

Stealth democracy and the support for new and challenger parties

SEBASTIÁN LAVEZZOLO^{1*} AND LUIS RAMIRO²

¹Department of Social Sciences, Carlos III University of Madrid, Calle Madrid, Madrid, Spain

²School of History, Politics and International Relations, University of Leicester, University Road, Leicester, UK

In the wake of the 2008 Great Recession, new and challenger parties have enjoyed electoral gains in some European countries. Political and economic disaffection have been pointed out as the main drivers of their electoral support. This article proposes voter's stealth democracy attitudes, as defined by Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, as an additional driving force to account for this electoral change. We examine the case of Spain with a survey conducted after the far-reaching transformation of the party system, which has led to the emergence of two new parties: *Ciudadanos* (on the center-right) and *Podemos* (on the radical-left). We find that stealth democracy attitudes are positively related to the support for the former and negatively related to the support for the latter. Additionally, we provide evidence of this relationship being conditional on voters' ideology. The study illustrates how an unexplored attitudinal dimension contributes to party system change, and how the relevance of these attitudes might go beyond the temporary political discontent caused by the economic crisis.

Keywords: stealth democracy; new parties; challenger parties; Great Recession; party system change

Introduction

Political support for non-mainstream parties has risen against the backdrop of the 2008 Great Recession. In the wake of the economic crisis, recent elections in some European countries have often resulted in important gains for new and challenger parties (Hino, 2012; Hobolt and Tilley, 2016). Following an economic voting logic, dissatisfied voters initially punished incumbents for their failing economic performance, voting for the mainstream opposition (Bartels, 2014; Kriesi, 2014; Magalhães, 2014); yet, the continuity of the crisis and the implementation of austerity policies by all of the mainstream parties have finally driven many discontented voters to support new and challenger parties (Kriesi and Pappas, 2015; Hobolt and Tilley, 2016).

Besides voters' political and economic disaffection, this article proposes an additional mechanism to account for the rise of new parties, namely voters' attitudes toward democratic decision-making processes. New and challenger parties stand not only as fierce critics of the incumbents' economic management, but also as political reformers of democratic procedures. In doing so, they might have

* E-mail: selavezz@inst.uc3m.es

matched the supposedly growing demand for changes in political decision-making among western publics.

However, little is known about the effect of the public's attitudes toward different procedures of decision-making on voting behavior. This article fills this gap by analyzing, for the first time, how stealth democracy attitudes, as defined by the seminal study of Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002), affect individuals' support for some new and challenger parties that have risen in the context of the 2008 Great Recession.

Stealth democracy attitudes gather together preferences on democratic political decision-making procedures, leaning not toward individuals' increase in political engagement, but in favor of delegation, efficiency, and experts' involvement in political decision-making. Stealth democracy attitudes also are reactions against 'politics as usual', and following the 2008 Great Recession they have increasingly captured scholars' attention (Bengtsson and Mattila, 2009; Font *et al.*, 2012, 2015; Webb, 2013; Coffé and Michels, 2014), but an analysis of their potential electoral consequences is still lacking.

Using data from a 2015 survey, we analyze the recent and far-reaching transformation of the Spanish party system, where two new parties, *Podemos* (We Can, on the radical-left), and *Ciudadanos* (Citizens, on the center-right), entered the parliamentary arena. The Spanish case allows us to explore how stealth democracy attitudes affect the support for new and mainstream parties differently [in our case the Socialist Party (PSOE) and the Popular Party (PP)], but also how they influence in dissimilar ways the support for new and challenger parties of different ideological inclinations. In this regard, although both *Podemos* and *Ciudadanos* are new parties (entering the national parliament for the first time in 2015), and present themselves as political reformers in clear contrast to the mainstream parties, *Podemos* is a radical-left pro-participatory democracy party corresponding to the definition of challenger party (as proposed by Hobolt and Tilley, 2016: 3–4),¹ while *Ciudadanos* is a centrist one aiming for much more moderate political reforms. Their presence increases the diversity in what Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002: 59) call the 'process space' of competition, presenting different party views on the democratic decision-making processes and putting them high on the agenda. In this way, voters dissatisfied with the political process have an alternative to mainstream parties and, following Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002), stealth democracy attitudes should influence party choice in such a context. Consequently, the Spanish setting is an optimum circumstance to test the effect of stealth democracy attitudes on party support.

Our findings show that the stealth democracy index (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 2002) helps to predict the intention to vote for new and challenger parties: negatively for the radical-left *Podemos*, and positively for the center-right

¹ Hobolt and Tilley (2016: 3–4) describe challenger parties as those that have not been in government, express extreme views and put new issues on the agenda, citing prominently *Podemos* as one of them.

Ciudadanos. These findings support Hibbing and Theiss-Morse's (2002) insights because *Podemos* is a populist and pro-participatory democracy party, while *Ciudadanos* aims to reform democratic procedures without calling for high-intensity citizen participation. We show that the electoral impact of these attitudes is independent from structural factors as well as the influence of other short-term orientations. Additionally, we find evidence of this relationship being conditional on voters' ideology. Stealth democracy attitudes increase the probability of voting for the new center-right *Ciudadanos* when voters are ideologically moderate. Therefore, stealth democracy attitudes are not only important because they are widely spread, but also because they play a relevant role in explaining voters' preferences for a new type of right-to-the-center party.

This study makes a series of valuable contributions. First, it updates the information about stealth democracy orientations with data from a period in which the consequences of the public's discontent after the 2008 Great Recession in Western Europe are fully apparent in the attitudes toward decision-making processes. It replicates Hibbing and Theiss-Morse's model for Spain confirming that stealth democracy orientations are widely spread and that the numbers of those in favor of experts' involvement in policy-making have increased.

Second, this article extends the field of study of stealth democracy attitudes. Although previous studies have investigated the determinants of these attitudes, they have left the electoral consequences of stealth democracy unexplored. This article explores the effects of these attitudes on party choice. In doing so, it increases our knowledge on the attitudinal determinants of the rising support for new and challenger parties.

Third, our results also inform the debate about the ongoing party systems change in Western European countries. While much information is already available on the determinants of the radical-right populist vote, our analyses demonstrate how, in the present context of political disaffection, stealth democracy attitudes foster the support for right-to-the-center parties that, although critical of 'politics as usual', cannot be considered radical populists. Therefore, we illustrate how an unexplored attitudinal dimension contributes to party system change in the context of economic and political discontent.

Finally, this article contributes to the methodological discussion about the suitability of the stealth democracy index (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 2002) examining the effect of its different components separately. With this exploratory exercise, the study provides a more nuanced image of the relationship between stealth democracy and voting: we find that support for experts' involvement in decision-making is critical when explaining the vote for the new center-right party *Ciudadanos*.

The article proceeds as follows: the next two sections summarize previous findings in this field and present the hypotheses that guide our research, then we briefly introduce the Spanish context. After succinctly describing the data, the variables and the methods used in the analyses, we explain our main findings presenting an analysis of how stealth democracy attitudes affect the support for

different parties, with a particular focus on the conditional role played by ideology. We end the article with a review of the limits of the stealth democracy index and an analysis that breaks down this conventional measure, and finally the conclusions and implications for further research.

Attitudes toward democratic decision-making processes and stealth democracy orientations

Political dissatisfaction and distrust for fundamental actors of representative democracies – such as parties and politicians – are widely spread in advanced democracies (Norris, 1999; Dalton, 2004; Allen and Birch, 2014). Demands for more participatory and direct decision-making processes have increased and have already been documented in some studies (Dalton *et al.*, 2001; Donovan and Karp, 2006; Bowler *et al.*, 2007; Bengtsson and Mattila, 2009; Anderson and Goodyear-Grant, 2010; Neblo *et al.*, 2010). However, the literature has also shown some limits in the support for increased participation (Dalton *et al.*, 2001; Donovan and Karp, 2006; Font *et al.*, 2012), has demonstrated that these demands do not translate into actual participation (Webb, 2013), and has cast doubt on the nature of the support for more direct procedures (Pateman, 1970; Barber, 1984).

The influential studies of Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2001, 2002) probably portray the most skeptical views of both the advantages of participatory democracy and of the commitment to this form of democratic participation in the United States. They argue that Americans prefer a stealth version of democracy, one in which the usual representative democracy institutions and procedures are in place and work better, and which does not require much involvement from and monitoring of the citizens. Stealth democrats would not be very interested in the high-intensity commitment implied by participatory or deliberative political processes, favoring instead delegation, efficiency, and expert input in the decision-making processes. As Hibbing and Theiss-Morse say, stealth democrats' preference is 'for decisions to be made efficiently, objectively, and without commotion and disagreement' (2002: 143). Stealth democrats prefer the involvement of experts and independent bodies in government decisions, and less partisanship, discussion, and individuals' active political engagement. Thus, stealth democracy, with its negative view of debate and compromise, and its willingness to hand over decision-making to unaccountable but efficient actors, would be opposed to the deliberative or participatory versions of democracy and would entail even less citizen involvement than the standard representative democracy (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 2002: 2, 10, 161, 239).

Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) and other studies that have followed their thread have analyzed the political correlates of stealth democracy attitudes. Font *et al.* (2012) found for the Spanish case that right-wing ideology is associated with stealth democracy attitudes. Webb (2013) analyzed the political attitudes associated with stealth democracy orientations for the British case confirming that stealth democrats tend then to avoid increased political commitment. Additionally, Webb (2013) found

that they express distinguishing views regarding decision-making processes and political participation, being less eager to be involved in conventional (party and non-party arenas) and deliberative types of participation than in the referendum democracy type of participation.²

However, our knowledge about the relationship between stealth democracy orientations and political preferences is limited. Among the gaps in our knowledge are the effects of stealth democracy attitudes on party support. Apart from the Democrats' aversion to stealth democracy reported by Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002), there is very little research on the impact of these attitudes on party preference. However, as Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) suggest, these orientations may, under specific circumstances, influence party choice. As they rightly discuss (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 2002: 72–74), attitudes toward decision-making processes should not be expected to have a great impact on party preferences when all parties share similar policies regarding political procedures. However, if voters are dissatisfied by the decision-making process and there is a party that makes reforming those political processes a relevant element in its agenda, voters may feel attracted to such a party. This is what, following Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002: 74), occurred in the United States with the support for the third-party candidate Ross Perot in 1992 and 1996.

Stealth democracy and party politics

Those circumstances in which attitudes toward decision-making processes, such as the stealth democracy orientations, may affect party preference are prominent in Western Europe. Parties have reacted to this challenging environment, which, outstandingly, includes a rise in citizens' mistrust for conventional political actors (Dennis and Owen, 2001; Mair, 2013). There has been a growth in the use of referenda, deliberative mechanisms, and other participatory devices across advanced democracies (Smith, 2009; Michels, 2011). Moreover, in organizational terms, numerous parties have adopted more inclusive internal procedures (Cain *et al.*, 2004). However, despite these efforts, new, challenger, and populist parties make strategic use of citizens' discontent toward their mainstream competitors (Bergh, 2004; Pauwels, 2014; Passarelli and Tuorto, 2016). Many of these parties present themselves to the public as anti-political-establishment parties, criticizing the privileges of mainstream parties and 'politics as usual'. In different ways, these parties propose weakening the political-establishment grip on decision-making; some propose reducing the role of parties in decision-making processes, favoring anti-majoritarian institutions or non-party political procedures; others propose the use of participatory and direct democracy decision-making processes to strengthen common citizens' political influence (see e.g., Bordignon and Ceccarini, 2013). Therefore, in some

² Among the studies analyzing socio-demographic correlates, the one by Coffé and Michels (2014) focusing on the role of education for the Dutch case is particularly insightful.

European party systems there are notable differences between mainstream and non-mainstream parties in the ‘process space’ of competition suggested by Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002: 59). This could cause process disaffected voters to support parties that oppose the mainstream ones and put high political reform on the agenda.

Consequently, in some western societies, the public’s stealth democracy orientations that, as Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) argue and Font *et al.* (2015) highlight, express a discontent with ‘politics as usual’, might have been matched by some parties that appeal to voters, presenting themselves as anti-mainstream political reformers. However, this critical connection between stealth democracy attitudes and party choice has not been empirically tested in Europe yet. This is our contribution. Particularly, in countries experiencing economic and political crises, such as the ones that have been suffered by Spain and many other European nations since 2008, stealth democracy attitudes might foster support for these parties. If that were the case, it would have important implications for our understanding of recent party system changes in Europe.

We expect, then, stealth democracy attitudes to increase the likelihood of support for new and challenger parties’ criticisms of the mainstream and ‘politics as usual’, but also to be adverse to participatory transformation of the democratic system. For the Spanish case, as we describe below, the new right-wing party, *Ciudadanos*, proposes political process reforms but it does not aim for high-intensity citizen involvement (Rodríguez-Teruel and Barrio, 2016); thus we expect stealth democracy orientations to positively affect the intention to vote for this party (*Hypothesis 1*).

Additionally, given that stealth democrats have been found in previous studies to be less likely to be left-wing and not inclined toward high-intensity political involvement, we do not expect stealth democracy orientations to increase the likelihood of supporting the new radical-left populist party, *Podemos*, despite this party being anti-mainstream. *Podemos* has intensely proposed direct democratic reforms and, in contrast to *Ciudadanos*, it has expressed its support for more participatory and deliberative mechanisms of decision-making.³ Therefore, we expect a negative relationship between stealth democracy orientations and support for *Podemos* (*Hypothesis 2*).

Finally, following the same perspective, we expect stealth democracy orientations to decrease the support for the mainstream parties because they are part of the political establishment and ‘politics as usual’, against which individuals of stealth democracy orientations react (*Hypothesis 3*).

The Spanish case: new parties and political discontent

Spain is an interesting case for testing the effect of stealth democracy attitudes on party preferences. The Spanish context matches very well the circumstances in

³ In relation to this, left-wing individuals have been found to support participatory processes (Font *et al.*, 2012).

which, according to Hibbing and Theiss-Morse's (2002) suggestion, stealth orientations should matter. As we describe in the next paragraphs, there is an intense dissatisfaction with mainstream politics and new parties offering an agenda of political reform. For a long time, considerable political disaffection has certainly characterized Spanish public opinion (Montero *et al.*, 1997), but the discontent has been strengthened because of and during the Great Recession (Orriols and Rico, 2014). Amidst an intense dissatisfaction with the country's economic situation, the evaluation of the political situation has reached very negative levels, and parties and politicians are considered among the major problems of the country (Torcal, 2014a).⁴

Additionally, polls and elections results during the crisis signaled a situation of partisan dealignment, with the two largest mainstream parties, the center-left PSOE and the conservative PP, losing support since the worsening of the economic indicators (Torcal, 2014b; Cordero and Montero, 2015). Spanish public opinion has rejected both the incumbent and the mainstream opposition parties, irrespective of whether it was the PSOE or the PP in office. The then incumbent PSOE was first held responsible for the bad economic results between 2008 and 2011, but the PP very soon suffered from voters' dissatisfaction after entering office in 2011. However, the public did not reconcile with the PSOE after it lost office or while it was in opposition in the 2011–15 period. Thus, both the mainstream incumbent and opposition parties have suffered from public dissatisfaction.⁵ Besides that, soon after the implementation of the first packages of austerity policies, a widely spread mobilization arose in the spring of 2011: the *15-M* or *indignados* movement. The *indignados* argued that political elites and mainstream parties were not representing 'the people'. One of their main demands was a thorough political reform granting a greater role to individual citizens in the decision-making process (Font *et al.*, 2012).

The Spanish party system underwent an important transformation in the 2014 European Parliament elections, the 2015 local and regional elections (Rodon and Hierro, 2016) and, finally, in the 2015 (Orriols and Cordero, 2016)

⁴ According to the polls of the *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas* (the governmental opinion poll institute), before the crisis, 'political parties, politicians and politics' were barely an issue for Spanish society. While almost all interviewees pointed to 'unemployment' or 'ETA terrorism' as the most important problem in Spain, between 1993 and 2008 only 8% of the public exhibited signals of political discontent. In contrast, since January 2008 polls have registered a sudden increase in the number of citizens claiming that 'political parties, politicians and politics' are the major problem of the country. From 2008 to 2015, the mean percentage of interviewees showing such disaffection was around 20%, with peaks of one-third between October 2012 and June 2013. Additionally, as shown in the Eurobarometers, since the economic crisis hit, trust in political parties has declined dramatically. While in April 2008, 40% of Spaniards stated that they tended to trust political parties, in November 2014 those who supported this statement were around 5% (*Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas* data available at http://www.cis.es/cis/export/sites/default/-Archivos/Indicadores/documentos_html/TresProblemas.html; Eurobarometers data available at <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Chart/index>).

⁵ Between 2008 and 2014 the positive evaluations of both the government and the main opposition party recorded by *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas* consistently decreased, irrespective of which party, PSOE or PP, was in office (data available at http://www.cis.es/cis/opencms/ES/11_barometros/Indicadores_PI/gobierno.html).

and 2016 general elections. The two main beneficiaries of the economic and political crisis have been two new nation-wide parties: *Podemos* and *Ciudadanos*. They are both harsh critics of the mainstream PP and PSOE, present themselves as tough detractors of the political corruption that has affected the PP and, to a lesser degree, PSOE governments, and defend the ‘democratization’ of parties’ internal procedures, favoring primaries to select party candidates.

Ciudadanos is a new center-right or liberal party that has very often stressed its nature of political reform, proposing a catalogue of policies aiming to revitalize Spanish democracy (Rodríguez-Teruel and Barrio, 2016). They defend a reduction of party influence on the judiciary and public prosecution systems, and of MPs and politicians privileges, leaner public administration, a strengthening of the control functions of parliament, and an increase in transparency and access to government information (Ciudadanos, 2015). However, in its 2015 manifesto, policies aiming to enhance citizens’ participation were circumscribed to the local government level and to the simplification of the popular legislative initiatives procedures.

Podemos is a new radical-left party that uses populist discourse (Llamazares and Gómez-Reino, 2015; Ramiro and Gomez, 2017). Having been formed by a group of left-wing activists, *Podemos*’ platform includes both anti-political-establishment claims and participatory demands. The populist leaning of the party is reflected in its use of the people vs. elite dichotomy. Consequently, *Podemos* has targeted in its attacks the political-establishment and mainstream parties, identified as ‘caste’ parties. While in some political reform policies *Podemos* does not differ from *Ciudadanos*, the former is much more ambitious and radical in its participatory plans. *Podemos* defends deliberative democracy, recall referenda, mandatory primaries, and citizens’ involvement in policy evaluation (Podemos, 2015).

In sum, Spain displays high levels of dissatisfaction with key representative democracy actors such as parties, while new parties (*Ciudadanos* and *Podemos*) offer alternative policies aiming to reform the political process. Stealth democracy orientations should foster the support for these parties as Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) suggested. However, they differ in their manifestoes’ content regarding the desired level of citizens’ involvement in political decision-making. It is these differences regarding decision-making processes that divert our expectations of the effect of stealth democracy attitudes on party choice (Hypotheses 1 and 2 above).

Data and methods

Questions on preferences about political decision-making processes are rarely asked in regular surveys. To test our hypotheses and overcome the lack of suitable data we included 11 questions about this topic in a telephone survey ($n = 1200$) conducted in Spain in 2015.⁶

⁶ The survey was conducted by *Metroscopia Estudios Sociales y de Opinión S.L.* between 30 September and 2 October 2015. The sample was stratified by region and distributed proportionally, applying age and

Our measure of attitudes about stealth democracy is the index developed by Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) built upon respondents' agreement with these statements:

1. It would be better for the country if politicians stopped talking and took action on important issues.
2. In politics, compromise is really selling out one's principles.
3. Politics would work better if political decisions were left up to successful business leaders.
4. Politics would work better if political decisions were left up to experts instead of politicians or citizens.

Favorable responses (strongly agree/agree) are interpreted as supportive attitudes toward stealth democracy. The index is an additive scale going from 0 to 3 where a positive response to each of the first two questions, and to at least one of the last two, scores 1 point. Thus, those scoring 0 in the stealth democracy index disagree with all statements, while those scoring 3 express some level of agreement with the first and second statement as well as with one of the third and fourth assertions. Table 1 shows frequencies for the level of agreement/disagreement with the four separate items in the index (Panel A), and the distribution of the stealth democracy index (Panel B).

Almost all respondents (95%) agree with the 'less talk and more action' statement, while the number halves when it comes to whether or not compromising should be taken as abandoning principles. Only one out of three sympathizes with the idea that leaving decisions to successful business people would make politics work well, and three out of four support leaving decisions up to experts instead of politicians or citizens. After computing the Hibbing and Theiss-Morse stealth democracy index we learn that 52% of the respondents score 3 points (the maximum), while 35% score 2 points, 11% only 1 point, and a very marginal fraction of the sample none. Therefore, there is extensive support for stealth attitudes among Spaniards.

These results are not far from what has been found in other advanced democracies.⁷ A cross-country comparative check confirms this picture, but with some nuances and limits to the comparison.⁸ Figure 1 shows frequencies of positive

gender quotas to the unit of analysis (interviewees). More information about the survey (interview duration, number of rejections, etc.) can be found at the end of the Online Appendix.

⁷ United States-1998 (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 2002); United States-2006 (Neblo *et al.*, 2010); Finland-2007 (Bengtsson and Mattila, 2009); Spain-2011 (Font *et al.*, 2012); United Kingdom-2011 (Webb, 2013); the Netherlands-2011 (Coffé and Michels, 2014); and Australia-2013 (Evans *et al.*, 2013).

⁸ A cross-country comparison of these numbers is limited by some important differences between the surveys. Some surveys allowed respondents the 'neither agree nor disagree' option while others did not, and the wording of the questions was not always equal across countries because each study adapted the questions to its specific context. Additionally, the data collection process also differed. Some surveys were face-to-face interviews (Finland, Spain), while others were telephone-based (United States-1998) or internet-based (United States-2006, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Australia). In spite of these differences, all of them work in the framework of Hibbing and Theiss-Morse's research.

Table 1. Measuring stealth democracy

Panel A: Stealth democracy components									
	Politicians should stop talking and take action		Compromise is selling out one's principles		Leave decisions to successful business people		Leave decisions to non-elected experts		
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	
Strongly agree	58.7	700	11.5	128	7.2	84	24.5	284	
Agree	36.7	438	41	456	24.1	279	50.9	589	
Disagree	3.7	44	35.8	399	41.5	481	19.2	222	
Strongly disagree	0.8	10	11.7	130	27.2	315	5.4	63	
Total	100	1192	100	1113	100	1159	100	1158	

Panel B: Stealth democracy index		
	%	N
No stealth democratic traits	1.4	15
1 Stealth democratic trait	11.2	119
2 Stealth democratic traits	35	370
3 Stealth democratic traits	52.4	554
Total	100	1058

October 2015 Barometer survey, *Metroscopia*.

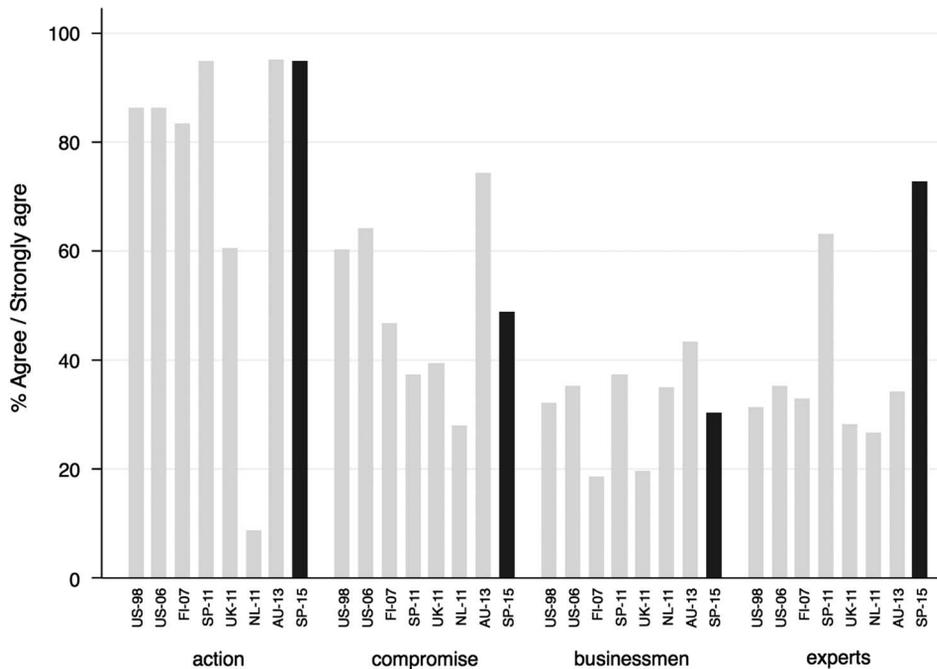


Figure 1 Stealth democracy orientations: a cross-national view.

responses to the four questions employed to build the index as reported in several studies for different countries. Spaniards are indeed among the most convinced about the need for more efficient politicians (talk vs. action), though Australians display the same level of agreement (95%), while in the United States (both in 1998 and 2006) and Finland there are also high levels of support for this opinion (>80%).⁹ Evaluations of ‘compromise’ in politics are very similar to those reported in the United Kingdom and Finland (around 40%), but the percentage who respond positively to the idea of compromise as abandoning one’s principles has increased by 10 points over the last 4 years in Spain, yet it is still behind the United States and Australia levels (>60%).

Regarding Spaniards’ willingness to delegate political decisions to non-political actors, support for turning responsibilities over to successful businessmen has decreased from 37% in 2011 to 30% in 2015. Still, it is around the same level as the United States, the Netherlands, and Australia. Yet, what it is particularly noticeable in the Spanish surveys is the high percentage of respondents agreeing with the idea of turning political decisions over to independent experts (instead of politicians or citizens): 62% in 2011 and 72% in 2015 (the support registered in other countries is always around 30% and it never goes beyond 35%).

In our vote models, the dependent variable is party support, that is, individuals’ intention to vote for a party. Aside from the stealth democracy index, we include the standard socio-economic and demographic controls in voting models: a continuous variable for age (*Age*); a dichotomous variable for sex, female being the reference category (*Sex*); a four-category variable of subjective social class introduced as dummy variables with ‘lower-class’ as the reference category (*Lower-middle class*, *Middle class*, *Upper-middle class*, and *Upper class*); a dichotomous variable for employment status (*Unemployed*); an ordinal variable for the respondent’s level of education (*Education*);¹⁰ and a variable capturing the interviewee’s self-placement in the left-right ideological scale, 0 being extreme left and 10 extreme right (*Ideology*).

In order to obtain an unbiased coefficient for stealth democracy, we run the models also accounting for a set of attitudinal variables that might confound with stealth democracy orientations, namely, a 0–10 range continuous variable for the level of dissatisfaction with democracy (*Dissatisfaction with democracy*), and another three 0–10 range continuous variables measuring the support for different types of political decision-making processes (*Referendum*; *Deliberative participation*; *Electoral participation*). Finally, we estimate a last model adding a five-category variable capturing the interviewees’ evaluation of the current economic situation (*Evaluation of the economy*).

⁹ In line with our caveat about the limits of the comparison, this great difference in the Dutch survey might be a result of the wording of the question.

¹⁰ The five ordinal categories are (1) ‘None or Primary school uncompleted’, (2) ‘Primary school’, (3) ‘High school’, (4) ‘Technical degree’, (5) ‘Bachelor or Graduate degree’.

Descriptive statistics for all variables are presented in the Online Appendix. We do logistic regression analyses since our dependent variable is a dichotomous variable coding individuals' intention to vote for a party, although results are robust to ordinary least squares (OLS) estimations.

Stealth democracy orientations and their effect on party support

The analysis of the influence of stealth democracy orientation on party choice using the Hibbing and Theiss-Morse index confirms two of our hypotheses (Table 2).¹¹ A marginal increase in the stealth democracy index boosts the likelihood of voting for the new center-right political-reform party *Ciudadanos* (Hypothesis 1), while it decreases the likelihood of supporting the radical-left populist *Podemos* (Hypothesis 2). However, the latter association is not as statistically strong as the former. In contrast, the stealth democracy index is not a significant predictor of the support for mainstream parties and Hypothesis 3 should not be accepted.

As we expected, the findings shown in the last three columns of Table 2 point out how stealth democracy orientations, with their indifference toward citizens' involvement, are associated with support for *Ciudadanos*. *Ciudadanos*'s rise can be conceived then as the product of public dissatisfaction with 'politics as usual' as performed by mainstream parties during the recession. Matching this party's moderate position regarding citizens' involvement in decision-making, *Ciudadanos* supporters do not seem very inclined toward individual high-intensity involvement. This finding holds after controlling for conventional factors in voting models (Model 1), attitudinal variables such as dissatisfaction with democracy and preferences for political decision-making processes (Model 2), or evaluation of the current state of the economy (Model 3). Moreover, this result is robust to additional checks regarding the way we estimate our coefficients, the specification of the model or the operationalization of the dependent variable.¹²

The opposite relation was expected regarding the radical-left *Podemos*, and the analysis confirms our intuition. Besides being an anti-political-establishment party,

¹¹ A set of previous analyses of the determinants of stealth democracy attitudes confirmed most of the previous research findings (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 2002; Bengtsson and Mattila, 2009; Font *et al.*, 2012; Webb, 2013; Coffé and Michels, 2014). For the purpose of our analysis it is remarkable how these orientations are related to right-wing ideology and negatively associated with political interest and efficacy. (Analyses are not shown in the article, but they are available upon request.)

¹² We provide a set of robustness checks in an Online Appendix (O.A.) hosted on the website of the journal. Table O.A.1 shows results with OLS estimation. From Table O.A.2 to Table O.A.4 we present three different specifications of the model. In the first one, we control for age-squared given the positive and significant association found between stealth attitudes and age. The second accounts for evaluation of the current political situation instead of current evaluations of the economy. In the third alternative specification we control for interviewees' votes in the previous General Election (2011). Table O.A.5 shows the result with a different operationalization of the dependent variable. Instead of 'vote intention' we employ 'vote intention + party sympathy' so as to correct a potential anti-mainstream parties bias. In all cases the result found for *Ciudadanos* holds or it is even statistically stronger.

Table 2. Electoral support for mainstream and new challenger parties

Dependent variable: intention to vote	Mainstream parties					
	PP			PSOE		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Stealth democracy index	-0.162 (0.140)	-0.128 (0.149)	-0.141 (0.158)	0.005 (0.127)	0.023 (0.128)	0.020 (0.128)
Age	0.017 (0.007)**	0.010 (0.007)	0.002 (0.008)	0.005 (0.006)	0.003 (0.006)	0.004 (0.006)
Gender	-0.127 (0.207)	-0.187 (0.224)	-0.409 (0.238)	-0.117 (0.182)	-0.109 (0.185)	-0.073 (0.187)
Low-middle class	-0.077 (0.439)	0.232 (0.480)	0.106 (0.512)	0.082 (0.348)	0.064 (0.356)	0.085 (0.356)
Middle class	0.053 (0.398)	0.329 (0.440)	0.158 (0.470)	-0.126 (0.335)	-0.135 (0.343)	-0.098 (0.345)
Upper-middle and Upper class	0.335 (0.498)	0.517 (0.540)	0.412 (0.574)	0.002 (0.457)	-0.014 (0.465)	0.018 (0.466)
Unemployed	-0.542 (0.321)	-0.460 (0.339)	-0.099 (0.359)	-0.084 (0.242)	-0.084 (0.246)	-0.128 (0.248)
Education	-0.046 (0.122)	-0.059 (0.131)	-0.119 (0.139)	-0.332 (0.115)**	-0.310 (0.118)**	-0.306 (0.118)**
Ideology	0.879 (0.080)***	0.811 (0.087)***	0.782 (0.091)***	-0.257 (0.055)***	-0.288 (0.059)***	-0.274 (0.060)***
Level of dissatisfaction with democracy		-0.322 (0.059)***	-0.257 (0.063)***		-0.085 (0.041)*	-0.095 (0.042)*
Referendum		-0.110 (0.040)**	-0.104 (0.044)*		-0.054 (0.035)	-0.054 (0.035)
Deliberative participation		0.013 (0.040)	0.059 (0.043)		0.043 (0.038)	0.039 (0.038)
Electoral participation		0.054 (0.062)	0.059 (0.067)		0.043 (0.050)	0.042 (0.050)
Perception of Spanish economy			0.864 (0.128)***			-0.149 (0.121)
Constant	-6.732 (0.835)***	-5.079 (1.150)***	-6.766 (1.257)***	0.439 (0.681)	0.600 (0.918)	0.833 (0.939)
Pseudo R ² (McFadden's)	0.23	0.29	0.35	0.04	0.05	0.05
Mean VIF	1.07	1.18	1.21	1.07	1.17	1.20
Observation	1024	1008	1006	1024	1008	1006

Table 2. (Continued)

	New and challenger parties					
	<i>Podemos</i>			<i>Ciudadanos</i>		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Stealth democracy index	-0.245 (0.134)	-0.259 (0.137)	-0.256 (0.139)	0.285 (0.128)*	0.291 (0.131)*	0.296 (0.132)*
Age	-0.012 (0.007)	-0.007 (0.007)	-0.005 (0.007)	-0.014 (0.006)*	-0.018 (0.006)**	-0.018 (0.006)**
Gender	0.256 (0.207)	0.238 (0.210)	0.382 (0.215)	0.191 (0.178)	0.108 (0.184)	0.112 (0.187)
Low-middle class	-0.026 (0.374)	-0.023 (0.389)	0.004 (0.389)	0.020 (0.414)	-0.135 (0.423)	-0.118 (0.424)
Middle class	-0.499 (0.367)	-0.431 (0.380)	-0.332 (0.381)	0.234 (0.387)	0.001 (0.398)	0.000 (0.399)
Upper-middle and Upper class	-0.352 (0.494)	-0.260 (0.508)	-0.144 (0.510)	0.119 (0.467)	-0.079 (0.479)	-0.071 (0.479)
Unemployed	0.418 (0.247)	0.324 (0.253)	0.166 (0.255)	-0.438 (0.260)	-0.345 (0.265)	-0.379 (0.269)
Education	-0.043 (0.123)	-0.005 (0.127)	0.005 (0.128)	0.209 (0.101)*	0.141 (0.106)	0.151 (0.106)
Ideology	-0.478 (0.062)***	-0.428 (0.067)***	-0.404 (0.066)***	0.293 (0.058)***	0.269 (0.063)***	0.280 (0.064)***
Level of dissatisfaction with democracy		0.093 (0.043)*	0.055 (0.044)		-0.046 (0.041)	-0.052 (0.042)
Referendum		0.041 (0.042)	0.039 (0.042)		0.028 (0.035)	0.026 (0.035)
Deliberative participation		0.084 (0.046)	0.072 (0.047)		-0.095 (0.034)**	-0.103 (0.034)**
Electoral participation		-0.051 (0.050)	-0.059 (0.050)		0.179 (0.056)**	0.178 (0.056)**
Perception of Spanish economy			-0.681 (0.172)***			-0.099 (0.110)
Constant	1.353 (0.746)	-0.059 (0.997)	1.193 (1.052)	-4.116 (0.693)***	-4.278 (0.958)***	-4.118 (0.976)***
Pseudo R ² (McFadden's)	0.12	0.14	0.16	0.05	0.08	0.08
Mean VIF	1.07	1.17	1.20	1.07	1.17	1.20
Observation	1024	1008	1006	1024	1008	1006

PSOE = Socialist Party; PP = Popular Party; VIF = Variance Inflation Factor.

Logistic regression results.

Standard errors in parentheses; *** $P < 0.001$, ** $P < 0.01$, * $P < 0.05$.

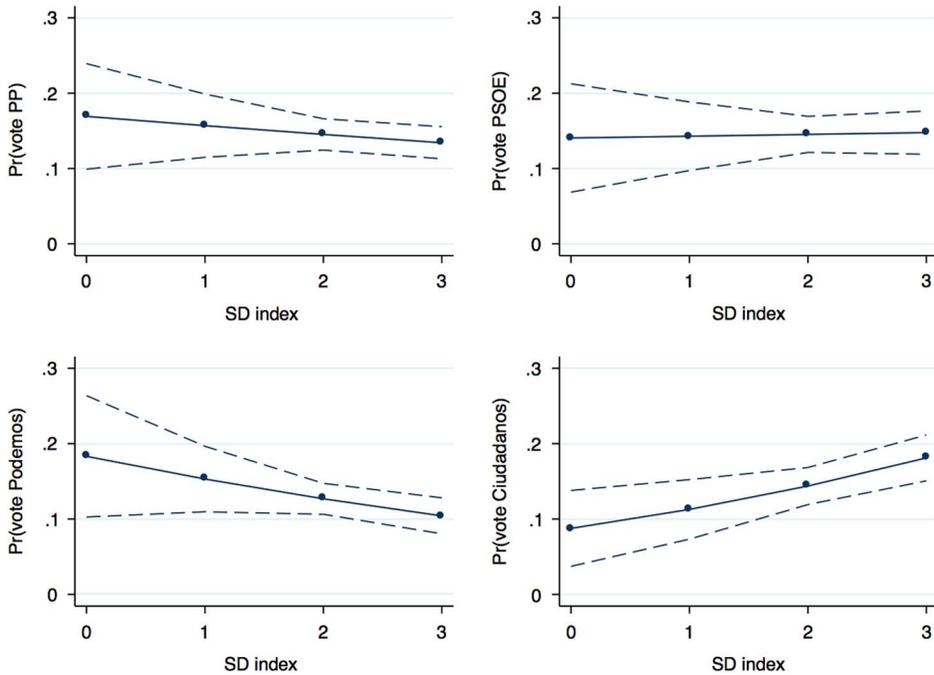


Figure 2 Predicted probabilities of party choice by stealth democracy attitudes.

Podemos strongly defends participatory democracy and deliberative procedures that contrast with the reservations about high-intensity political participation associated with stealth democracy. The effect of the stealth democracy index on the probability of voting for *Podemos* does not reach the conventional statistical level of confidence to validate our hypothesis (P -value = 0.065). However, it does if coefficients are estimated with OLS (see O.A.1) or through a multinomial logistic regression where the probability of voting for *Podemos* is compared with the probability of voting for *Ciudadanos* (see O.A.6). In other words, we can take stealth democracy attitudes as a trustworthy (negative) predictor of voting if we focus on the competition between the new parties.

However, the stealth democracy index does not appear as a significant predictor in any of the models for mainstream party support (PP and PSOE). Figure 2 shows how the predicted probabilities of voting for each of the parties change across different values of the stealth democracy index. An increase in the strength of stealth democracy orientations increases the likelihood of supporting *Ciudadanos* and decreases it for *Podemos*, while the effects for PP and PSOE are indistinguishable across different values of the index.¹³ In this way, the suggestion by

¹³ Given that stealth attitudes might measure some sort of political apathy, we also run models with 'abstention' or 'undecided vote' (DK/DA) as the dependent variables (Table O.A.7). The former represents

Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) of the opposed effects of stealth democracy orientations on party choice, negative for mainstream parties and positive for non-mainstream political-reform parties, only sees partial confirmation. In the case analyzed, only the latter effect is confirmed. Additionally, as we have shown, not all non-mainstream parties benefit from stealth democracy attitudes and their effect seems dependent on the non-mainstream party's ideology and emphasis on citizens' political involvement.

Ideology is, in any case, a relevant variable to explain the electoral support for all political parties across the board and it has been shown in previous studies that stealth democrats have right-wing leanings. However, these two variables are not so highly correlated to make us think of a spurious relationship between stealth attitudes and party choices (correlation coefficient of about 0.12). We have assessed how ideological orientations condition the way stealth democracy attitudes affect party choice, thus deepening our understanding of how voters' attitudes translate into voting preferences for some new parties. Table A.2 in the Online Appendix shows the results of the logistic models where the stealth democracy index is interacted with ideology (Model 1) and ideology squared (Model 2).¹⁴ From these analyses we gain some more insights. First, voters' ideology does not condition the null result about the effect of stealth democracy on the support for mainstream parties. Neither PP nor PSOE have an ideological space where having preferences against 'political as usual' pays off.

Second, the impact of stealth democracy attitudes on the probabilities of voting for new and challenger parties does vary across different levels of the ideological scale. However, the form in which ideology conditions such a relationship differs by party choice. Results from the interaction models for *Podemos* and *Ciudadanos* are shown in Figure 3.

On the one hand, the interaction between stealth democracy and ideology is negative and statistically different from zero in the analysis for *Podemos*. As expected, the range where the ideology moderates the relationship is in the left, namely between 0 and 3 (see the upper-left graph in Figure 3). As the ideological position of the interviewees moves to the right the marginal impact of stealth democracy on the probability of voting for *Podemos* decreases. Contrary to the unconditional analysis, this result gives support for Hypothesis 2: stealth democracy orientations are negatively associated with electoral support for the new radical-left populist party *Podemos* despite being anti-mainstream.

7% of the sample while the latter is 27%. Stealth democracy is not a significant predictor in these models, thus our theoretical arguments linking stealth democracy orientations and party choice are strengthened.

¹⁴ We differentiate from the standard practice by exploring non-linear associations between stealth democracy and ideology since we do not find compelling reasons to expect a linear relationship between these two variables. Indeed, extreme ideological positions (either leftist or rightist) might be at odds with stealth democracy attitudes. Individuals with such intense political orientations might be more willing to advocate more intense political involvement, so we could expect an inverted U-shape relationship between these two variables.

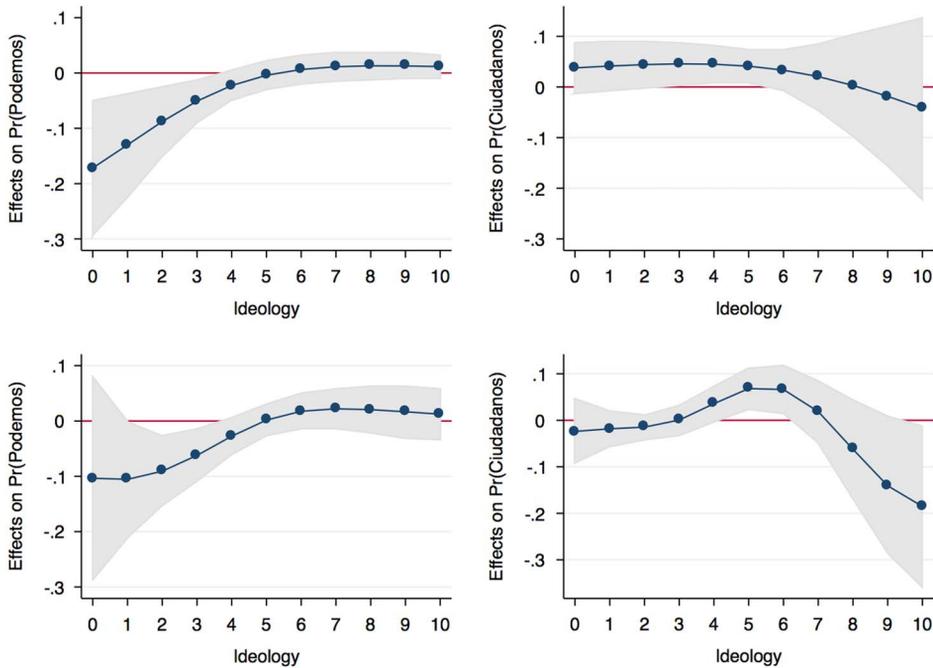


Figure 3 Stealth Democracy effect on the probability to vote for *Podemos* or *Ciudadanos* by ideology (upper row) and ideology squared (lower row).

On the other hand, the linear interaction between ideology and the index of stealth democracy does not provide clear results on the probability of voting for *Ciudadanos* (upper-right graph in Figure 3). Yet, the non-linear interaction does (see bottom-right graph). Thus, stealth democracy attitudes especially contribute to the explanation of the votes for new right-to-the-center parties if voters are not ideological extremists.¹⁵

Among the control variables, some results merit some additional comments. For instance, we find that the parameter for level of disaffection with the democratic system is negatively associated with the support for traditional parties. The probability of voting for PP or PSOE decreases as the level of dissatisfaction with democracy increases, which is consistent with the motivation of this study, that is, political discontent against the backdrop of the Great Recession. However, disaffection with democracy is not associated with support for the new and

¹⁵ Beside the conditional role of ideology in the relationship between stealth democracy attitudes and vote choice, we assessed the potential role of less structural factors such as interviewees' perception of the economic situation, since the economic crisis could determine how stealth orientations shape the vote choice. Table O.A.8 in the Online Appendix shows the results for models with interactions between the stealth democracy index and these evaluations. None of the coefficients capturing the conditional impact are statistically significant.

challenger parties. Neither voting for *Podemos* nor for *Ciudadanos* shows a significant relationship with discontent. These results suggest that some level of alienation from the democratic system could be a necessary but not sufficient condition for new parties to gain electoral support. This is something that indeed underlines the statistically significant findings found for the role of stealth democracy attitudes.

The variable measuring economic disaffection (*Perception of Spanish economy*) only plays a role in voting for either the incumbent party (PP) or the left-wing new challenger party (*Podemos*): positively for the former (the better the perception of the economy, the higher the probability of supporting the incumbent) and negatively for the latter. Although we would also have expected a negative effect in the model of *Ciudadanos*, since the Great Recession is taken as a trigger for the support for new and challenger parties, we find no impact. This result may be due to the differential effects of the economic crisis on (and the diverging perception of it from) parties' electorates.¹⁶

Discussion and concluding remarks

Our analysis shows that stealth democracy attitudes foster the support for new and challenger parties, particularly when they are moderate and they defend reforms on the democratic decision-making processes characterized by low-intensity citizen participation. In the Spanish context this is the case for the new right-to-the-center party, *Ciudadanos*. On the contrary, stealth attitudes decrease the support for new and challenger parties that enhance citizens' involvement in the democratic decision-making process, like *Podemos*.

The analysis developed in this article, although novel, would not be complete without echoing the methodological discussion of the limits of the stealth democracy index. The index has shown its usefulness for comparative analyses, but it has also been subject to criticism. Webb (2013: 754) argues that the index fails to capture one of the critical dimensions of stealth democracy, namely people's attitude toward conflict or dispute, which is intrinsic to the political debate. Neblo *et al.* (2010: 577–578) suggest that people expressing stealth democracy beliefs may have conditional attitudes toward the content of the items, which could lead to different interpretations of the index. Font *et al.* (2012: 27) disagree with the aggregation of what they consider conceptually unrelated aspects of citizens' preferences. Additionally, in the same line, Font *et al.* (2015: 163) demonstrate that business-based governance does not perfectly match the other expert-based items.

As in other studies, the index built with our survey data is not exempt from potential weaknesses. In fact, the aggregation of the four items of

¹⁶ Regression analyses show low values for McFadden's pseudo R^2 , which means that the model with predictors is a much better fit than the one without them. Although to seek a comprehensive model of voting is not the aim of our study, we are still aware that results might be affected by an omitted variable bias.

Hibbing and Theiss-Morse's stealth democracy index in our survey produces a low-reliability Cronbach's α score (0.36), although it improves upon the one obtained in a previous analysis of the Spanish case.¹⁷ Therefore, without detracting from the theoretical content of the stealth democracy concept, we believe that due to the weakness of the measurement tool, studies using this index should also complement the analyses with further exploration of the separate effects of its four components. In doing so, we may derive a nuanced image of the relationship between stealth democracy and party choice.

Results of this exploration are shown in Table 3. They reveal a more complex picture than the one obtained using the compound index. Two of the index's items, namely the support for the claims that 'Politicians should stop talking' and 'Compromise is selling out one's principles', do not have any effect on voting intentions.¹⁸

What is more, the expected differentiation between mainstream and new parties' supporters appears more blurred when the effects of the components of the index are observed separately. The vote for the mainstream conservative PP is positively related to the support for involving 'successful business people' in decision-making. This component also affects the likelihood of supporting the left parties, but in this case, in line with what Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002: 148) found for those who identified with the US Democratic party, the sign is negative: supporting the involvement of business people in decision-making decreases the likelihood of supporting either the new radical-left challenger (*Podemos*) or the mainstream center-left (PSOE) (although this effect is barely significant). Finally, supporting the role of non-elected experts in political decisions is only relevant in explaining the support for the new center-right *Ciudadanos*, increasing the likelihood of voting for it. This last result exemplifies how this extra analysis of the component of the index might illuminate further lines of research. For instance, in the emerging literature about preferences for technocratic governments (Pastorella, 2016; Bertou and Pastorella, 2017), the role played by new and challenger parties has been absent so far.

In sum, these results demonstrate the role played by stealth democracy orientations (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 2002) in party support. The relationship between this set of attitudes and party preference had not been empirically assessed before and our findings allow for a better understanding of unexplored attitudinal factors affecting recent party system changes. Yet, our findings also show that the effect of stealth democracy orientations – leaning not toward individuals' increased involvement, but in favor of delegation, efficiency, and experts' roles in political decision-making – could be more nuanced if the stealth democracy index is decomposed. For the Spanish case, one of the items included in Hibbing and Theiss-Morse's (2002) index seems to exert a particular influence on voting for the

¹⁷ In Font *et al.* (2012: 17) the Cronbach's α score is 0.18.

¹⁸ The variable 'Politicians should stop talking' hardly varies.

Table 3. The effects of stealth democracy components on party choice

Dependent variable: intention to vote	Mainstream parties		New and challenger parties	
	PP	PSOE	<i>Podemos</i>	<i>Ciudadanos</i>
Politicians should stop talking and take action	-0.518 (0.549)	0.522 (0.554)	0.380 (0.528)	-0.146 (0.435)
Compromise is selling out once's principles	-0.034 (0.236)	0.116 (0.190)	-0.154 (0.217)	-0.029 (0.187)
Leave decisions to successful business people	0.524 (0.240)*	-0.377 (0.225)	-0.638 (0.289)*	0.203 (0.196)
Leave decisions to non-elected experts	-0.315 (0.274)	0.116 (0.220)	-0.110 (0.240)	0.598 (0.238)*
Age	0.001 (0.008)	0.003 (0.006)	-0.006 (0.007)	-0.017 (0.006)**
Gender	-0.502 (0.243)*	-0.054 (0.189)	0.408 (0.217)	0.130 (0.188)
Low-middle class	0.068 (0.517)	0.056 (0.358)	-0.041 (0.392)	-0.100 (0.425)
Middle class	0.072 (0.474)	-0.114 (0.345)	-0.388 (0.383)	0.002 (0.400)
Upper-middle and upper class	0.315 (0.579)	0.062 (0.467)	-0.103 (0.510)	-0.074 (0.482)
Unemployed	-0.080 (0.359)	-0.128 (0.248)	0.166 (0.256)	-0.395 (0.270)
Education	-0.102 (0.140)	-0.319 (0.119)**	-0.004 (0.130)	0.156 (0.107)
Ideology	0.771 (0.091)**	-0.266 (0.060)**	-0.398 (0.067)**	0.286 (0.064)**
Level of dissatisfaction with democracy	-0.258 (0.063)**	-0.096 (0.042)*	0.055 (0.044)	-0.054 (0.042)
Referendum	-0.110 (0.044)*	-0.054 (0.035)	0.039 (0.042)	0.024 (0.035)
Deliberative participation	0.059 (0.043)	0.035 (0.038)	0.070 (0.047)	-0.094 (0.035)**
Electoral participation	0.066 (0.066)	0.039 (0.050)	-0.062 (0.050)	0.181 (0.056)**
Perception of Spanish economy	0.836 (0.129)**	-0.122 (0.122)	-0.668 (0.174)**	-0.111 (0.111)
Constant	-6.350 (1.330)**	0.372 (1.042)	0.639 (1.131)	-3.913 (1.031)**
Pseudo R ² (McFadden's)	0.36	0.05	0.17	0.08
Mean VIF	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18
Observation	1022	1006	1006	1006

PSOE = Socialist Party; PP = Popular Party.

Logistic regression results.

Standard errors in parentheses; *** $P < 0.001$, ** $P < 0.01$, * $P < 0.05$.

new right-to-the-center party *Ciudadanos*: a preference for experts' involvement in politics. In this way, the results suggest that the theoretical contribution of the stealth democracy concept can sometimes be complemented from outside the index, as originally proposed.

Additionally, while the literature has advanced on the determinants of the radical-right populist vote, our analyses inform us about how stealth democracy attitudes might foster the support for right-to-the-center political reform parties critical of the 'politics as usual', such as the Spanish *Ciudadanos* – or potentially

other recent newcomers such as The New Austria and Liberal Forum (*Das Neue Österreich und Liberales Forum*), Action of Dissatisfied Citizens (*Akce nespokojených občanů*) in the Czech Republic, or Bright Future (*Björt framtíð*) in Iceland. Our study shows that in a context such as the one generated by the Great Recession, disaffection with the political process and the presence of parties offering political reforms do favor these new parties. If this citizens' discontent becomes a stable feature of western public opinion it will also be a permanent source of support for non-mainstream parties oriented toward the reform of political decision-making processes.¹⁹

Further research is needed into the way in which these attitudes have an effect on the support for political reform parties in other countries and the methods to better measure and assess their influence.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the editors and the three anonymous referees for advice, which greatly improved the quality of this study. The authors also wish to thank *Metroscopia Estudios Sociales y de Opinión S.L.* for giving us the opportunity to include some questions in its Barometer. The authors are also in debt with Laura Morales, Pablo Simón, and the participants of the Political Behavior Seminar at the Pompeu Frabra University for their useful comments. All errors remain the authors.

Supplementary material

To view supplementary material for this article, please visit <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773917000108>

References

- Allen, N. and S. Birch (2014), 'Process preferences and British public opinion: citizens' judgments about government in an era of anti-politics', *Political Studies* 63: 390–411.
- Anderson, C. and E. Goodyear-Grant (2010), 'Why are highly informed citizens skeptical of referenda?', *Electoral Studies* 29(2): 227–238.
- Barber, B. (1984), *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Bartels, L. (2014), 'Ideology and retrospection in electoral responses to the great recession', in N. Bermeo and L. Bartels (eds), *Mass Politics in Tough Times*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 185–223.
- Bengtsson, A. and M. Mattila (2009), 'Direct democracy and its critics: support for direct democracy and stealth democracy in Finland', *West European Politics* 32(5): 1031–1048.

¹⁹ Further research should also assess how successive changes in parties' positions on decision-making processes impact their electoral support. Although Spain had another General Election 6 months after December 2015, political parties did not introduce substantial changes regarding the political process in their manifestos.

- Bergh, J. (2004), 'Protest voting in Austria, Denmark and Norway', *Scandinavian Political Studies* 27(4): 367–389.
- Bertsou, E. and G. Pastorella (2017), 'Technocratic attitudes: a citizens' perspective of expert decision-making', *West European Politics*, 40(2): 430–458.
- Bordignon, F. and L. Ceccarini (2013), 'Five stars and a cricket. Beppe Grillo shakes Italian politics', *South European Society and Politics* 18(4): 427–449.
- Bowler, S., T. Donovan and J.A. Karp (2007), 'Enraged or engaged? Preferences for direct citizen participation in affluent democracies', *Political Research Quarterly* 60(3): 351–362.
- Cain, B., R. Dalton and S. Scarrow (eds), (2004), *Democracy Transformed? Expanding Political Opportunities in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cordero, G. and J.R. Montero (2015), 'Against bipartism, towards dealignment? The 2014 European election in Spain', *South European Society and Politics* 20(3): 357–379.
- Ciudadanos (2015), 'Programa electoral'. Retrieved 18 April 2016 from <https://www.ciudadanos-cs.org/programa-electoral>.
- Coffé, H. and A. Michels (2014), 'Education and support for representative, direct and stealth democracy', *Electoral Studies* 35: 1–11.
- Dalton, R. (2004), *Democratic Challenges, Democratic Choices. The Erosion of Political Support in Advanced Democracies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dalton, R., W. Bürklin and A. Drumm (2001), 'Public opinion and direct democracy', *Journal of Democracy* 12(4): 141–153.
- Dennis, J. and D. Owen (2001), 'Popular satisfaction with the party system and representative democracy in the United States', *International Political Science Review* 22(4): 399–415.
- Donovan, T. and J. Karp (2006), 'Popular support for direct democracy', *Party Politics* 12(5): 671–688.
- Evans, M., G. Stoker and J. Nasir (2013), *How Do Australians Imagine Their Democracy*, Canberra: Anzso, Institute for Governance at the University of Canberra.
- Font, J., M. Wojcieszak and C. Navarro (2015), 'Participation, representation and expertise: citizen preferences for decision-making processes', *Political Studies* 63(1): 153–172.
- Font, J., C. Navarro, M. Wojcieszak and P. Alarcón (2012), «*Democracia sigilosa*» en España? *Preferencias de la ciudadanía española sobre las formas de decisión política y sus factores explicativos*, Madrid: CIS.
- Hibbing, J.R. and E. Theiss-Morse (2001), 'Process preferences and American politics: what the people want government to be', *American Political Science Review* 95(1): 145–153.
- Hibbing, J.R. and E. Theiss-Morse (2002), *Stealth Democracy: Americans' Beliefs About How Government Should Work*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hino, A. (2012), *New Challenger Parties in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis*, Abingdon: Routledge.
- Hobolt, S. and J. Tilley (2016), 'Fleeing the centre: the rise of challenger parties in the aftermath of the euro crisis', *West European Politics* 39(5): 971–991.
- Kriesi, H. (2014), 'The political consequences of the economic crisis in Europe: electoral punishment and popular protest', in N. Bermeo and L. Bartels (eds) *Mass Politics in Tough Times*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 297–333.
- Kriesi, H. and T. Pappas (eds) (2015), *European Populism in the Shadows of the Great Recession*, Colchester: ECPR Press.
- Llamazares, I. and M. Gómez-Reino (2015), 'Left populism in Spain? The rise of Podemos'. 22nd Congress for European Studies, July 8–10, Paris.
- Magalhães, P. (2014), 'Introduction – financial crisis, austerity and electoral politics', *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 24(2): 125–133.
- Mair, P. (2013), *Ruling the Void. The Hollowing of Western Democracy*, London: Verso.
- Michels, A. (2011), 'Innovations in democratic governance. How does citizen participation contribute to a better democracy?', *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 77(2): 275–293.
- Montero, J.R., R. Gunther and M. Torcal (1997), 'Democracy in Spain: legitimacy, discontent and disaffection', *Studies in Comparative International Development* 32(3): 124–160.
- Neblo, M., K. Esterling, R. Kennedy, D. Lazer and A. Sokhey (2010), 'Who wants to deliberate – and why?', *American Political Science Review* 104(3): 566–583.

- Norris, P. (1999), *Democratic Deficit. Critical Citizens Revisited*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Orriols, L. and G. Rico (2014), 'El clima de opinión', in Eva Anduiza, *et al.* (eds), *Elecciones generales 2011*, Vol. 5 Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, pp. 63–82.
- Orriols, L. and G. Cordero (2016), 'The breakdown of the Spanish two-party system: the upsurge of Podemos and Ciudadanos in the 2015 general election'. *South European Society and Politics* 21(4): 469–492.
- Passarelli, G. and D. Tuorto (2016), 'The Five Star Movement: purely a matter of protest? The rise of a new party between political discontent and reasoned voting', *Party Politics* <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068816642809>.
- Pastorella, G. (2016), 'Technocratic governments in Europe: getting the critique right', *Political Studies* 64(4): 948–965.
- Pateman, C. (1970), *Participation and Democratic Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pauwels, T. (2014), *Populism in Western Europe. Comparing Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands*, London: Routledge.
- Podemos (2015), 'Programa. Democracia Política'. Retrieved 18 April 2016 from <http://unpaiscontigo.es/programa/>.
- Ramiro, L. and R. Gomez (2017), 'Radical left populism during the Great Recession: Podemos and its competition with the established radical left', *Political Studies* 65(1S): 108–126.
- Rodon, T. and M.J. Hierro (2016), 'Podemos and Ciudadanos shake up the Spanish party system: the 2015 local and regional elections', *South European Society and Politics* 21(3): 339–357.
- Rodríguez-Teruel, J. and A. Barrio (2016), 'Going national: Ciudadanos from Catalonia to Spain', *South European Society and Politics* 21(4): 587–607.
- Smith, G. (2009), *Democratic Innovations. Designing Institutions for Citizen Participation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Torcal, M. (2014a), 'The decline of political trust in Spain and Portugal: economic performance or political responsiveness?', *American Behavioural Scientist* 58(12): 1542–1567.
- Torcal, M. (2014b), 'The incumbent electoral defeat in the 2011 Spanish national elections: the effect of the economic crisis on an ideological polarized party system', *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 24(2): 203–221.
- Webb, P. (2013), 'Who is willing to participate? Dissatisfied democrats, stealth democrats and populists in the United Kingdom', *European Journal of Political Research* 52: 747–772.