²⁵.

This view was not endorsed by *El Mundo*, who implied multiple times that the government was choosing not to resort to protest policing for electoral reasons (*“The Police can only act in the event of an incident”; “Nobody wants to confront the young people because that would be politically incorrect... The young people of 15-M have them at their mercy”*), and that this choice revealed the government’s inability to maintain law and order⁶²⁶. It would also ridicule the possibility of infiltrated police officers in the protest camp, denounced by protesters – *“One of the groups camped at Puerta del Sol... seems to have discovered a veritable army of spies prowling around them”* – thereby

⁶²³ «El vicepresidente primero y ministro del Interior... aseguró ayer que el Gobierno está preparado para responder con contundencia si las marchas convocadas para mañana en Madrid por las indignados del Movimiento 15-M y Democracia Real Ya desembocan en actos de violencia... la Policía actuará con “prudencia”... pero mostrará “firmeza si hay alguien que lo quiere hacer mal”», *El Mundo*, “Rubalcaba avisa: «Si se hace mal, habrá firmeza»”, published on May 18th 2011 (my translation).

⁶²⁴ «el papel de las Fuerzas de Seguridad respondería... a los criterios de “oportunidad, congruencia y proporcionalidad”, cuidando siempre de “no crear dos o tres problemas donde so hay un”», *El Mundo*, “España, entre la reflexión y la indignación”, published on May 21st, 2011 (my translation).

⁶²⁵ «Los dos principales sindicatos policiales... calificaron de “disparate” que se hubiera procedido al desalojo... carácter “pacífico” y “heterogéneo” de los presentes. “Si se hubiera desalojado la plaza, habría sido un disparate porque hablamos de una concentración pacífica donde no ha habido incidentes!”», *El Mundo*, “Rubalcaba no quiere desalojar”, published on May 20th, 2011 (my translation).

⁶²⁶ «La Policía sólo puede actuar en caso de que se produzcan incidentes», *El Mundo*, “España, entre la reflexión y la indignación”, published on May 21st, 2011; «Nadie quiere enfrentarse a los jóvenes porque eso sería políticamente incorrecto... Los jóvenes del 15-M los tienen a su merced», *El Mundo*, “Zapatero, ‘sensible’ al 15-M”, published on May 21st, 2011; *El Mundo*, “La calle derrota al Gobierno, incapaz de hacer cumplir la ley”, published on May 21st, 2011 (my translation).

presenting (at least some of the) protesters as delusional conspiracy theorists, and fully rejecting their framing of intelligence services as the “*enemy of the people*”⁶²⁷.

This initial lenient attitude towards *Acampada* Madrid would not last, as the protest camp would eventually be evicted, and so would its Barcelona counterpart, when different interested parties branded protest policing in contrasting ways. The *Generalitat* labelled it as “«*correct*»”, the product of police forces’ “«*common sense, caution, prudence, and, when necessary, forcefulness*»”⁶²⁸ and the Catalan Interior Councillor stood by this evaluation, demanding that “«*the work, quality, soundness, and dedication of the region's police not be permanently questioned*»”⁶²⁹.

This type of reaction to protest policing, removing it from the realm of subjects that can be discussed in the public sphere would become a staple of the anti-austerity protest cycle – and reverts to Hansen’s (2000) paradigm of securitisation by silence. It is also a partisan stand, contrasting with leftist parties’ and labour unions’ evaluation of protest policing: “*all left wing parties criticised it... The PSC considered the police action «disproportionate»... ICV described the charge as «unacceptable, disproportionate, and unjustified.» UGT and CCOO police unions demanded the councillor resignation, and the Barcelona Bar Association expressed its «rejection and indignation»*”⁶³⁰ at protest policing. The citizenry appeared to share this view, as it was said that “*images of the police beating dozens of people with their hands up and sitting on the ground fuelled the [protest] movement*”⁶³¹.

⁶²⁷ «Uno de los colectivos acampados en la Puerta del Sol... parece haber descubierto un auténtico ejército de espías merodeando a su alrededor», *El Mundo*, “El CNI, «traidor del pueblo»”, published on May 26th, 2011 (my translation).

⁶²⁸ «“Sentido común, cautela, prudencia y, cuando ha sido necesario, contundencia”. Así justificó el consejero de Interior... la actuación de la policía autonómica», *El País*, “Los Mossos cargan contra el 15-M”, published on May 28th, 2011; «Sobre el trabajo policial, el consejero dijo que fue “correcto”», *El Mundo*, “La torpeza de los Mossos reactiva el 15-M”, published on May 28th, 2011 (my translation).

⁶²⁹ «Interior pidió ayer que no se ponga permanentemente en duda “el trabajo, la calidad, la solvencia y la entrega de la policía del país”», *El Mundo*, “Los acampados se organizan para presentar denuncias”, published on May 29th, 2011 (my translation).

⁶³⁰ «Todos los partidos de la izquierda le criticaron... El PSC consideró “desproporcionada” la actuación policial... ICV calificó la carga de “inaceptable, desproporcionada e injustificada”. Los sindicatos policiales de UGT y CC 00 reclamaron la dimisión del consejero, y el Colegio de Abogados de Barcelona expresó su “rechazo e indignación” por lo sucedido en la plaza», *El País*, “Los Mossos cargan contra el 15-M”, published on May 28th, 2011 (my translation).

⁶³¹ «La imagen de la policía aporreando a decenas de personas con las manos en alto y sentados en el suelo avivó el movimiento», *El País*, “Barcelona dibuja su propio camino”, published on June 19th, 2011 (my translation).

This would not be the only protest camp of the anti-austerity protest cycle that would be dislodged by forceful protest policing – that also occurred in Salamanca, with protesters denouncing excessive use of force, which the police classified as a minor scrap⁶³². In this instance, the securitising move is different, as its goal is to remove all importance from the protest event and subsequent protest policing, as both are framed as inconsequential in one single word.

The nationwide demonstrations of 2011 when newly elected local governments took oath also constitute eventful events concerning reactions to protest policing, as it was on this occasion that the Spanish Police Confederation, according to *El Mundo*, joined other vested actors, who remained unnamed, in asking the government for an increase in the intensity of protest policing of the *Indignados*⁶³³ – in another instance of the media claiming to voice the general view of the political community by positing that this was a common demand.

Protest policing of the “*Aturem al parlament*” protest event in Barcelona would, as expected, be the subject of a more uniform narrative, although with some nuances. While political parties in the opposition considered it “*insufficient and discriminatory*” (referring to the fact that MPs received different levels of police protection)⁶³⁴, all parties agreed on a joint *parlement* declaration asking “*the Prosecutor's Office to... take criminal action against those responsible for the attacks*”⁶³⁵. The *Mossos* would, a few days after, take this request seriously: it was reported that fifty elements of the riot police entered (“*stormed*”) the Barcelona City of Justice to arrest six *Indignados*, who were there precisely to surrender to the authorities, not posing any security risk or public order threat. On this occasion, the resource to the riot police was justified by the

⁶³² «En Salamanca, los acampados ... denunciaron una carga de la policía municipal... La policía de la ciudad reconoció el enfrentamiento y lo calificó de “rifirrafe”», *El Mundo*, “Miles de ‘indignados’ acosan a los electos en su toma de posesión”, published on June 12th 2011.

⁶³³ «Algunas voces pidieron ayer al ministro del Interior... una intervención policial contra los indignados... Confederación Española de Policía... pidió “contundencia” a Interior ante las “posibles provocaciones de los antisistema camuflados de indignados”», *El Mundo*, “Miles de manifestantes increpan a los electos en calles de toda España”, published in June 12th, 2011.

⁶³⁴ «“Insuficiente” y “discriminatorio [diferencia de trato a algunos diputados]” fueron los adjetivos más utilizados por los portavoces de la oposición para referirse al dispositivo de los Mossos», *El Mundo*, “Un operativo «insuficiente y discriminatorio»”, published on June 17th, 2011.

⁶³⁵ «El Parlament pidió ayer a la Fiscalía que... ejerza acciones penales contra los responsables de los ataques», *El Mundo*, “‘Indignados’ ante los tribunales”, published on June 22nd, 2011 (my translation).

Interior Department by the simple fact that they were the closest to the location⁶³⁶ – an explanation already seen in the Portuguese case when referring to an instance of contested protest policing.

The Interior Minister referred to protest policing of the day as an ongoing good practice: *“the Police and the Civil Guard act «firmly with those who engage in violent or intimidating behaviour» and with «intelligence and prudence with those who engage in peaceful behaviour», as they have been doing until now”*, a positioning shared by his party (a PSOE MP defended forceful protest policing⁶³⁷). This is yet another instance of protest policing being removed from the realm of issues that are up for public discussion, with only two dissenting voices (given much less room in the media sphere): that of 15-M, denouncing an attempt to stigmatise the movement, so as to justify police repression, and a manifest signed by fifteen intellectuals and jurists, whom the Catalan Interior Councillor threatened to sue for slander, since they had argued that some plainclothes police officers encouraged violence on that day’s protest event⁶³⁸ – a public statement that, again, reiterates that protest policing is not to be questioned, and is a clear example of penal populism extending from protesters to those supporting them.

An interesting case of protest policing during the anti-austerity protest cycle was the attempt to resume *Acampada* Madrid later in 2011, when police forces stated that the government had prevented them from making any arrests or charge against

⁶³⁶ «unos 50 agentes antidisturbios irrumpieron en ... Ciudad de la Justicia para detener a seis de los indignados que... habían acudido al juzgado para entregarse... A pesar de que los indignados no representaban ninguna amenaza de seguridad, el Departamento de Interior decidió enviar a su principal fuerza de choque, los antidisturbios, porque “eran los que estaban más cerca de la Ciudad de la Justicia”», *El País*, “50 antidisturbios irrumpen en los juzgados de Barcelona para detener a seis indignados”, published on October 7th, 2011.

⁶³⁷ «Alfonso Guerra defiende el uso de la fuerza contra los que quieren coaccionar... El ministro del Interior... aseguró que la Policía y la Guardia Civil van a actuar “con firmeza con quien tiene comportamientos violentos o intimidatorios” y con “inteligencia y prudencia con quien tiene comportamientos pacíficos”, como ha venido haciendo hasta ahora», *El Mundo*, “El ministro Rubalcaba promete «firmeza» con los violentos”, published on June 17th, 2011 (my translation).

⁶³⁸ «A su entender, hay un intento de “estigmatizar” a los indignados para justificar la “represión policial” contra ellos...15 intelectuales y juristas... firmaron ayer un manifiesto... El consejero de Interior... amenazó con denunciarle por calumnias al sostener que algunos mossos de paisano alentaron la violencia», *El País*, “El 15-M condena la violencia de Barcelona pero evita la autocritica”, published on June 18th, 2011.

protesters⁶³⁹. According to the police union SUP, they had been given the following orders – which they vehemently opposed:

“that no arrests are made, that no anti-riot material is used, and that protesters are prevented by all means from returning to [Puerta del] Sol... SUP emphasises that asking the police not to detain a person who commits a crime is illegal. They also ask if police officers «can be assaulted, having to stoically endure it without being able to use the means at their disposal». These orders... «in addition to being pathetic, are illegal». The [government] delegate...«must be the first to comply with the law, unless we are worse than in Franco's time»”⁶⁴⁰.

This statement is revealing of Spanish police forces standing, on this occasion, in clear opposition to the central government when it comes to protest policing as a governing strategy. In their view, government's orders were hindering the police's mission to protect the citizenry while, simultaneously, imperilling members of the police forces (as this statement openly highlights that the police attributed a high level of dangerousness to actors in the protest movement). This is a clear securitising move – meant to legitimise the role of the police as guardians of public order and citizen security, against a government that puts them at risk through *“illegal and pathetic”* orders. It is, in addition, another instance of the Spanish police referring to the dictatorship to sanction their role as the democratic guardians of public order – in the face of a government that is not willing to let them fulfil that mission.

On this occasion, and prior to the protest event, PP asked for forceful protest policing, but it would change its tune soon after, considering police intervention as excessive, resulting, however, directly from the government's mismanagement of the protest event, and not from any mistake by police forces. In fact, the party made its support for

⁶³⁹ «Los indignados del 15-M volvieron ayer a la carga... el sindicato policial SUP denunció que la delegada del Gobierno no les deja practicar detenciones ni cargar contra los manifestantes», *El Mundo*, “Los ‘Indignados’ intentan regresar a Sol y los policías denuncian que no pueden detenerles”, published on August 4th, 2011.

⁶⁴⁰ «Esas órdenes fueron tres: que no se produjeran detenciones, que no se empleara material antidisturbios y que por todos los medios se impidiera a los acampados volver a Sol. En un comunicado, el SUP... subraya que pedir a la policía que, aunque alguien cometa un delito no se le detenga es ilegal. También se preguntan si los policías “pueden ser agredidos y tienen que soportarlo estoicamente sin poder usar medios a su alcance”. Esas órdenes, según el sindicato, “además de ser patéticas son ilegales”. La delegada... “debe ser la primera en cumplir la ley, a no ser que estemos peor que en tiempos de Franco”», *El País*, “La policía blindo el centro de Madrid contra los indignados”, published on August 4th, 2011 (my translation).

the police clear (*"The police officers... are «first class professionals»"*)⁶⁴¹. This is, then, a moment of clear alignment between *Partido Popular* and the Spanish police forces against the government, using an instance of popular mobilisation as a queue for partisan politics. The fact that this was published on *El Mundo's* cover adds weight to the framing.

Protest policing of the first general strike of 2012 was also framed as necessary and appropriate, described as the only reason why workers and business owners were able to work in the face of violent resistance in *El Mundo's* cover (*"Police protection allowed workers and business owners to stand up to pickets"*⁶⁴²), and as particularly intelligent – and even kind (the police are said to have demonstrated *"cunningness, police psychology, and, in some cases, even sympathy"* to avoid any serious alterations of public security⁶⁴³). The Minister of the Interior agreed, and, further, considered the police as the keepers of the citizenry's constitutional rights, in

*"a letter to the Director of the Police... congratulating him for the work carried out by officers during... the general strike. «Citizens were able to exercise their constitutional rights freely thanks to the professionalism and responsibility of the police. I would like to congratulate all police supervisors, who worked brilliantly inside and outside in numerous deployments»"*⁶⁴⁴.

The dissenting voice would come from *El País*, which reported that protest policing may, actually, had been excessive, targeting, in particular, young people: *"At Puerta del Sol, dozens of anti-riot police stopped people wearing a union sticker, a T-shirt demanding*

⁶⁴¹ «los policías... son "unos profesionales de primera división"... el Gobierno "no actúa cuando debe hacerlo y sobreactúa donde no debe" ...El PP de Madrid había pedido un día antes de la carga policial mano dura para impedir las manifestaciones de indignados», *El País*, "Rubalcaba: «200 personas no pueden poner patas arriba una ciudad»", published on August 6th, 2011 (my translation).

⁶⁴² *El Mundo*, "La protección policial permitió a trabajadores y comerciantes plantar cara a los piquetes", published on March 30th, 2012 (my translation).

⁶⁴³ «La Policía tiró de oficio y de mucha, mucha mano izquierda para sortear y evitar situaciones delicadas y alteraciones graves de la seguridad pública durante la jornada de huelga general... Los mandos tiraron de mano izquierda, psicología policial y, en algunos casos, hasta de simpatía», *El Mundo*, "Unos agentes con mucha mano izquierda", published on March 30th, 2012 (my translation).

⁶⁴⁴ «El ministro del Interior... envió ayer una carta al director de la Policía... felicitándole por el trabajo desarrollado por los agentes durante la jornada de huelga general. "La ciudadanía pudo ejercer sus derechos constitucionales libremente gracias a la profesionalidad y responsabilidad de los policías". "Me gustaría que todos los mandos que trabajaron de forma brillante dentro y fuera de los numerosos dispositivos participen de esta felicitación", indica la misiva», *El Mundo*, "El ministro felicita a los policías", published on March 31st, 2012 (my translation).

*public education or, simply put, anyone who was young... Police agents (most with their identification number covered) said that they were just following «orders»*⁶⁴⁵.

PP government's staunchly positive evaluation of protest policing would be amplified at an instance of concerted mobilisation at the national and a few regional Parliaments, when it described protest policing as "*magnificent*", "*extraordinary*", "*splendid*", "*brilliant*" and "*exemplary*", an evaluation echoed by the police forces themselves – even if through less laudatory terms ("*there was «no inappropriate performance by any member of the National Police»*"). On this occasion, however, parties on the left disagreed – "*PSOE described police action as «clearly excessive»*" and IU referred to it as "*«uncontrolled police violence»*"⁶⁴⁶. Further, the presence of agent provocateurs was hinted at by leftist parties: "*Yesterday IU, Equo, and other parties echoed existing complaints... about alleged agent provocateurs among protesters, who not only controlled the violence from within – which is legal and normal – but also caused incidents and encouraged the rest of the Indignados to use violence»*"⁶⁴⁷.

On this occasion, (at least a part of) the citizenry disagreed with the government's evaluation of protest policing, and it was precisely to protest it that people took to the streets the following days⁶⁴⁸. In addition, PSOE and IU stood against what they perceived as the criminalisation of protest: PSOE posited that "*trying to accuse detainees of crimes against State institutions is exaggerated because the Penal Code requires that these actually crimes occur, something that was far from happening, in part thanks to the*

⁶⁴⁵ «*En la Puerta del Sol decenas de policías antidisturbios impidieron a mediodía el paso a la calle de Preciados... a cualquiera que llevase una pegatina sindical, una camiseta reivindicativa de la educación pública o, simplemente, fuese joven. Los agentes (muchos de ellos con el número de identificación tapado) se limitaron a señalar que cumplían «órdenes»*», *El País*, "Huelga de poco metro y mucha policía", published on March 30th, 2012 (my translation).

⁶⁴⁶ «*El Gobierno alaba la «magnífica» actuación policial el 25-S... general de la Policía... aseguró... que el martes no hubo «ninguna actuación inadecuada por parte de ningún miembro del Cuerpo Nacional de Policía»... PSOE calificó la actuación policial como «claramente excesiva»... IU... «violencia policial descontrolada»*», *El Mundo*, "La Policía seguirá actuando con la «máxima firmeza»", published on September 27th 2012 (my translation).

⁶⁴⁷ «*IU, Equo y otros partidos se hicieron eco ayer de denuncias existentes en las redes sociales sobre supuestos policías infiltrados entre los manifestantes que no sólo controlaban a los violentos desde dentro – lo cual es legal y normal –, sino que habrían provocado incidentes y animado al resto de los ‘indignados’ a usar la violencia»*, *El Mundo*, "IU: «Hubo policías encapuchados»", published on September 27th 2012 (my translation).

⁶⁴⁸ «*manifestantes expresaban indignación por la actuación policial, por las declaraciones posteriores del Gobierno afirmando que esta había sido «extraordinaria», «espléndida», «brillante» y «ejemplar»*», *El País*, "Tercera protesta masiva en Neptuno", published on September 30th, 2012.

action of the National Police Corps”⁶⁴⁹ (which is also a statement on the appropriateness of protest policing, contrasting with the party’s assessment above).

The final eventful protest event of this protest cycle concerning reactions to protest policing is the #ValenciaSpring protest campaign by community pupils against cuts in public funding for education by the regional government. While police intervention in protest events led by underage citizens (accused, as mentioned above, of being a public enemy by the chief of the regional police) was described as proportional by the regional government, this view was very contested – as indicated in the very declarations of the government delegate’s, who insisted *“there was no order to stop the protests and that proportionate action was taken to enforce the law”*⁶⁵⁰. Multiple vested actors would disagree. The media described forceful protest policing as unparalleled: *“The scenario of violence is unprecedented... not even during the emergence of the 15-M citizen movement... had we seen the police deployment and the forcefulness of recent days. The police justify it by alleging that the students have «insulted» them, «spat» on them and «bit» them during arrests”*⁶⁵¹ – with the police justification indicating a clear unbalance of power, reiterated in a title of one of the multiple articles reporting on protest policing of the protest campaign: *“Crushing pupils”*⁶⁵².

Leftist political parties were also very critical of protest policing – PSOE, IU, and ERC classified it as *“«police repression»”* and demanded the presence of the Interior Minister at the Parliament to explain it, and *Esquerra Unida* filed a complaint at the Youth Prosecutor’s Office⁶⁵³. In addition, these parties expressed that PP was instrumentalising

⁶⁴⁹ «PSOE e IU... aseguran que ha tratado de ... “criminalizar” la protesta... PSOE... tratar de imputar delitos contra las instituciones del Estado a los detenidos es exagerado porque el Código Penal exige que esos delitos se produzcan, cosa que estuvo lejos de ocurrir, en parte gracias a la acción del Cuerpo Nacional de Policía... IU ... PP ha tratado de “criminalizar al máximo” la protesta del 25-S», *El Mundo*, “PSOE e IU: Interior «exageró» los hechos”, published on September 28th, 2012 (my translation).

⁶⁵⁰ «la delegada del Gobierno en la Comunidad... había hecho hincapié en que no había orden alguna de atajar las protestas y que se había actuado proporcionadamente para hacer cumplir la ley», *El Mundo*, “La violencia se desborda en Valencia”, published on February 12th, 2012 (my translation).

⁶⁵¹ «El escenario de violencia no tiene precedentes... ni durante la irrupción del movimiento ciudadano 15-M... se había visto el despliegue policial y la contundencia de los últimos días. La policía lo justifica alegando que los estudiantes los han “insultado”, tirado “escupitajos” y dado “mordiscos” durante las detenciones», *El País*, “La policía detiene en Valencia a otros 26 estudiantes, al menos 5 menores”, published on February 21st, 2012 (my translation).

⁶⁵² *El País*, “Machacando a los estudiantes”, published on February 19th, 2012 (my translation).

⁶⁵³ «PSOE, IU y ERC pidieron la comparecencia en el Congreso del ministro del Interior... para que explique “la contundente represión” contra los alumnos... Esquerra Unida denunció los hechos ante la Fiscalía de

the pupils' protest campaign to convey a message to the Spanish citizenry: popular mobilisation over social cuts would be harshly repressed⁶⁵⁴.

Civil society organisations were also extremely scathing of protest policing on this occasion: the Spanish Confederation of Parents openly condemned it as excessive and as an unacceptable way of silencing protest⁶⁵⁵, and so did the Judges for Democracy Association, which issued a statement indicating the presence of “*«disproportionate and indiscriminate» use of force»*” and stating that “*police officers «were not wearing their mandatory identification badges»*”⁶⁵⁶. The political community seemed to be aligned behind these views, as it would take to the streets to “*«support» and «protect»*” pupils, rejecting the “*«criminalisation»*” of protesters enacted by the Government and the hierarchy of the Community police forces, via the enactment of the “*«biggest police deployment in democracy»*”⁶⁵⁷.

Eventually, the regional government would radically modify its protest policing strategy, replacing the riot police with agents of the regular police forces⁶⁵⁸ – revealing how protest policing is a governing strategy subjected to political decisions. Ultimately, the Prime Minister would issue the following, rather ambiguous statement: “*«Everyone has the constitutional right to demonstrate... but the Police Forces also have their functions. I think that if everyone acts with restraint and common sense, this type of thing will not*

Menores», *El País*, “La violencia policial en Valencia provoca un alud de críticas”, published on February 21st, 2012 (my translation).

⁶⁵⁴ «Las organizaciones de izquierda creen que los estudiantes han sido el colectivo utilizado por el PP para lanzar el mensaje de que las protestas por los recortes sociales serán reprimidas con dureza si van a más», *El País*, “Machacando a los estudiantes”, published on February 19th, 2012 (my translation).

⁶⁵⁵ «Confederación Española de Asociaciones de Padres y Madres de Alumnos condenó ayer la “desproporcionada” actuación policial... y cree “inaceptable que las autoridades de la Comunidad Valenciana quieran silenciar las voces críticas con su gestión”», *El Mundo*, “Estudiantes en pie de guerra por los recortes”, published on February 18th, 2012.

⁶⁵⁶ «La asociación Jueces para la Democracia emitió ayer un comunicado en el que indica que los vídeos apuntan a un uso de la fuerza “desproporcionado e indiscriminado” y señala que los agentes “no portaban la correspondiente placa de identificación”», *El País*, “Machacando a los estudiantes”, published on February 19th, 2012 (my translation).

⁶⁵⁷ «Miles de ciudadanos acompañaron ayer a los estudiantes para “solidarizarse” con ellos y “protegerlos”... Una “indignación” generalizada por la “criminalización” de los estudiantes que hicieron la Delegación del Gobierno y la Jefatura Superior de Policía de la Comunidad... participantes en la marcha de ayer calificaron como “la mayor actuación policial en democracia”», *El País*, “El arma del «enemigo» es un libro”, published on February 22nd, 2012 (my translation).

⁶⁵⁸ «Agentes municipales sustituyen a los antidisturbios y abren paso a los manifestantes», *El Mundo*, “El Gobierno cambia de estrategia y ordena guardar las porras a la Policía”, published on February 22nd, 2012.

*happen again, and I hope so because that is what Spain needs»*⁶⁵⁹. This declaration equates the two sides – police forces and protesters (as well as their supporters) – but it should not obscure that they were very different: in strength, in resources, in access to power and to the media, in age, in legitimacy, and in social capital, with the police taking the upper hand on all these aspects. This is reflected in declarations by Police labour unions, that unanimously dismissed any criticisms, considered as an insult and a cowardly act, and implied the judiciary would eventually validate their positioning⁶⁶⁰. These statements – by police labour unions and PP Prime Minister – although rather different in tone, serve the same purpose: removing the discussion on the (il)legitimacy and (lack of) appropriateness of police intervention from the public sphere.

Students' and pupils' popular mobilisation – as well as youth mobilisation in general – had, however, and as indicated above and in chapter 5, long been subjected to depoliticisation, delegitimation, and securitisation, and reactions to protest policing during their protest events fortified those frames. For example, when students expressed to *Ciutadans* that they were not welcomed in their demonstration of 2008 (and which resulted in the party equating them with Nazis), the party stated that protest policing was insufficient, thereby increasing the perceived dangerousness of protesters, but also attributing the absence of police action to a partisan choice (*“Regional Police took «more than half an hour» from when they were called until they came to help party members, something that they attribute to political «orders»*⁶⁶¹). And in 2014, students protest was described as increasingly aggressive, with resort to average and high impact repertoires justifying the need for forceful protest policing – including the presence of riot police on campuses (which was, however, described as reminiscent of the dictatorship):

⁶⁵⁹ «*“todo el mundo tiene el derecho constitucional a manifestarse... pero las Fuerza de Seguridad y del orden tienen también unas funciones. Creo que, si todo el mundo actúa con mesura y con sentido común, este tipo de cosas no se volverá a repetir, y ojalá que así sea porque eso es lo que necesita España”*», *El Mundo*, “Interior habla de «excesos» sin aclararse”, published on February 22nd, 2012 (my translation).

⁶⁶⁰ «*“ultranza” a los agentes... acto de cobardía política y personal... la actuación de los agentes fue la correcta y que han de ser “los jueces los que han de decidir”*», *El Mundo*, “Interior habla de «excesos» sin aclararse”, published on February 22nd, 2012.

⁶⁶¹ «*la Policía Autonómica tardó “más de media hora” desde que la llamaron hasta que acudió a socorrer a los manifestantes del partido algo que atribuye a “ordenes” políticas”*», *El Mundo*, “Agreden a Ciutadans en una marcha contra la Ley de Educación catalana”, published on November 14th, 2008 (my translation).

“Protest... lately has been... more virulent, with barricades, burned garbage containers... And the riot police have returned to campuses. The image goes back to the past, evoking the collective memory of the repression by Francoist police in universities... The rector of Complutense, whose progressive profile is known (...) admits his discomfort. «I didn't particularly like calling for police intervention... But since there was a hijacking of the vice-rector's office, there was no other choice»”⁶⁶².

On this occasion, the heir to the throne took a public stand on the side of the police forces: as published in *El Mundo*, “Prince Felipe telephoned the Director General of the Police... to inquire about the state of health of injured policemen and to express his solidarity with them... The Prince, thus, wanted to make clear his support for the forces who, protected by the Law, have the obligation to maintain citizen security”⁶⁶³.

There are, however, other instances when protest policing of student protest is described as excessive – that was the case in 2003 (“the police used unusual violence against hundreds of students who demonstrated peacefully and cheered... by citizens”), when police agents were said to don “pre-constitutional flags on the butts of their pistols”⁶⁶⁴, and in 2009, when protest policing at the anti-Bologna process demonstration at the University of Barcelona was described as a “spectacle of persecutions, indiscriminate beatings and, above all, lack of control” (on this occasion, however, police intervention was framed as necessary by the university rector, as students had crossed the “«red line of no violence»”⁶⁶⁵).

⁶⁶² «La protesta... ha sido últimamente algo más virulenta, con barricadas, quemas de contenedores... Y los antidisturbios han vuelto a entrar en los campus. La imagen retrotrae al pasado, por el recuerdo en el imaginario colectivo de la represión de la policía del franquismo en las universidades... El rector de la Complutense, cuyo perfil progresista es conocido (...) admite su incomodidad. “No me ha gustado especialmente pedir la intervención policial... Pero en el caso del secuestro del vicerrectorado no hubo más remedio”», *El País*, “Algo se mueve en la Universidad”, published on March 31st, 2014 (my translation).

⁶⁶³ «El Príncipe Felipe telefoneó al director general de la Policía... para interesarse por el estado de salud de los heridos y trasladarle su solidaridad hacia ellos.... El Príncipe quiso dejar así claro su respaldo a las fuerzas que, amparados por la Ley, tienen la obligación de mantener la seguridad ciudadana», *El Mundo*, “El Príncipe, con los policías heridos”, published on March 28th, 2014 (my translation).

⁶⁶⁴ «La policía empleó ayer una violencia inusitada contra los centenares de estudiantes que, de forma pacífica y vitoreados... por los vecinos, se manifestaron... la actitud desafiante de los agentes, algunos de los cuales lucían banderitas preconstitucionales en la culata de sus pistolas», *El País*, “Decenas de miles de estudiantes toman la calle”, published on March 21st, 2003 (my translation).

⁶⁶⁵ «espectáculo de persecuciones, golpes indiscriminados y, sobre todo, descontrol... El rector de la UB pidió a los mossos el desalojo... por entender que los alumnos habían “trespasado la línea roja por la no violencia”», *El País*, “El desalojo de estudiantes 'anti-Bolonia' degenera en violencia en Barcelona”, published on March 19th, 2009 (my translation).

These nuances are mostly amiss from reactions to protest policing of occupations, as there are multiple instances of public calls for more intense protest policing of this protest repertoire: in 2006, both PP and *Ciudadanos* called for the end of any permissiveness towards squatters (on this occasion, protest policing was framed as appropriate by the Barcelona City Hall)⁶⁶⁶, PP would repeat the statement in 2010, when police did not immediately evict activists despite their access to a gasoline deposit, calling, in addition, for an adjustment of the Penal Code: *“the leader of PP in the Barcelona City Council... demanded «an end to the impunity enjoyed by anti-system [activists] in the city» and to harden the Penal Code”*, so authorities could act more effectively⁶⁶⁷. And following the eviction of a 2011 occupation in which 422 people participated, by a deployment of 350 elements of the riot police, the Catalan Interior Councillor, who described protest policing as perfect, further added: *“«From now on, impunity has ended with those who think that occupying private property and disturbing public order is part of the landscape of Barcelona and Catalonia»”*. Here, however, multiple civil society organisations described protest policing as unjustified and disproportionate⁶⁶⁸.

A different framing of protest policing would emerge during the aforementioned 2014 protest campaign against the demolition of an occupied cultural centre in Barcelona, when some of the tactics used by the police were deemed as excessive: 300 riot police officers resorted to kettling, maintaining 255 protesters in a limited space over a period of three hours, and took their photos without any consent, practices questioned by

⁶⁶⁶ «alcalde de Barcelona... defendió la actuación policial... *“La manifestación fue pacífica, por tanto, se ha actuado correctamente y con profesionalidad”*», *El Mundo*, “PP y CiU acusan al Gobierno y al Ayuntamiento barcelonés de permisividad ante los ‘okupas’”, published on December 4th, 2006.

⁶⁶⁷ «El líder del PP en el Ayuntamiento de Barcelona... ha reclamado *“poner fin a la impunidad de los antisistema en la ciudad”* y endurecer el Código Penal para poder actuar contundencia», *El Mundo*, “Archivada la causa de la ‘okupación’ del edificio Banesto”, published on January 7th, 2011 (my translation).

⁶⁶⁸ «“A partir de ahora se ha acabado la impunidad con quienes piensan que ocupar propiedades privadas y alterar el orden público forma parte del paisaje de Barcelona y de Cataluña”... el conseller... felicitó a los Mossos d'Esquadra porque *“todo funcionó a la perfección”*... Mediante un comunicado firmado por 13 entidades, el grupo *“lamentó, una vez más, una intervención policial injustificada, absolutamente desproporcionada y del todo desmesurada”*», *El Mundo*, “El Govern de Mas emplea mano dura contra los ‘okupas’”, published on January 24th, 2011 (my translation).

experts and by the Catalan Coordinator for the Prevention of Torture, all considering them outside the realm of legality⁶⁶⁹.

Lastly, the positioning on protest policing in pro-independence protest is aligned with the positioning of the vested actor as pro or against independentist claims. For those standing in opposition to the cause, protest policing in pro-independence protest is often framed as insufficient. That was the case in the aforementioned 2009 pro-independence protest event with destruction of a screen in a public space, when *El Mundo* lamented the absence of protest policing, an argument mimicked by *Ciudadanos* (“*Ciudadanos... reproached Mossos for not preparing any special security measures*”)⁶⁷⁰. Protest policing of a 2011 boycott of PP speakers by independentist youth in Catalonia was, too, described as insufficient given young protesters’ violent and dangerous behaviour, not only by the *Guardia Civil*, but also by the political party: “*The Civil Guard... consider themselves powerless to control individuals whom they defined as «violent and dangerous»... PP denounced Civil Guard’s «lack of foresight» when organising the event*”⁶⁷¹.

But it would be protest policing of the 2017 Catalan referendum that would clearly expose different positionings, with extensive reporting on the break of policing by consensus on the part of the Catalan police forces. The hierarchy of *Mossos d’Escuadra* is said to have failed to uphold their constitutional duties to maintain the rule of law and to have disobeyed the Judiciary’s order to stop the plebiscite. They were

⁶⁶⁹ «La policía optó por rodear a los manifestantes formando una férrea línea de 300 antidisturbios... los agentes les pidieron la documentación según el procedimiento habitual. Pero los mossos fueron más allá: grabaron en vídeo los DNI y tomaron fotografías de los manifestantes sin su consentimiento... Coordinadora Catalana para la Prevención de la Tortura... “Estas prácticas claramente no tienen encaje legal”... “Identificar a una persona y retener-la tres horas no tiene cobertura legal. Y en cuanto a las fotos... pueden ser una infracción del derecho a la propia imagen”, asume el catedrático de Derecho Penal... El experto añade que las identificaciones en la calle... deben realizarse “ante la sospecha de que se ha cometido un delito, no para saber si se ha cometido”, *El País*, “Los juristas cuestionan que los Mossos retratasen en la calle a 225 manifestantes”, published on June 2nd, 2014.

⁶⁷⁰ «No hubo heridos ni detenidos. Por qué actuar entonces? Así lo entienden los Mossos, que han optado por no investigar ni proceder a la identificación de los responsables... Poco importa que unas 200 personas – incluido un buen número de menores – tuvieron que huir... Ciudadanos... reprochó a los Mossos que no prepararan ninguna medida especial de seguridad», *El Mundo*, “‘Kale borroka’ sin castigo”, published on June 22nd, 2009 (my translation).

⁶⁷¹ «Guardia Civil... considerarse impotentes para controlar a unos individuos que definieron como “violentos y peligrosos”... PP denunció la “falta de previsión” de la Guardia Civil al organizar el acto», *El Mundo*, “La Guardia Civil rescata a Acebes y a Piqué en otro ataque a un acto del PP en Cataluña”, published on October 11th, 2011 (my translation).

further accused of acting as “«a political police, disobeying and betraying the trust that judges and prosecutors had placed in them»”, and expected to face well-deserved legal consequences (the judiciary stated its “«concern and disappointment.... for the [regional police’s] failure to comply with their constitutional duty... and this betrayal of the rule of law will have criminal consequences»”⁶⁷²), in another instance of a public sphere trial.

Mossos’ intervention was contrasted with that of the national police forces, deemed as appropriate and necessary – and more so in comparison with that of a “disloyal” police force⁶⁷³: “textbook police intervention – quick, effective, without a drop of blood or images of violence to open the news”; “A quick, hygienic intervention [by] the legitimate force of the State... A clean intervention. Liberal. And, given the circumstances, touchingly proportionate”⁶⁷⁴.

The national police were also said to incarnate the very essence of democracy, and their intervention was further framed as appropriate when posited in contrast with foreign police forces – “The exemplary work of the Spanish Police... embodied democratic reason... This performance could be compared, proportionately!, to... that of the German, British, American, or French police when they set themselves the task of clearing the streets”⁶⁷⁵. The media description of protest policing was echoed by the

⁶⁷² «La fiscalía está descontenta con la inacción de los Mossos d’Esquadra para evitar los preparativos de la consulta ilegal del 1 de octubre», *El País*, “Los Mossos desoyen la orden de la fiscalía de impedir el referéndum”, published on September 20th, 2017; «Ocho jueces catalanes investigan ya a los Mossos d’Esquadra por su desobediencia para impedir el referéndum... Los jefes de los Mossos d’Esquadra actuaron ayer como “una policía política, desobedeciendo y traicionando la confianza que jueces y fiscales habían depositado en ellos”... “La holgazana pasividad de los Mossos tendrá consecuencias penales para los responsables de esta desobediencia”... “preocupados y decepcionados” por “la quiebra de la confianza depositada en ellos” y el incumplimiento de su deber constitucional “en un Estado de derecho como es España”... “Y esta traición al Estado de derecho traerá consecuencias penales”», *El País*, “Los jueces investigan tanto la desobediencia de los Mossos como las lesiones a ciudadanos”, published on October 2nd 2017 (my translation); *El Mundo*, “Jueces y fiscales dejan de confiar en los Mossos por su inacción”, published on October 8th, 2017.

⁶⁷³ «La Policía Nacional y la Guardia Civil, sin embargo, intervinieron con mayor contundencia para impedir la consulta», *El País*, “La orden judicial que cambió los planes”, published on October 2nd, 2017; «hubo de bregar con los colegas desleales», *El Mundo*, “La paz, la ley, la fuerza”, published on October 2nd, 2017.

⁶⁷⁴ «intervención policial de manual —rápida, efectiva, sin una gota de sangre ni imágenes de violencia para abrir los teledisarios», *El País*, “«Nunca pensamos que fuera tan peligroso»”, published on October 2nd 2017; «una acción rápida, higiénica [por] la fuerza legítima del Estado... Un orden limpio. Liberal. Y, dadas las circunstancias, conmovedoramente proporcionada», *El Mundo*, “De una puta y un español”, published on October 2nd, 2017 (my translation).

⁶⁷⁵ «La ejemplar labor de la Policía española... encarnar... la razón democrática... Esta actuación cabría compararla, iproporcionadamente!... con la de las policías alemanas, británicas, americanas o francesas cuando se ponen a la tarea de despejar las calles», *El Mundo*, “La paz, la ley, la fuerza”, published on October 2nd, 2017 (my translation).

government, which, in addition, labelled protest policing as a proportionate response to the violent behaviour exhibited by people participating in the referendum⁶⁷⁶ – *“Moncloa defended the proportionality of police action by broadcasting comparative videos of other police forces in the European Union and a scene... in which several civil guards rushed into two jeeps, pursued by a mob that chased them throwing rocks”*. The appropriateness of protest policing was further communicated by the fact that the government opted not to use the only water cannon truck, which the Ministry of the Interior had, nonetheless, moved to Barcelona the week prior. The fact that this truck was purchased in 2014⁶⁷⁷, following the anti-austerity protest cycle, is also significant, as it implies the intention, or the ever-presence threat, to intensify protest policing.

The last reaction to protest policing of the referendum worth mentioning is that of *Ciudadanos*, which adopted an ambiguous position which, nonetheless, framed police intervention as insufficient: *“Although the party’s official position was to support the action of the security forces and those of the Government, Rivera showed... that the Executive could not speak of “success”... in the face of the “unforeseen” police charges or “attacks on police officers”*. The party leader also criticised that there were only 10,000 agents in Catalonia”⁶⁷⁸.

This framing of protest policing contrasts with that of supporters of independentist claims, who mostly framed protest policing as excessive – ERC Catalan mayors stated that the *Guardia Civil* charged disproportionately and indiscriminately against *“peaceful people”* and argued that police intervention had been violent and anti-democratic⁶⁷⁹.

⁶⁷⁶ «La Moncloa defendió la proporcionalidad de la actuación policial emitiendo vídeos comparativos de otros cuerpos de policías en la Unión Europea y una escena... en la que varios guardias civiles se montaban a la carrera en dos jeeps para huir perseguidos por la turba que les corría a cantazos», *El Mundo*, “El largo día en que la Policía tuvo que ir sufriendo a los Mossos”, published on October 2nd, 2017; «El Gobierno... denunció “violencia” contra sus agentes», *El Mundo*, “Policías y guardias realizan cargas ante la pasividad de los Mossos”, published on October 2nd, 2017.

⁶⁷⁷ «El único camión antidisturbios con cañón para lanzar chorros de agua a presión que posee y que el Ministerio del Interior trasladó a Barcelona la semana pasada... El vehículo fue adquirido en 2014... pero hasta ahora no ha disparado ningún chorro de agua», *El País*, “Interior no estrenó el ‘camión-botijo’”, published on October 2nd, 2017.

⁶⁷⁸ «Aunque la posición oficial del partido fue la de apoyar la acción de las fuerzas de seguridad y la actuación del Gobierno, Rivera mostró... que el Ejecutivo no podía hablar de “éxito” ni tampoco estar “eufórico” ante las cargas policiales “no previstas” o las “agresiones a policías”... también criticó que solo hubiera 10.000 agentes en Cataluña», *El País*, “Ciudadanos apoya al Ejecutivo, pero lamenta su «ingenuidad»”, published on October 2nd, 2017 (my translation).

⁶⁷⁹ «Guardia Civil... han optado por cargar de forma desmesurada contra gente en actitud pacífica...criticaba... alcalde (ERC)... “Que han herido a gente de 80 años yendo contra todos de forma

The *Generalitat* president, unsurprisingly, added that police intervention during the referendum constituted an instance of “*serious police violence*”, and invited the international community to recognise that⁶⁸⁰. The regional government also denounced that the “*riot police used rubber bullets – prohibited by law in Catalonia*”⁶⁸¹.

Pro-independence actors were not alone in considering protest policing as excessive – in an official statement, labour unions UGT and CCOO posited that “*«the State’s judicial apparatus failed to maintain the expected proportionality, having shown its most repressive side*”⁶⁸². CCOO, in addition, considered that the police forces had carried out a “*violation*” of “*fundamental rights and democratic freedoms*”⁶⁸³. That was also the positioning taken by PSOE, whose president stated: “*I want to make our profound disagreement with the police charges clear*”. The party would also state that excessive protest policing was, in their view, the government’s responsibility, as the police were following “*political orders*” (it maintained, nonetheless, its support to the government “*in defence of legality against secessionism*”⁶⁸⁴). Once elected, the PSOE government reiterated that positioning on the anniversary of the public consultation, when it declared that police charges of the day had been a mistake⁶⁸⁵.

indiscriminada”... alcalde ERC ... tras la carga policial que dejó a varios vecinos heridos, calificó los hechos como “graves, violentos y antidemocráticos”», El País, “Le vamos a dar la Cruz de Sant Jordi a Rajoy”», published on October 2nd, 2017 (my translation).

⁶⁸⁰ «*Puigdemont... Su segundo mensaje se dirigió a la comunidad internacional, a la que emplazó a tomar nota de la “grave violencia policial”», El País, “Rajoy recurre a la fuerza policial para descabezar el referéndum ilegal”, published on October 2nd, 2017 (my translation).*

⁶⁸¹ «*los antidisturbios de la Policía usaron bolas de goma –prohibidas por ley en Cataluña desde hace tres años», El Mundo, “Policías y guardias realizan cargas ante la pasividad de los Mossos”, published on October 2nd, 2017 (my translation).*

⁶⁸² «*“La intervención del Gobierno y del aparato judicial del Estado no ha guardado la proporcionalidad que era exigible y ha mostrado su cara más represiva”... afirmaron los sindicatos... en un comunicado conjunto», El País, “Críticas de UGT y CC OO a la intervención”, published on October 2nd, 2017 (my translation).*

⁶⁸³ «*CCOO... vulneración” de “derechos fundamentales y libertades democráticas” que, a su juicio, ayer llevaron a cabo las fuerzas de seguridad del Estado», El País, “El soberanismo, sindicatos y pymes llaman a la huelga general”, published on October 2nd, 2017 (my translation).*

⁶⁸⁴ «*mantuvo su apoyo al Ejecutivo en defensa de la legalidad ante el secesionismo... “Quiero dejar claro nuestro profundo desacuerdo con las cargas policiales en el día de hoy”, criticó Sánchez, quien despojó de la responsabilidad de las mismas a las fuerzas y cuerpos de seguridad, ya que estos “cumplen órdenes políticas”», El País, “Sánchez reclama a Rajoy que negocie con la Generalitat”, published on October 2nd, 2017 (my translation).*

⁶⁸⁵ «*ejecutivo tacha de error las cargas de la Policía Nacional e de la Guardia Civil contra los participantes», El País, “El Gobierno tacha de «error» las cargas de la consulta ilegal”, published on October 2nd, 2018.*

The same divide is found in subsequent pro-independence protest events – protest policing was again deemed as insufficient by the media during the Catalanian strike following the referendum (*“permissiveness of the security forces”; “police forces’ passivity”*⁶⁸⁶) and on a 2018 protest event supporting the use of the Spanish language in education in the region (*“Mossos allow the CDR to boycott a march for Spanish language”*⁶⁸⁷). This trope would be repeated during the demonstrations marking the first anniversary of the referendum, when local police were again accused of passivity (which was, in addition, supported by the regional government and tolerated by the central government⁶⁸⁸): *“Despite the forecast of large mobilisations... called days in advance, Mossos chose to maintain a low profile and allowed activists to enjoy great freedom of movement... police deployment was insufficient to contain the CDR”*⁶⁸⁹. This stands in contradiction to the evaluation of protest policing by the Ministry of the Interior, who *“praised Mossos’ strategy ...as «very balanced»”*.

Protest policing of the *Procès* demonstrations – necessary as a defence of the constitution and of the rule of law⁶⁹⁰ – would also be framed as insufficient: it was implied that the Catalan police were at particular disadvantage, given the rising intensity of protest repertoires and the temporal length of the protest: *“Deprived, in addition, of anti-riot material, such as gas and rubber balls, the regional police witness how their foam projectiles are of little use in these scenarios”*⁶⁹¹. The police also declared that their means were insufficient given the virulence exhibited by some protesters (*“«We were*

⁶⁸⁶ «La permisividad de las fuerzas de seguridad, que sólo actuaron a última hora de la tarde para restablecer los servicios que llevaban 12 horas interrumpidos», *El Mundo*, “Una minoría bloquea Cataluña ante la pasividad policial”, published on November 9th, 2017 (my translation).

⁶⁸⁷ *El Mundo*, “Los Mossos permiten el boicot de los CDR a una marcha por el español”, published on September 17th, 2018 (my translation).

⁶⁸⁸ «elementos más radicales del independentismo catalán... provocar graves incidentes. Lo hicieron con la pasividad de los Mossos, el aliento de Torra y la complacencia del Gobierno de Sánchez», *El Mundo*, “Torra cede a los violentos la calle con el plácat del Gobierno”, published on October 2nd, 2018 (my translation).

⁶⁸⁹ «Pese a la previsión de grandes movilizaciones... convocadas con días de antelación, los Mossos optaron por mantener un perfil bajo y permitieron gran libertad de movimientos a los activistas... el dispositivo resultó insuficiente para contener a los CDR... Ministro del Interior... elogió la estrategia de los Mossos... como “muy equilibrada”», *El Mundo*, “Torra espolea a los radicales”, published on October 2nd, 2018 (my translation).

⁶⁹⁰ «Policía y Mossos defienden la legalidad constitucional y estatutaria», *El País*, “Sanchez garantiza ante la violencia «firmeza, unidad y moderación»”, published on October 17th, 2019.

⁶⁹¹ «Privada, además, de material antidisturbios, como gas y pelotas de goma, la policía autonómica ve como sus proyectiles de foam sirven de poco en estos escenarios», *El País*, “La mecha se extiende a todas las capitales”, published on October 20th, 2019 (my translation).

*close to losing the battle. They were looking to kill someone»*⁶⁹²), despite the fact that this was the first occasion when police use a water jet to disperse protesters⁶⁹³. On this occasion, the ERC framed protest policing as appropriate, albeit rather ironically – it would, in reaction to police intervention during the attempt to occupy El Prat airport (the action which started the protest events), state that *Mossos* had actually protected those who were protesting, since, by stopping them on their tracks, they had guaranteed protesters would not be accused of serious crimes (including sedition, the charge that was at the root of the protest event)⁶⁹⁴.

To conclude this section, there are a few eventful protest events throughout the series that deserve particular mention – firstly, protest policing of the demonstrations protesting the World Youth Journey in 2011 was described by *El Mundo* as tardy and not particularly forceful, although still effective (indicating that forceful police intervention was exactly what was needed to put an end to the outrageous behaviours reported by the newspaper⁶⁹⁵). What is more, on this occasion, police unions called for the monopoly of decision-making in protest policing of demonstrations: they *“recalled that the Police had previously sent several reports to the Government Delegation in which they warned of the risks if the march passed through Puerta del Sol, but they were not heard. To prevent the repetition of similar events, they asked politicians to let the Police direct future police deployments”* in protest events⁶⁹⁶.

Protest inside the galleries of the parliament is also of particular interest, with PP (national and regional) governments describing it as necessary to maintain public order

⁶⁹² *El Mundo*, “«Hemos estado cerca de perder la batalla. Buscaban un muerto»”, published on October 20th, 2019 (my translation).

⁶⁹³ «*Es la primera vez que se usa la tanqueta desde que se compró en los noventa*», *El País*, “Un camión de agua para frenar a los disturbios”, published on October 20th 2019.

⁶⁹⁴ «*ERC... alegó que los Mossos en realidad actuaron para “proteger” a los manifestantes. “Podrían haber invadido las pistas de aterrizaje, acto por el que te pueden acusar de delitos tan graves como la sedición”*», *El Mundo*, “Torra avala la protesta violenta”, published on October 16th, 2019.

⁶⁹⁵ «*la Policía, casi tres horas después de que comenzaran las agresiones, había cargado finalmente contra los indignados... Más tarde... comenzaron las cargas. No fueron muy fuertes, pero bastaron para que los manifestantes comenzaran a dispersarse*», *El Mundo*, “Los anti Papa agreden a peregrinos”, published on August 18th, 2011.

⁶⁹⁶ «*Sindicato da policía...recordó que la Policía había remitido previamente varios informes a la Delegación del Gobierno en los que advertía de los riesgos si la marcha pasaba por la Puerta del Sol, pero no fueron atendidos. Para evitar que se repitan hechos similares, pidió a los políticos que dejen a la Policía dirigir los dispositivos de seguridad*», *El Mundo*, “Críticas y peticiones de dimisión a la delegada del Gobierno”, published on August 19th, 2011 (my translation).

and the rule of law – such was the case in the 2000 protest event at the Castilla y León parliament, defended by PP and criticised by PSOE and IU as intrinsically anti-democratic⁶⁹⁷, and in 2010, on a protest by Saharawi activists, when the same dynamics are present, with the (PP) Parliament president requesting protest policing and PSOE, IU, and ICV describing it as excessive and unnecessary, as well as reminiscent of protest policing during the dictatorship (“*«Just like in the times of fascism»*”)⁶⁹⁸.

The analysis presented above highlights the presence of complex dynamics between law enforcement, protesters, and political actors, but it, first and foremost, illustrates how protest policing is, more often than not, framed as necessary and appropriate in response to perceived threats during protest events. This is particularly the case in protest events with forceful protest policing, contributing to the framing of these events as security issues.

Two main actors emerge in framing protest policing as a guarantee of the safety and security of the citizenry: police forces themselves and the government, both frequently framing protest situations as security threats, justifying increased police presence and intervention. This is evident in the calls for more protest policing during strikes, anti-austerity demonstrations, and youth mobilisation. During the Catalanian crisis, however, a clear divide emerges between protest policing by national police forces – appropriate, necessary, and irrevocably democratic – and that of regional law enforcement, framed as insufficient, negligent, and undemocratic, ultimately putting the *demos* at risk.

It is worth noting that, on some occasions, the government frames protest events as potential public order issues, even before they occur. By emphasising the need for police

⁶⁹⁷ «*una medida sin precedentes desde que el Teniente Coronel Antonio Tejero tomara el congreso de Diputados en 1981*”...Presidente...“*tiene la obligación de mantener el orden en todo o recinto*”, y aseguró que se limitó a cumplir el reglamento... La intervención de Guardia Civil dentro del recinto de parlamento fue defendida por el PP... IU mostró indignación “por la ocupación de la Guardia Civil de un espacio inviolable como es el Parlamento regional”», *El País*, “La Guardia Civil irrumpe en el Parlamento de Castilla y Leon para expulsar 10 sindicalistas”, published on November 14th, 2000 (my translation).

⁶⁹⁸ «El PSOE y el IU han presentado una queja formal por la “desproporcionada” actuación policial... con el lamento de IU: “Como en los tiempos de lo fascismo!”... Presidente... “les ruego expulsen de la sala a quienes gritan y tomen sus nombres, por si estuviesen cometiendo alguna falta o delito. Entréguelos a la comisaría del Congreso”... Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds (ICV)... calificó de “desproporcionada e innecesaria la detención”» *El Mundo*, “Detenidos seis horas por insultar a los diputados en el Pleno”, published on December 3rd, 2001 (my translation).

intervention based on the potential for violence, it, then, seeks to securitise protest events, passing the message to the public that they are threats to public order which require a security response, enacted in the presence of a strong, very visible security apparatus – including the riot police or police helicopters. The government's insistence on the legality and appropriateness of forceful protest policing further contributes to the securitising narrative. At times, however, as seen during the first *Acampada Sol*, the government's framing of protest policing can vary – while it firstly enacted a pre-emptive justification for potential police action, emphasising preparedness for violence, it would later justify the absence of police intervention, citing the peaceful nature of the protest. What is more, this framing of protest policing clearly posits it as a governing strategy, as demonstrated also by the shift in police intervention during the #ValenciaSpring protest campaign, with public reactions shaping public discourse and public action.

This is indicative of different reactions to protest policing articulated by different actors, in different moments and in different positionings. Whilst the central government (both PSOE and PP led) and some political parties (mostly right leaning) often accept and even advocate for strong police intervention, framing it as necessary for maintaining order and security, political opposition (mostly leftist, but, at times, also the PP), labour unions and other CSOs, and some local authorities contest these moves, accusing the police of excessive force and of limiting the right to protest. There are, then, some contradictory narratives regarding the effectiveness and appropriateness of protest policing, with some considering a necessary and expected response to potential violence and disruption, while others view it as excessive and as an infringement on the right to protest.

Partisan struggles further complicate the issue, as seen in the divergent reactions from political parties (mainly PP and PSOE). The absence or presence of police intervention becomes a point of contention and part of their broader political narratives, illustrating how protest policing can become a political battleground. This is particularly salient when considering the “good vs. bad citizens” narrative exposed in the previous chapter, which also emerges here – the authorities are positioned and position themselves as the good citizens, against perceived threats from protesters, the bad members of the polity. This is evident in the contrast drawn between the government's praise for police forces

as guarantors of public security and the negative portrayal of protesters as engaging in violent actions.

One aspect that emerges with more strength in Spain than in the neighbouring country is the presence of securitisation by silence – this occurs when reactions to protest policing aim to remove the discussion of its legitimacy from the public sphere, seeking to establish it without any concurrent narrative. This is evident in the police forces' and the government's dismissal of criticism and demands for accountability, as well as in expressed reluctance to engage in a public discussion on the appropriateness of police intervention, contributing to a narrative of silencing dissent through non-discussion, positioning protest policing beyond debate or questioning – and clearly exhibited in this 2015 utterance by the chief of the Catalan police force: “«We, Mossos, do not have to prove anything, people must presume that we do things well»”⁶⁹⁹.

Media outlets also contribute to the securitisation of protest by shaping the public perception of protest policing. Two different strategies were clearly identified. At times, the media – specifically *El Mundo* – suggest that the (PSOE) government refrains from protest policing for electoral reasons, questioning its ability to maintain law and order. This narrative potentially securitises the decision-making process, implying that political considerations may override security concerns, undermining the legitimacy of the government's actions, and reflects how media narratives can influence public opinion regarding the motives behind protest policing decisions. On other occasions, they contribute to the securitisation framework by portraying protest policing as a textbook, necessary, and proportionate response. This framing enhances the perception of protest movements as security threats that require decisive and legitimate action.

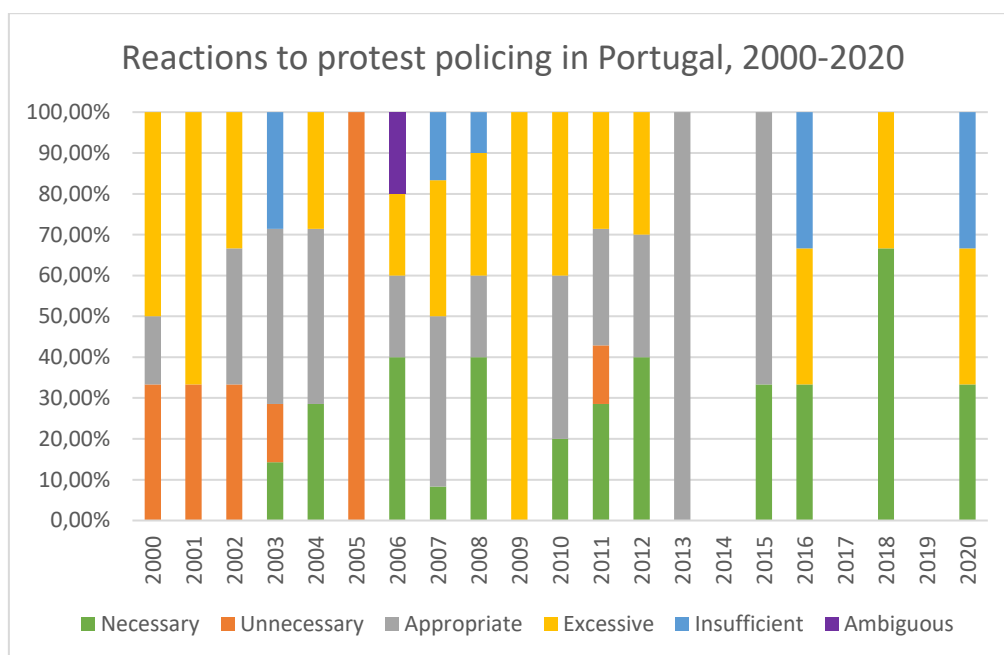
At times, contested protest policing and government's positive appraisal of it fuels protest movements, indicating a divide in public perception of the appropriateness of police intervention. These are instances of failed securitisation, as the public, at whom securitising moves are aimed, clearly rejects it – as seen during the #ValenciaSpring, the *Acampada* Barcelona, or in anti-austerity protest events fuelled by the framing of

⁶⁹⁹ «comisario jefe de los Mossos: “Los Mossos no tenemos que demostrar, se debe presumir que hacemos las cosas bien”», *El Mundo*, “Los Mossos, en el punto de mira por los incidentes en la ciudad”, published on August 13th, 2015 (my translation).

contested protest policing as excellent and exquisite by the central government. Public acceptance of securitising moves on protest policing is, then, not guaranteed, as demonstrated by the Spanish case.

This chapter concludes with the analysis of the yearly evolution of reactions to protest policing. In Portugal (figure 129), the percentage of reactions to protest policing that frame is as necessary shows some variability, peaking in 2004 and 2011 (28.6%), 2006, 2008 and 2012 (40%), 2015, 2016 and 2020 (33.3%), and 2018 (66.67%). It is, thus, in the second half of the series, that this type of reaction to protest policing is more prevalent. Protest policing is framed as appropriate, by contrast, more frequently in the first half of the series (over 40% in 2003 and 2004, at 42.9% and 2007 – 41.7%), as well as during the anti-austerity protest cycle (40% in 2010, 28.6% in 2011, 30% in 2012 and 100% in 2013) and in 2015 (66.7%). As for the framing of protest policing as insufficient, this is particularly important in 2003 (28.57%), 2016 (33.3%), and 2019-2020 (33.3%).

Figure 129. Yearly reactions to protest policing in Portugal, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

On the negative side, protest policing is considerably seen as unnecessary in the first six years of the series (33.3% between 2000 and 2002, and 100% in 2005), a perception that is virtually absent from then on. And protest policing is considered excessive particularly in the first two years considered here (50% in 2000-1) and at the height of the Great

Recession (100% in 2009, 40% in 2010, 28.6% in 2011 and 30% in 2012). This is also present in the last third of the series, namely in 2016, 2018 and 2020 (33.3%). It is worth pointing out, however, that reactions to protest policing that see it as excessive are scattered throughout the series, being a relatively common utterance.

There are, then, several years when positive framings of protest policing in the country dwarf negative perceptions, representing over two thirds of all reactions to police intervention in protest events. namely 2003 (85.7%), 2004 (71.4%), 2006 (75%), 2007 (66.7%), 2008 (70%). This corresponds to reactions to protest policing in student protest of 2003-2004 and in labour related mobilisation targeting the PS government in 2006-2008. This would only occur again at the end of the anti-austerity protest cycle (2012 – 70%; 2013 – 100%), and again in 2015 (100%). That is also the case in the last four years that are relevant here (66.7% in 2016, 2018 and 2020). Furthermore, from 2003 onwards, positive framings of protest policing outweigh negative frames in every significant year.

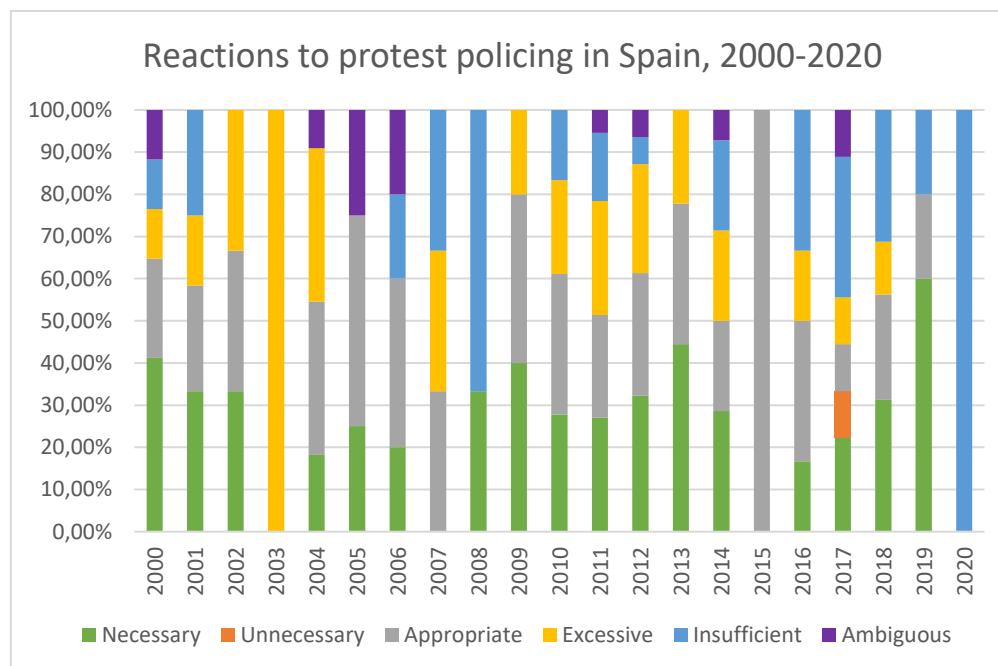
By contrast, it is only in the period between 2000 and 2002 that negative perceptions of protest policing are more important (83.3% in 2000, 100% in 2001 and 66.7% in 2002). This is a testament to the gradual disappearance of negative reactions to protest policing – unless they frame it as excessive, a statement more likely to make it to the news due to its intrinsic mediatic value.

In Spain (figure 130), there is only one negative reaction to protest policing – that framing it as excessive (as the unnecessary frame is virtually absent from the series), occurring mostly in the first ten years – 33.3% in 2002, 100% in 2003, 36.4% in 2004 and 33.3% in 2007. This reaction to protest policing is also relatively common during the anti-austerity protest cycle and its immediate aftermath, when it oscillates between around 25% – 22.2% in 2010, 27% in 2011, 25.8% in 2012, 22.2%, in 2013 and 21.4% in 2014. The frame, then, is significantly less significant than in the Portuguese case (with the exception of 2003), and that contrast remains valid until 2020.

Protest policing is described as necessary and appropriate throughout the series (and these frames often occur, as per the analysis above, in combination). Police interference in protest events is seen as necessary in over one third of occurrences in 2000-2002

(41.2% in 2000, and 33.3% in 2001-2002), 2008-2009 (33.3% and 40%, respectively), 2013 (44.4%) and 2019 (60%), and this is also a significant occurrence in 2010 and 2011 (27.8% and 27%). As for protest policing labelled as appropriate, this is particularly relevant in 2002 (33.3%), 2004 to 2007 (36.4%, 50%, 40% and 33.3%, respectively), 2009-2010 (40% and 33.3%), 2013 and 2016 (33.3%) and 2015, when it is the only frame present (100%). In combination, these two frames total over two thirds of reactions to protest policing in six years of the series (2002, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2015 and 2018), and 60% or over in another four years (2000, 2006, 2010 and 2012) – these are, then, the most current frames on protest policing during moments of higher popular mobilisation in the country.

Figure 130. Yearly reactions to protest policing in Spain, 2000-2020.



Own elaboration.

The variations in perceiving protest policing as "insufficient" show an interesting pattern, with peaks in 2001 (25%), 2006 (20%), 2007 (33.3%), 2008 (66.7%) 2014 (21.4%), and in the last five years of the series – 33.3% in 2016 and 2017, 31.3% in 2018, 20% in 2019 and 100% in 2020. This corresponds, naturally, to the intensification of independentist claims in protest events with protest policing, as well as to the rise of protest events against the far-right presence in the Spanish electoral sphere, with VOX

(but also *Ciudadanos*) denouncing police passivity in protecting their party members⁷⁰⁰. This is, too, evidence of an intensification of the securitising discourse around protest policing, with calls for more police intervention in protest events becoming more prevalent as new “law and order”, populist, far right parties emerge in the electoral sphere – this should not occlude, however, that this is a trope frequently used by PP before.

Considering the three positive frames of protest policing in combination, they topple three fourths of all reactions to protest policing in Spain in thirteen years – 2000-2001 (76.5% and 83.3%), 2005-2006 (75% and 80%), 2008 to 2010 (100%, 80% and 77.8%, respectively), 2013 (77.8%), 2015 (100%), 2016 (83.3%) and 2018 to 2020 (87.5% in that first year and 100% in the final years of the series). There are, inclusively, four years when reactions to protest policing are exclusively positive at the end of the series, revealing that the media space is exclusively taken by evaluations of protest policing that are either supportive, or request the intensification of police intervention in protest events. There is, then, a rise in the presence of a positive law and order discourse around protest in the country.

It is also worth noticing that, in Spain, positive perceptions of protest policing are, particularly from the anti-austerity protest cycle onwards, accompanied by utterances declaring – mainly by PP elected representatives – the need to intensify police practices or to limit or punish protest:

- While vehemently defending forceful protest policing of the *Acampada* Barcelona, the Catalan Interior Councillor stated that the regional government was considering equipping riot police with micro cameras⁷⁰¹,
- Following the first 2012 general strike, he would publicly demand a “*firm hand*” to punish participants in the day’s incidents, stating that he would “*push the law to its limits, and even further*”, a statement echoed by the Barcelona mayor, who “*was the first to demand that the Penal Code prosecute acts of vandalism more*

⁷⁰⁰ “Santiago Abascal, que denunció la permisividad policial con los agresores”, *El Mundo*, “Agresión a Vox en plena campaña vasca”, published on June 19th, 2020.

⁷⁰¹ «El actual consejero de Interior... ha defendido con vehemencia la actuación de los Mossos... Interior estudiará la posibilidad de equipar a los antidisturbios con microcámaras», *El País*, “«No he podido darles ni una colleja»”, published on May 31st, 2011.

harshly”; the PP spokesperson in the Barcelona *Ayuntamiento*, in addition, demanded the application of “«kale borroka *anti-terrorist legislation*»” and the *Generalitat* declared that it would consider modifying the law to address the type of protest repertoires⁷⁰² enacted on the streets during the strike,

- Already in government in 2012, “*Popular Party put on the table the possibility of limiting – or «modulating», in the words used by the Government delegate in Madrid... – the exercise of one of the fundamental rights in the Constitution: the right of assembly and demonstration. This is one of the political and judicial initiatives... emerging in the aftermath of last week's Rodea al Congreso demonstrations*”⁷⁰³ – in this case, however, the media outlet (*El País*) clearly rejects this initiative, as per the tone of the article,
- PP government’s reactions to “*escraches*” further reinforced the need to limit the geography of protest, proposing to instal a security perimeter around the homes of PP politicians targeted by PAH, and recommending a fine for participants in this type of protest events of 300 euros⁷⁰⁴,
- Finally, a protest event against the *Ley de Seguridad Ciudadana* was received with one simple comment from the party: “«*Demonstrations will be freer because they will be protected from violent people*»”⁷⁰⁵.

⁷⁰² «El titular de Interior... se ha caracterizado... por pedir y aplicar mano dura... aseguró... que iba a “tensar la ley hasta allí donde esté permitido y un poco más”... presidente del ayuntamiento... fue el primero en reclamar que el Código Penal persiga con más dureza los actos vandálicos... la Generalitat buscará... estudiar cómo se puede modificar el marco legal para que esta violencia no quede impune... El portavoz del PP en el Ayuntamiento de Barcelona... exigió que se aplique la legislación antiterrorista de la kale borroka a los alborotadores», *El País*, “La Generalitat pide mano dura contra la «guerrilla urbana»”, published on March, 31st, 2012 (my translation).

⁷⁰³ «El Partido Popular ha puesto sobre la mesa la posibilidad de limitar – o “modular”, según las palabras utilizadas por la delegada del Gobierno en Madrid... – el ejercicio de uno de los derechos fundamentales de la Constitución: el derecho de reunión y manifestación. Se trata de una de las iniciativas políticas y judiciales... que ha dejado la resaca de las tres manifestaciones de la semana pasada bajo el lema Rodea el Congreso», *El País*, “El derecho de reunión se ejerce molestando”, published on October 4th, 2012 (my translation).

⁷⁰⁴ «Ministro explicó que no se ha dado una instrucción generalizada para que se ponga en marcha un cordón de seguridad ... alrededor de cada vivienda de representantes del PP que sea objetivo de la plataforma antidesahucios», *El Mundo*, “Cordón policial en las viviendas de los ‘populares’”, published on April 11th, 2013; «una misma sanción económica para los identificados que podría rondar los 300 euros», *El Mundo*, “Más de una veintena de escraches al PP”, published on April 7th, 2013.

⁷⁰⁵ «“Las manifestaciones serán más libres porque estarán protegidas de los violentos”», *El País*, “El PP aprueba en solitario y entre protestas la ‘ley mordaza’”, published on December 12th, 2014 (my translation).

The framing would continue past the approval of the Citizen Security Law – in 2014, the Interior Ministry, reacting to a PP law proposal in the Madrid Community to ban protest events from Puerta del Sol (defended on the basis that the regional government was “«not asking that the legally recognised right [to assembly] be limited»”, but, rather, “«asking that [protest] is not all concentrated in the same geographical point»”) reiterated that he considered “the possibility of delimiting a specific place in which to concentrate protest was very opportune”. While this possibility was strongly rejected by leftist parties in the opposition – IU considered the proposal “«unconstitutional»” and “«provocative»”, UPyD (*Unión Progreso y Democracia* – Union, Progress and Democracy), considered that it was against the law, and PSOE stated this constituted a limitation on “«a fundamental right»”⁷⁰⁶, this possibility had actually been considered by this very party when in government, reacting to the attempt to reset *Acampada Sol*, when the PSOE Ministry of the Interior proposed reaching an agreement with 15-M by giving them a “«stable place»” where the movement could continue its “«information activities»”⁷⁰⁷ – a proposal that not only attempted to geographically limit protest, but further voided it of contestation, an aspect that is central for popular mobilisation, by reframing the movement as an informational act, rather than a political movement.

This would not be the only time that PP and PSOE would agree in relation to the need to control – and ultimately sanction – protest. In 2015, both parties approved a reform of the Penal Code (proposed by PP) that constituted a clear securitising response to street politics. This included a reform of article 550 (see chapter 2), introducing the notion that serious intimidation in resisting police orders constituted an attack (with no definition of serious intimidation) and corresponding penalties (including prison sentences and fines), the inclusion of a list of potentially dangerous objects whose use

⁷⁰⁶ «El propio ministro del Interior... quiso que quedara claro que le parece muy oportuna la posibilidad de acotar un lugar específico en el que concentrar los actos reivindicativos... proponer que se restringieran las protestas en la Puerta del Sol: “No estamos pidiendo que se limite el derecho legalmente reconocido, pero sí que no se concentren todas en el mismo punto geográfico. Madrid es muy grande”, argumentaban en el Gobierno autonómico... El PSOE cree que esta polémica por limitar un “derecho fundamental”... IU cree que la propuesta «no sólo es inconstitucional, sino provocadora»... UPyD consideró que “no se puede hacer” porque no tiene cabida en la legislación», *El Mundo*, “Interior echa un capote a Botella”, published on March, 28th, 2014 (my translation).

⁷⁰⁷ «“Apostamos por un acuerdo para que el 15-M pueda tener un lugar estable para informar”», *El Mundo*, “El PSOE exige un sitio para que los ‘indignados’ atiendan a la gente”, published on August 5th, 2011 (my translation).

would incur in heavier sentences (including throwing blunt objects, a high impact repertoire that had gained traction during the anti-austerity protest cycle – article 511, point 2), and, most significantly, the norm establishing that anybody who disrespects a member of the authority forces in active duty (or failed to show them “*due consideration*”) would be punished with a fine of one to 3 months (article 556, point 2) – another provision whose interpretation can widely vary.

Most importantly, it is from this point in time onwards that aggravated penalties are given to actions that disturb public order (and “*public peace*”, which can be read as social cohesion or democratic polity) occurring during protest events (as mentioned in the text of the law, “*large demonstrations or reunions*” – article 557 bis, point 3) and to perpetrators (aka protesters) covering their faces (article 557 bis, point 6). Furthermore, a new provision concerning occupations was entered into the Code: article 557 ter reads:

“Those who, acting as a group or individually, under a group protection, invade or occupy, against the will of the owner, the domicile of a public or private legal entity, an office, establishment or any place, even if it is open to the public, causing a significant disturbance of the public peace and [citizens’] normal activity, will be punished with a prison sentence of three to six months or a fine of six to twelve months, unless the acts can be punishable with a longer penalty, in accordance with other provisions included in this Code.”

Additionally, this revision included the introduction of the European Union’s definition of terrorism into the Penal Code (article 573), greatly expanding the catalogue of actions which can be considered terrorist acts, including destroying public and private property carried out for the purposes of “*subverting the constitutional order, or seriously suppress or destabilise the functioning of political institutions or the economic or social structures of the State*”, as well as forcing public authorities to either perform or abstain from performing certain actions⁷⁰⁸ – a definition that can also be used to describe protest,

⁷⁰⁸ The Portuguese Penal Code includes an almost word-by-word mirrored version of these dispositions in article 300, point 2: “A terrorist group, organisation or association is any grouping of two or more persons who, acting in concert, aim to undermine national integrity or independence, prevent, alter or subvert the functioning of state institutions provided for in the Constitution, force a public authority to perform or refrain from an action”.

whose ultimate aim is, in many occasions to force public authorities to either enact or abstain from particular doings.

Taken together with the provisions laid down in the 2015 Citizen Security Law (laid out in detail in chapter 2), particularly the inclusion of new offences (such as recording images of police officers in active duty) and the aggravation of their level of seriousness, coupled with the intensification of sentences and monetary fines, one can argue that, at the end of the series analysed here, Spain witnessed the constitution of a legislative hostile environment from protest and protesters, increasingly limited, restricted, punished, surveyed, and, ultimately, securitised⁷⁰⁹. This legislative hostile environment was, furthermore, accompanied and reinforced by a discursive landscape in which the legitimacy, efficacy, and meaning of popular mobilisation were growingly negated and invalidated.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that different securitising moves targeting protest transpire with different intensities and are enacted by different actors across the Iberian public sphere, occurring with much higher frequency and strength in Spain, where protest is also more frequently depoliticised and delegitimised.

While the most striking difference between cases is the more common occurrence of all securitising moves in Spain, the ‘protest as terrorism’ move emerges as particularly relevant. This is a frame called upon to securitise protest on the basis of the country's recent past, used to construct protest as a security problem and a threat to the political community, and is particularly salient in relation to youth protest and to emerging social movements from the anti-austerity protest cycle onwards. Framing protest as terrorism justifies the call for legislative amendments to limit the right to protest and for harsher protest policing tactics, and it is not incidental that this occurs in instances when

⁷⁰⁹ It is worth noticing that it was also in 2015 that the sentence of “reviewable permanent prison” was introduced in Spain, approved, as the Gag Law, with PP’s parliamentary votes.

protesters are described as bad citizens, with no legitimate right to enact dissent in the public sphere.

This frame is, in addition, also used in partisan competition, as different parties on the right side of the electoral spectrum resort to this frame to disqualify left wing opponents – both on the streets and on the ballots. In essence, the use of the terrorism frame in the context of protest events is a powerful tool employed by those with discursive power to delegitimise, stigmatise, and, ultimately, criminalise street politics, effectively instrumentalising the collective memory of past terrorist experiences.

This analysis also revealed that the anti-austerity protest cycle posed new security challenges to protest policing, which are, again, more visible in Spain. These challenges emerge in geographical terms, as protest extended across both countries, at times adopting unconventional repertoires involving the prolonged occupation of public space (*“Acampadas”*, particularly securitised in Spain), in temporal terms, as dissent was prolonged in time and repeated in multiple moments, often called via innovative means (SMS, emails, social media), and in demographical terms, due to the consistently high number of participants in protest events and their diversity. This relates closely to different securitisation temporalities, with protest events being the object of securitising moves before, during, and after their occurrence, particularly since the beginning of the protest cycle:

- Securitisation prior to the protest event, through preventive police control, narratives justifying and legitimising preventive protest policing and through statements discouraging participation in popular mobilisation, deemed as a potential security problem;
- Securitisation during the protest event, through the use of bellicose terms to refer to protesters and protest repertoires, or through judgement calls of protest policing as a proper response to the protest event on account of the threat it posed to security referents; and
- Securitisation post-protest event, through calls for more and more intense protest policing and legislative changes to limit the range and effects of protest, through the judicialisation of protesters and protest organisers (imposition of fines and prison sentences), through the identification of protesters in political

discourse and in the media with radicals or extremists, or through silence, by removing protest policing from the realm of public discussion.

This analysis also revealed the presence of different securitisation mechanisms through which securitising moves are discursively constructed, deemed as their integral constituent parts, and, at times, occurring simultaneously – and across the border:

- The protest event is securitised through dislocation of the protest target – the protest target ceases to be that defined by protest participants or organisers, to become another entity, identified by securitising actors – i.e., order, safety, the polity, the highest institutions of the state, the police forces as guarantors of security for the citizenry,
- The protest event is securitised through its mediatisation – the media acts as a significant securitising actor: it is the reporting on the protest event that emphasises that it constitutes a risk or a threat to the political community or public safety,
- The protest event is securitised through comparison – the protest event is described by vested actors as a rising security problem or existential threat, be it in comparison to past protest events in the country or to protest events in other countries; in alternative, reference to past protest events that had been previously the object of a securitising move are made, reminding the audience of the ubiquitous presence of that problem / threat,
- Criminalisation – the protest event is described as a crime that should be dealt with by the police forces or the judiciary; and, in close connection to this mechanism, and
- Securitisation of protesters and protest organisers – protest participants and protest organisers are collectively described as posing a risk / threat to the political community or to public safety.

Positive reactions to protest policing constitute additional securitising moves, and are particularly salient in Spain, although this analysis revealed the existence of a range of opinions regarding the appropriateness of protest policing in both case studies. While a significant proportion of reactions acknowledges the need for protest policing, there are

concerns in both countries about the excessive use of force during protests, revealing a nuanced and evolving landscape of public opinions on protest policing. This should, however, not occlude that, the same way that protest is described in more pungent terms by Spanish vested actors, so is protest policing lauded in much stronger expressions than found in Portugal. The fluctuations indicate that reactions to protest policing are often framed in accordance with the left-right cleavage, with parties on the left in both countries framing protest policing as excessive more frequently than those on the right, which are more prone to defend actual levels of police intervention in protest events and, particularly in Spain, calling for its intensification.

Nonetheless, this analysis also revealed that reactions to protest policing are influenced by specific events, changes in political and social contexts, and the strategies employed by law enforcement. Understanding these nuances is crucial for policymakers and law enforcement agencies to address concerns, build trust, and adapt their approaches to align with public expectations.

Considering reactions to protest policing in combination with the analysis of securitising moves found in relation to protest, it is not possible to conclude that the securitisation of protest occurs in Portugal, despite a growing presence of securitising moves, accompanied by depoliticisation and delegitimation of popular mobilisation. That is not the case in Spain, where protest has been increasingly securitised, as revealed by the growing presence and intensification of securitising moves. This, however, does not signify that the securitisation of protest is fully accepted by the political community, which is seen resisting securitising moves on multiple occasions.

In Spain, too, the securitisation of protest occurs simultaneously with the framing of police forces as guarantors of democracy – in sharp contrast with Portugal, where this is not present. Here, rather, protest policing is often described as a last resort, so as not to hinder the democratic practice of protesting.

In conclusion, this chapter revealed the existence of different securitising responses in Portugal and Spain. It also uncovered the difficulties in securitising highly participated protest – not only in practice (in terms of actual protest policing), but also discursively, as securitising moves are more frequently contested when a high proportion of the

citizenry joins or supports a protest event. Discussions on protest policing, thus, result in a complex narrative where multiple vested actors engage in a continuous debate between security and civil liberties.

The securitisation framework helps understand how these dynamics unfold, emphasising the role of political actors in framing and contesting the securitisation of protest events. In this sense, then, the discourse surrounding the appropriateness of protest policing is a battleground where securitisation plays out. The analysis reveals how issues are framed, narratives constructed, and debates shaped within the context of security, reflecting a dynamic interplay of political, social, and ideological factors.

Conclusion

“Se em democracia uma greve geral é uma forma legítima de protesto, então a forma normal, sem incidentes, como tudo decorreu foi um sinal de maioridade da nossa democracia” [«If in democracy a general strike is a legitimate form of protest, then the normal, uneventful way in which everything unfolded was a sign of the coming of age of our democracy»], Público’s editor-in-chief, 2002⁷¹⁰.

“La labor de los agentes antidisturbios consistió en «defender la democracia»”
[«The role of the riot police consisted of “defending democracy”», Ignacio Cosidó, general director of the Spanish national police, 2012⁷¹¹.

This work’s conclusion opens with quotes on protest and the state of democracy in the Iberian Peninsula, the ultimate concern of this dissertation. Has Portuguese democracy indeed come of age at the beginning of the twentieth century? How has it aged since then? How healthy is it at its 50th anniversary? What about Spanish democracy? Does it need to be defended by police in riot gear and, if so, what kind of statement is that about its state? The main conclusions of this investigation are discussed below in relation to these interrogations.

Protest and protest policing in the Iberian Peninsula

This work added to the existing literature on the Iberian protest arena (Accornero and Ramos Pinto, 2015; Portos, 2016; Flesher Fominaya, 2017; Carvalho, 2018; Portos and Carvalho, 2019; Fernandes *et al.*, 2020, 2021; Fernandes and Araújo, 2024; Matos *et al.*, 2021; Romanos and Sádaba, 2022) by demonstrating that the Portuguese protest sphere has been categorised by an extraordinary level of homogeneity, with labour unions and labour related issues continuing to take central stage in a protest arena that remains

⁷¹⁰ Público, “Sem Surpresas”, published on December 11th, 2002 (my translation).

⁷¹¹ El Mundo, “La Policía seguirá actuando con la «máxima firmeza»”, published on September 27th, 2012 (my translation).

very much left leaning, with traditional actors and traditional demands in relation to labour, capitalism, and inequality at the core of popular mobilisation. Even during the anti-austerity protest cycle, when new social movements were able to repeatedly mobilise a significant amount of the population, labour unions and leftist political parties remained at the helm of popular mobilisation, crafting a public message that reflected the same traditional claims which had been expressed in previous protest cycles and continued to feature in street politics past the Great Recession. The quick retreat of those social movements (mainly QSLT and *Geração à Rasca*) from the streets attests to the fugacity of the innovations they introduced in the Portuguese protest sphere.

The Spanish protest sphere, in contrast, is characterised by a higher degree of heterogeneity, in terms of participants and organisers, demands expressed in the public sphere, or types of repertoires, but also concerning the main targets of dissent. While labour unions remain an important mobiliser, this work established that Spanish (mostly independentist, leftists, but also mainstream rightist) political parties are also quicker to take to the streets, and so are a variety of citizen initiatives which have been calling protest events around a diversity of issues which include clearly political demands, often centred on the very meaning of democracy and framed in terms of protection of and requests for human rights. What is more, the Spanish protest arena emerges as more open to collective, horizontal dynamics – reflected on the type of repertoires which become current from the anti-austerity protest cycle onwards, but also on the ethos of new protest and political actors emerging from that cycle (i.e., PAH or *Podemos*). Importantly, the unprecedented demobilisation of the Portuguese citizenry did not find correspondence in Spain, where the protest landscape swiftly transitioned from expressing opposition to austerity to rallying around rights (particularly gender equality) and independence and sovereignty matters.

I have argued elsewhere (Araújo, 2023) that the homogeneity of the Portuguese anti-austerity protest movement stifled some of the specific demands uttered by a variety of citizen initiatives which joined the protest cycle and whose claims remained vastly unheard – namely women, feminist, and LGBTQIA+ grassroots organisations, including well-established associations with over forty years of activism. It is possible to extend that conclusion to the series analysed here to argue that new and old social movements

face barriers in a Portuguese protest sphere dominated by established labour unions and leftist political parties – although those organisations often protest, their claims are not viewed as a valid concern of the whole political community and are often given very little importance. For example, LGBTQIA+ mobilisation – and namely Gay Prides marches, which constitute some of the most participated protest events in Spain across the series – is reported in Spanish newspapers as protest events featuring multiple civic and political demands, whilst, in Portugal, the same instances of popular mobilisation are described as apolitical street parties. Post-modern, current, actualised concerns, thus, appear more frequently in the Spanish protest sphere, and this indicates a higher level of inclusivity in Spanish democratic practices.

This investigation also zoomed on the role of political parties as mobilisers of protest, uncovering important dynamics – starting with their more active role in Spain, and particularly those rooted in the Basque Country and Catalonia. In Portugal, it is, again, traditional leftist parties (with a primacy of the Communists and the Left Bloc) which are responsible or adhere to a higher proportion of popular mobilisation, but, additionally, old and new far-right parties organise a higher proportion of protest events than their Spanish counterparts. Remarkably, other Portuguese political actors, or even the media, have not been particularly reactive to this type of mobilisation, which could be evidence of the existence of a sanitary cordon around the far right in Portugal, which the entrance of *Chega!* in the national parliament appears to have started to erode.

Conversely, the results presented here are not indicative of *Podemos* in Spain taking the role of a protest party (della Porta, 2020, ch. 4) – and certainly not more than PSOE or PP. What is more, the mainstream right's absence from the Portuguese protest arena finds no correspondence in Spain, where PP, while in opposition, has been active in both organising and standing as an ally of highly participated protest events, a finding which contradicts Robert Fishman's (2011, p. 241; 2019, pp. 81-82) view of the party as generally averse to street politics. The role of PP emerges as particularly relevant for this investigation and will be further discussed below.

Another innovation presented in this work is the categorisation of protest repertoires in accordance with their impact, an option that impedes value judgments on the appropriateness of the form taken by collective action. The respective analysis revealed

that the Iberian protest arena is predominantly characterised by low-impact repertoires, albeit with a higher prevalence in Spain compared to Portugal (which, conversely, exhibits a notably lower proportion of high-impact repertoires). This discrepancy is due to the greater significance of average-impact repertoires in the last country, primarily attributable to the pervasive occurrence of strikes – another factor reinforcing the classic, traditional nature of Portuguese popular mobilisation.

One methodological novelty of this dissertation is the use of protest event data to analyse protest policing. The first important finding presented here is that, in the Iberian Peninsula, protest policing is not dependent on the legality of a protest event and appears, in fact, quite detached from what protesters actually do (as it is mainly low impact protest repertoires that feature in protest events with police control). However, and as posited in chapter 4, protest policing inherently serves as a mechanism for articulating a narrative on popular mobilisation, conveying perceptions of a protest event as illegal or illegitimate, and as a potential risk necessitating control or eradication. This work also posits that this narrative is heightened with the presence of the riot police or the military in protest control, actors which are – and most predominantly the riot police engaging in forceful protest policing tactics – a substantially more common sight in the Spanish protest sphere, particularly during the first half of the series and the Great Recession.

In Portugal, the last few years in the series are noteworthy due to the confluence of a heightened incidence of protest policing (including high intensity tactics), a decrease in the number of protest events and participants, and the absence of reported illegitimate activities. This investigation, thus, points to a shift in protest policing strategies across the Iberian Peninsula in the first twenty years of the 21st century, with a growing tendency for high intensity protest policing in Portugal, contrasting with a reduction in the neighbouring country, which is significant since this coincides with heightened mobilisation around divisive claims, particularly evident during the peak of the Catalanian independentist movement. As posited before, however, this should not occlude that the prevalence of protest policing (including of forceful policing strategies) is much more pervasive in Spain.

Although there is convergence across cases on the type of protesters (activists) and protest organisers (citizen initiatives) whose protest events are more often policed, this work also posited that the higher prevalence of protest policing in Spain can be related to the diversity of the Spanish protest sphere. Citizen initiatives and activist groups (which are, in addition, mostly young) are less established organisations, lacking labour unions' privileged access to the media and to political actors, and are intrinsically diverse – this confluence of factors appears to influence the perception of their protest events as potentially more susceptible to risk, thereby increasing the likelihood of active police control. Analogous reasoning could elucidate the incidence of protest policing directed at youth-led protest. This is particularly noteworthy for young protesters, as these encounters may shape their perceptions of popular mobilisation as illegitimate, potentially dangerous, and an undesirable practice, and deter them from engaging with the (informal and formal) political.

Finally, and concerning the protest policing typology established by Donatella della Porta and Herbert Reiter (1997), this investigation identified a rise in coercive protest policing tactics, in line with previous studies (della Porta and Fillieule, 2004, pp. 219-220; della Porta and Reiter, 2006, pp. 185-196; Wahlström, 2011, p. 21; Wood, 2014). As the first study using protest event data to assess the presence and type of protest policing (to this work knowledge), this is an important contribution. And whilst the data does not allow for the identification of information-based protest policing (although, and particularly in the Portuguese case, security forces themselves inform the citizenry that their actions during the anti-austerity protest cycle placed a strong emphasis on those), it did, however, found evidence of police forces across the border actively adopting the strategy of intentional media spin identified by Lesley Wood (2014, pp. 39-40), present, in particular during the anti-austerity protest cycle (as illustrated in the aforementioned Portuguese example and in Spanish police forces claiming the role of guardians of democracy – as will be further explored below).

Framing protest and protest policing in the Iberian Peninsula

This investigation also focused on reactions to protest policing, uncovering that these are mostly positive across the border – albeit more in Spain, as these are balanced in Portugal with an important proportion of evaluations of police control of popular mobilisation which frame it as excessive or unnecessary, uttered mostly by labour unions and leftist political parties and present, in particular, in reaction to protest policing of highly visible protest events (such as the anti-austerity protest cycle, the labour rights and preservation of public services campaign of 2007-2008, and the University student protest against rise tuition costs of 2003-2004). Whilst this is, again, demonstrative of the traditional composition of the Portuguese protest arena, it is also indicative of the existence of a public debate on the legitimacy of protest policing, centred on the preservation of the citizenry's right to protest.

In this country, law enforcement agencies frequently characterise their approach to handling protest as fitting by emphasising their role as maintainers of public order whilst simultaneously not interfering in the development of popular mobilisation (and, at times, protest organisers echo these considerations). This is a very different positioning from Spanish police forces, which often justify (forceful) protest policing by stating their claim to the role of guardians of democracy – and particularly when protest takes place at the seat of popular sovereignty –, thereby constructing (forceful) police intervention in protest events as intrinsically democratic and, simultaneously, questioning the legitimacy of popular mobilisation as a democratic practice. This is a most interesting media spin tactic (Wood, 2014, p. 39-40), indicative of a different understanding of democracy as exclusively electoral in the second country, but also of a contrasting understanding of the police as a normative barrier between electoral representatives and their electorate (a view absent from the Portuguese protest sphere – as per the words of the PS prime minister at the beginning of the series: “*I do not want a country*

*where the prime minister puts the riot police on the streets to avoid contact with people»*⁷¹²).

Despite these significant differences, both the Portuguese and the Spanish governments, in reacting to instances of protest policing, predominantly seek to affirm its legitimacy, especially in situations where that is challenged by other stakeholders. This stance is also adopted, in Portugal, by the President of the Republic, who, though generally absent from other framings of protest, occasionally asserts his alignment (and that of the whole Portuguese citizenry) with practices of protest policing.

The Spanish government, both PSOE and PP-led, however, often laud protest policing as imperative to maintain security and public order, with PP, particularly, constructing a dichotomy between good and bad citizens, with the good citizens being police officers who, under the attack of ‘bad protesters’, are able to defend the citizenry and preserve their fundamental rights (beyond those which are associated with protest). In this sense, legitimacy is lent to the police forces’ assertion of their role of guarantors of democracy.

Moreover, the Spanish government, regardless of orientation, has pre-emptively portrayed protest events as potential threats to public order, emphasising the legality and suitability of robust protest policing, and has, along with police corps themselves, actively removed protest policing from the realm of issues that can be fully discussed in the public sphere, rejecting criticism and calls for accountability – and, ultimately, contributing to a narrative of stifling dissent. Furthermore, commencing with the anti-austerity protest cycle, government's favourable perspectives on protest policing frequently coincide with declarations advocating the imperative to intensify law enforcement tactics or impose constraints and penalties on popular mobilisation. While initially articulated by the PSOE government, the PP subsequently elevates this discourse to new heights, progressively positioning itself as the preeminent law-and-order party and clearly enacting penal populism.

The quantitative analysis presented in this work, thus, suggests that there is a greater normalisation of forceful protest policing within the Spanish context, and this was

⁷¹² «*“Não quero um País onde o primeiro ministro põe o Corpo de Intervenção nas ruas para evitar o contato com as pessoas”*», *Diário de Notícias*, “*Marcha anti-Judas em Cascais*”, published on February 11th, 2001 (my translation).

confirmed by the qualitative probe, which also advanced that positive evaluations of protest policing can constitute securitising moves, which are notably more current in Spain. These represent, however, merely a subset of the securitisation mechanisms at play in reaction to popular mobilisation in the country. This study, in fact, unveils an escalating prevalence of what Michael Loadenthal (2018, p. 50) terms the “*terrorisation of dissent*”, present in the public framing of protest as terrorism, with the goal of discrediting it, its participants and organisers, but also opponents in the realm of electoral politics. This occurs through the strategic deployment of rhetoric devices as thought terminating clichés (Dimitrov *et al.*, 2021) such as “*kale borroka*”, *Herri Batasuna*, or ETA, drawing parallels between Spain's recent history of internal terrorism and contemporary expressions of popular mobilisation. Presenting protest in this manner characterises street politics as a security problem, and this securitising discourse's emphasis on youth and emerging social movements is not incidental.

This investigation agrees with Loadentahl (2018, p. 53) concerning the strong “*public disciplinary effect*” embodied by this type of utterances but contends that these also have the effect of destroying mechanisms of solidarity and identification with protesters that are essential for the survival and success of social movements, effectively criminalised by these discursive tropes. They further create the conditions for increased polarisation, which is one of the conditions detrimental to the maintenance of a healthy democracy.

This work further contends that, in Spain, a discursive threshold has been surpassed, as consensual, ordinary protest events featuring low-impact repertoires (and, at times, highly participated) are branded the work of Nazis, fascists, conspirators, and / or terrorists. This labelling effectively positions collective action outside the political realm, and has been applied to pupils, students, and teachers, the *15-M* and the *Indignados*, participants in ‘*mareas*’, youth, and pro-independence activists, all collectively depicted using similar semantic tools. This is also indicative of another semantic leap, that equating protest with a hate crime – with a multiplicity of victims, such as tourists, the monarchy, right wing politicians (including the far-right party Vox) and the whole Spanish citizenry.

The discursive construction of the dichotomy good vs. bad citizens, mentioned above in the discussion on reactions to protest policing, occurs, in fact, at a basic level, where members of the polity are classified as ‘bad citizens’ simply because they protest, and as ‘good citizens’ when they refrain from doing so – or, in Spain, when they join demonstrations led or expressly supported by PP. The findings in this investigation, thus, go beyond Ella Muncie’s (2020, pp. 470-474) study of anti-fracking mobilisation in the UK, where the same dichotomy is identified, lying at the porous boundary between legitimate and illegitimate protest. Although that boundary is relevant, citizens who engage in legitimate popular mobilisation (asserted, for example, in governments’ reactions to protest when the ‘protest is a right’ framing is invoked) can still be framed as bad members of the polity, for standing in the way of the country’s economic recovery or for harming the political community’s access to other rights. This research, however, finds partial validity in her claim that protest tends to be increasingly framed as extremism (p. 474) – in fact, in Spain, varied occasions of collective dissent have been considered as such and diverse members of the polity have been referred to as extremists. Further, this also occurs in relation to electoral politics, as protest events targeting parties on the mainstream and the far right are often described in these terms, including through the use of the ‘hate crime’ discursive trope.

In particular, the bad citizens frame is applied to activists and youth who protest, increasingly depicted as radical, and whose access to the shared public sphere is progressively controlled – either in practice, by waves of dispersion led by police officers in riot uniforms, or symbolically, by discursive frames which place them firmly outside the political community and, ultimately reduce their right to stand and represent themselves in the shared public sphere.

This investigation, thus, asserts that there is, indeed, a Manichean divide between good and bad citizens, which is more prevalent and more polarising in Spain, acting as an effective selective measure of the *demos* who are considered a legitimate part of the state. This divide has implications for the quality of democratic processes and practices, as it acts as a mechanism of exclusion from rights and fundamental freedoms, and as an indicator of the levels of repression those placed outside the polity can experience.

Another important finding concerns the discourse on the right to protest. Whilst this work revealed that the positive discourse concerning the right to protest is more salient in Portugal, it also uncovered that, on both sides of the border, utterances asserting that protest is a democratic right are often accompanied by addenda reiterating that there should be limitations to the enjoyment of said right, often expressed through arguments reinforcing that protest actively curtails other citizenship rights, such as the right to work, education, or freedom of movement. As argued in chapter 5, this engenders a hierarchical construct of rights, wherein the right to protest is, at best, portrayed on par with those rights or, at worst, deemed inferior – ultimately resulting in the delegitimation and depoliticisation of popular mobilisation. What is more, this inquiry underscores the potential hazard for the ‘protest as a right’ subframe evolving into an empty signifier, systematically countered by expressions emphasising the adverse consequences of popular mobilisation on other rights of the polity (and portraying protesters as oblivious to, or purportedly threatening the fulfilment of said rights).

Ultimately, this investigation demonstrated that protest has been increasingly framed as a security problem in Spain – while in Portugal, although there are securitising moves, there is not enough evidence to clearly state that the country is witnessing a trend for the securitisation of protest. Although apparent across the Spanish series, this securitisation trend intensifies notably during the anti-austerity protest cycle, in relation to emergent social movements employing novel protest repertoires and making use of diverse organisational channels (including NIT and web 2.0). Several securitising actors emerge – notably PP (and particularly since the 2011 elections), other right wing parties and at times PSOE, law enforcement agencies, and the media, especially *El Mundo* – making use of a battery of securitisation strategies, including the othering and criminalisation of protesters and protest organisers and the dislocation of protest targets (at times escalating protest to an attack on the whole citizenry or on the nation itself). A discernible increase in securitising moves is evident in the responses of vested actors to protests during periods of heightened contention on Spanish streets, both in terms of the frequency of events and the magnitude of popular mobilisation. This is in contrast to the situation in Portugal, where there are fewer securitising moves (enacted by similar actors) and these appear particularly salient in relation to micro-protest,

participated by those members of the polity with limited social capital – the exception would be strikes during the anti-austerity protest movement, but protesters who were characterised as a security problem were constantly depicted as a small contingent of participants in popular mobilisation and as outsiders to established civil society organisations (mostly labour unions).

This work also posits that securitisation is not the only issue undermining the general understanding of protest as a democratic practice. It revealed the presence of two other master frames used by vested actors to refer to protest – illegitimacy / legitimacy and depoliticisation / politicisation – and it explored their composing frames (Democracy, Relation to formal politics, Remembrance, Rights – already explored above) and Citizenship and Political Community), considered in binomial terms (positive vs. negative). It revealed that, in both cases, the onset of the 2008 financial crisis coincides with a decrease in the proportion of positive frames related to street politics – although, in Portugal, periods of heightened mobilisation generally coincide with a heightened prevalence of positive framings (which remain, however, less prevalent than their negative equivalents), whereas the opposite is observed in Spain. This is demonstrative of a more balanced distribution of discursive power in the first country, with certain actors from civil society – namely labour unions – enjoying substantial access to the media and routinely exercising their discursive influence to portray protest favourably. The uniformity of the Portuguese protest arena, in that sense, is conducive to a more balanced depiction of protest than in the neighbouring country, where one observes the opposing tendency, since diversity of protest organisers appears to be detrimental to their ability to frame protest positively, as they are less able to garner media attention and to exert discursive power. In this sense, then, the inclusivity that emerges as positive when considering the actual presence in the protest arena, may actually be a hindrance in the discursive arena.

Moreover, this investigation has brought to light notable disparities in the operationalisation of frames, explicitly revealing that Spanish actors tend to articulate protest in more strongly negative terms than their Portuguese counterparts. This is particularly pronounced with the primary electoral politics contender in the Spanish mainstream right, *Partido Popular*, although other formal political actors, including the

Spanish Socialists, also exhibit a tendency to frame protest negatively. In this context, the findings of this study partially substantiate prior research indicating PP's aversion to street politics (Fishman, 2011, p. 241), a sentiment that appears to gain discursive prominence, markedly during the anti-austerity protest cycle. In Spain, thus, the notable prevalence of electoral politics actors in describing /framing protest within print media is a salient factor.

As previously mentioned, however, PP's engagement in large-scale street politics introduces complexity to this narrative, as the party strategically portrays protest as a positive element of a democratic polity, reflecting its view of protest as a tool in partisan politics. The positive frame is, thus, transitory: its favourable portrayal of protest undergoes a complete inversion when the party is in power, and is the main target of protest, often framing it as a threat to both the citizenry and democracy itself in increasingly hostile terms.

A side result of this investigation concerns each country's media system. In Spain, this study found evidence confirming the left-right cleavage identified in the literature as a key feature of the Spanish media system (Hallin and Mancini, 2004, p. 61; Brüggemann *et al.*, 2014, pp. 1056-1057). In addition, this signals the existence of constant contestations over the narratives on protest, wherein diverse frames introduced by various actors vie for ascendancy, aiming to be embraced either by the broader public or specific audiences perceived as partisan and more receptive to distinct messages.

Methodological contributions

Methodologically, this study certified the relevance of protest event analysis to examine street politics. It clearly identified that newspapers on both sides of the border tend to report on protests which are not notably impactful, either in terms of participation levels or the disruptive nature of the protest repertoires, which stands in contrast with the expectations of the literature on media and protest (Oliver and Maney, 2000; Fillieule and Jiménez, 2003; Earl *et al.*, 2004; Rohlinger and Vaccaro, 2013; Amenta *et al.*, 2017). This attests to the validity of the methodology of PEA to paint an accurate portrait of

popular mobilisation, particularly when the coding procedures allow for comprehensive data gathering which reduces the possibility of bias interference.

It innovated in terms of its application of Critical Frame Analysis, not only as it applied the methodology to a new phenomenon and adopted a comparative perspective, but also as it adapted the methodological framework to the investigation of texts published in printed media across a long period of time, instead of policy documents and single-issue research questions. It thereby was able to identify mechanisms of public opinion formation enacted by different actors with different discursive power and to expose diverse representations of protest and protesters. It also uncovered silenced areas pertaining to popular mobilisation – notably, the absence of the protesters' own voices (particularly in Spain, but also, in Portugal, of those with less media access) and the retrieval of protest policing from the realm of issues which can be publicly discussed.

This is, in addition, an important contribution to the understanding of the operationalisation of the securitisation framework, confirming the validity of Critical Frame Analysis to understand it – by clearly lifting securitising moves out of the discourses reproduced in the media, it confirmed that the theoretical framework of the Copenhagen School of Security is suitable to understand the multiple dynamics at play in the portrayal of protest as a security problem. It also clarified how the State can, indeed, stand as an ambiguous purveyor of security and insecurity – when protest is framed as a security problem or an existential threat by those upholding the legitimacy of the state (the government, the security forces), protesters' level of insecurity when they take to the streets increases (and their potential access to fundamental rights decreases), for the sake of maintaining security (and rights) for the rest of the political community. Critical Frame Analysis, additionally, was also instrumental in the identification of the other master frames and their operationalisation.

A few words on the potential limitations of this research are needed: as the main data was pulled from newspaper sources, it is important to acknowledge that the quality of the data was uneven, with protest events with wide and comprehensive information, and others missing important details. The coding procedures of the Disdem dataset, in addition, allowed for the occlusion of potentially highly participated protest events as it exclusively recorded the lowest number of participants taking part in a protest event

(for example, if 500 to 1000 people are said to have joined a demonstration, the number of participants was coded as 500). Further, when the number of participants was reported in a percentual format (i.e., 45% of teachers in the country joined a strike), that protest event was recorded with no known number of participants. This could have resulted in the exclusion of significant instances of popular mobilisation from the set of eventful events (chapters 5 and 6) and may have impacted the recognition of important country-wide protest events in terms of their sheer participation (chapter 3). It is also important to add that, although it is this work's belief is that trends and tendencies identified here will be expandable to other geographies, the conclusions presented reflect the existing data for Portugal and Spain, so one must be careful in drawing parallels with other locations and moments in time.

Final reflections: The right to protest and democratic backsliding

“Police in black fatigues and riot gear or unidentifiable under tinted visors or masks are, like it or not, a statement about the state of democracy.” (de Lint, 2005, p. 189)

Having established how protest unfolded and was policed in Portugal and Spain at the beginning of the twentieth first century, and how it was framed in printed media, the last order proposed by this dissertation is to consider the potential effects on the quality of democracy. This work posited that protest is an intrinsic democratic practice and argued that the right to protest, despite being inscribed in both countries' constitutions, is actively being curtailed, be it by practices of protest policing, be it by consistent and escalating framings of popular mobilisation as illegitimate, a- or antipolitical, and as a security problem. It posited that this is particularly problematic for young citizens who protest – the most common targets of these physical and discursive practices – and expressed concern for their full inclusion in the *demos*. In that sense, it mirrored the concerns expressed by Foa *et al.* (2020b, pp. 18-19) in relation to young people's

“democratic transition fatigue” but posits that this may be connected to their exclusion from the political realm, resulting from the practices identified above.

Although the findings presented here are not enough to assert that the Iberian public sphere is evolving into *“a space of imminent police violence”* as posited by Starr *et al.* (2008, p. 260), it was clearly demonstrated that their assertion of the reduction of the quality of political discourse – at least in what concerns popular mobilisation – has found its way to the Iberian Peninsula. The increased polarisation found in reactions to protest signals a decrease in the recognition of the need for cooperation that is a bulwark of democracy and creates a clear Manichean divide between insiders (whose citizenship and fundamental rights – including the right to security – are fully recognised and need to be protected) and outsiders (whose rights are, by contrast, at risk) in accordance with their political beliefs and alignments, as well as their political actions, which, ultimately, constructs political opponents as existential threats, affecting citizens’ trust in democratic political norms and institutions.

Despite the fact that protest is being framed as a threat to social cohesion, this work postulates that it is precisely that framing that poses a threat, as the polarisation emanating from the discourse discussed here can extend beyond the political realm and permeate society, leading to increased social divisions, potentially creating an environment where citizens are more willing to tolerate or support anti-democratic measures, as long as they align with the interests of their political group. Interestingly, this is more poignant in the more diverse public sphere – Spain – where the hegemonic discourse in what concerns popular mobilisation is mostly negative, delegitimising, and depoliticising.

This analysis also points to the emergence of populist discursive tropes in and in relation to popular mobilisation in the Iberian public sphere prior to the emergence of populist parties in the electoral arena. And whilst this is not the focus of this work, this is an interesting finding that could elicit further investigation – including in its consequences for democratic quality.

So what...

The need to protect and guarantee democracy – as uttered multiple times by Spanish police forces – is growing and paramount, but it is not up to the police to fulfil that need. It is up to the citizenry, considered from an inclusive standpoint, to take on that mammoth task. The role of civil society in keeping democracy in check cannot be diminished (Rosanvallon, 2008), neither can the scope of their interventions – including the right to stand on the streets and make demands of political institutions and actors. Most importantly, the citizenry cannot be reduced by discursive practices that actively divide it into insiders and outsiders. If democracy is to survive, it will need multiple and diverse contributions expressed in conditions of freedom, fairness, and equity in the shared public sphere. Hope remains with those who mobilise, and the vast majority of protest is rights-enhancing, actively contradicting a majority of discourse on protest that is rights-limiting.

Spain has the advantage of a more open and diverse protest sphere, more representative of the multiplicity of actors and positionalities that make Spanish society, which, despite facing obvious (practical and discursive) constraints, continue to mobilise in its multiplicity, whereas the traditional classic aspect of the Portuguese protest arena raises concerns of its representativeness of the whole of society, with its new and old demands and positionalities. In that sense, this work raises inquiries if there has been any complacency of Portuguese formal and informal politics actors regarding the country's democratic practice. Has the consensual narrative of a strong five-decade democracy emanating from people's efforts on the streets somehow obscured the fact that democracy is not guaranteed and that efforts need to continue to be enacted in order to fulfil democracy's promise of equity, fairness and inclusivity? Complacency does not seem to be the problem in Spain, where discussions on the future of democracy make their way to the protest sphere significantly more frequently than in the Portuguese case – but reasons for apprehension abound: from the normalisation of forceful protest policing to the increased polarisation in political discourse.

One common concern, however, relates to the role of youth keeping democracy alive – are young people finding their rightful space in the Portuguese vertical protest sphere and are they actively being excluded from the Spanish counterpart? Growing inequality

affects their (and other groups') potential for political participation, and that, too, is a growing threat to democracy.

In order to protect and guarantee democracy, then, this work states that there is a growing need to diminish discursive and practical obstacles to protest, thereby guaranteeing that the avenues for the citizenry's political participation remain open and accessible, warranting access to political and civil rights, enabling diverse individuals and groups to influence decision-making, and reinforcing the linkages between democratization and social movements, especially those with progressive aims, advocating for social justice and positive freedom. And since this work is focused on discourse, it finally postulates the need to bring civility back into public discourse, as a dominating feature of political dialogue.

This final chapter ends on a positive note, by focusing on reasons for hope – the overwhelming majority of protest worldwide is peaceful (ACLED, 2021b) and civil society is, today, more organised than it has ever been, actively resisting “*civic space crackdown*” (Civicus, 2021). Creativity runs healthy in progressive social movements across the globe, and civil society has demonstrated resilience and solidarity. Although there is much uncertainty, as political processes are more unpredictable and the overall picture of democracy is now as bleak as it has ever been, the push from below for Human Rights for all is strong, resilient, and innovative. As Lewis A. Posner put it (1974), all societies contain elements of potential conflict that bring about social changes, and it is that very conflict that allows for creativity and innovative practices to break the mould of old, reified, deeply unequal systems. In pluralist societies, conflict can, actually, bring about feelings of unity around fundamental values. The question remains, though, on how increasing inequality and polarisation are affecting those feelings of unity.

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