Working Paper

Introducing a New Database on Legislative Behaviour in Portugal

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Editorial Note:

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Abstract

The development of new and bigger databases on law production fostered the study of legislative behaviour. This happened not only in the traditional stage of congressional politics, but also, in the European Union and country levels. As a developing reality, still several countries do not have accessible legislative data, and Portugal counts as one of these examples, this database was constructed with this in mind. The time covered here comprises the period of 1982 to 2009 and covers all the legislative initiatives and approved laws that were proposed and enacted by the Portuguese Parliament and the Council of Ministers. Because of the institutional information, the detailed features of each one of the observations (legislation), the extended time-period and of the incorporation of variables potentially strategic, this database can be useful for a wide range of Academics.

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1 Introduction

Over the last decades, the study of legislative behaviour was intensified, and its production volume increased. Not just the traditional US Congress studies were developed, but also other cases were analysed. Especially given to the access and analysis of big databases, made possible by computational tools, the knowledge of decision-making processes and mechanisms concerning legislative behaviour is greater than before. By using this approach, the effort of gathering data is now not only possible, but also, very pertinent to a better testing of theories and, therefore, for a broader and better analysis of political moves.

The new database that is here presented follows the previous logic of an increasing development of coded data on legislative features. This country-data aggregation of twenty-seven[1] years, because of its richness and novelty, should be made accessible to the academic community. It can be useful for a wide range of researchers that are interested in information about all the proposed bills made by all the political actors in the Portuguese political system. This occurs in two distinct levels: the first one is the Parliament, considering governmental and opposition bills, and the second is in the Council of Ministers. This database has also other institutional information as the President of the Republic supporters, if it is his first or second mandate, if the legislation was approved or not and in which format was converted, if it was vetoed, among other relevant aspects.

In the next sections I explain and illustrate the database.[2] I start by giving a broader characterisation of the Portuguese system, explaining its relevant features. After that, I give a more in-depth explanation on how the database was constructed. Within this point I write about the measurement and the operationalisation of the variables. Finally, I present some descriptive statistics.

2 The Portuguese Case

Although country-specific and comparative data concerning legislative behaviour has recently been the object of a growing interest from researchers, resulting in an increase in legislative data coding, Portugal's legislation is not usually included in this sample.[3] More recently, two studies on Portuguese legislation and the European Union considered legislative production, Calca (2014) and Caupers et al. (2014). Both use data on legislative production but both present some limitations since these data are a small parcel of the country's major legislative characteristics. In these papers, because the focus is on the relationship between Portugal and the European Union, the research topic and the data are narrower than what is presented here.

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1   The data that I analyse starts on the 30th of September 1982, when, officially, the *Conselho de Revolução* was dismissed. This institution had powers that constrained the other institutional powers such as the Government, the President of the Republic and the Parliament, in such a way that to have it as part of possible analysis would produce a bias and drive the results into partial conclusions.

2   The database that I present here is part of a larger project, my Ph.D. dissertation (*Government's Decision: A Theoretical and Empirical Study on Legislative Initiative as Strategic Behaviour*). Although this database was primarily constructed for this purpose, it can be useful for other studies that either focus on legislative behaviour and legislative decision-making, or for other research projects that, by their nature, deal with decisional and institutional variables.

3   There is a reference to a database that includes the Portuguese case cited in Claro da Fonseca and Guerra Martins (2008). This dataset, however, has two limitations that keep it from being user-friendly. Firstly, it is not coded in English (it is coded in German, which is a major international drawback, in fact a majority of researchers do not understand the language). Secondly, it does not have most of the variables needed to test institutional moves and, consequently, actors' interactions. There the authors only presented totals of legislation, and they have not coded the 10th legislature.

The database's backbone thus comprises all the official legislative documents (the legislation published in the *Diário da República*[4]), and being newly coded data, it gives the possibility of adding Portugal as another unit of analysis to cross-national comparative projects. In addition, it helps the understanding parliamentary and governmental decision-making, at large, and of decision-making under the Portuguese reality, more specifically.

Portugal is a small country that does not accurately fit the several distinct denominations of political systems that are currently available in the literature. The country does not correspond to any of the pure categories of political systems defined within the discipline. Nonetheless, because of its puzzling features, it may be relevant for political scientists, as a convenient tool for comparisons and the further disentangling of theoretical and empirical questions to use it. The contradictory status of the country is thus relevant to my choice of it as a case to be studied. The intriguing aspect about the political system of Portugal is visible in the diverse attempts to classify it. There is no consensus in its categorisation, and several typologies have been presented as attempts to incorporate it into theoretical and/or empirical frameworks. Some of these classifications endeavour to define the Portuguese unicameral system as *semi-presidential,* the cases of Duverger (1980), Sartori (1994) and Elgie (1999); as *premier presidentialism* by Shugart and Carey (1992) and as a system that originally was *premier presidentialism* and afterwards a *parliamentary* system, by Diamond and Morlino (2005).

Not rarely because it falls into a *crossbreed* classification, given its conflicting characteristics, it is neglected or forgotten. In fact, studying the *outlier* case that Portugal is can prove to be a suitable way to find new research paths. Identifying legislative powers, and by that political powers, may help to solve how the functioning of the political institutions happens and how the country-specific system works.

In this database two possibilities of legislative production were coded. The first one is related to the so-called *common legislative process* and deals with the legislative process that takes place in the Parliament; the other path refers to the legislative process that takes place in the Council of Ministers. The parliamentary legislative process has some steps that I explain briefly: (1) Individual MP's, Parliamentary Groups or Groups of Citizens can propose an initiative as a member's bill, or a government bill by the Government or the Legislative Assemblies of the Autonomous Regions; (2) The initiatives are presented to the floor (where they are registered, numbered and announced). There, they can be accepted or rejected (with the right to appeal if there is a rejection; in this case the initiative will be evaluated by a committee and returned to the floor for voting); (3) They are presented to a committee that produces a report on them. There is also a public discussion and proposals for possible changes; (4) They go to the plenary to be discussed and voted, in general (at this point they can be rejected); (5) If approved, the initiative is discussed in its specificities in a committee (when it is a member's bill proposals can be presented to change it there) and goes to the floor, in the case that it is a government bill; (6) In this period, it should go to a full vote on the floor; (7) The committee will make the final draft of the legislation; (8) It will be published as a Decree of the Assembly of the Republic; (9) It will then be sent to the President of the Republic to be signed (it can be vetoed and returned to the Parliament); (10) It is accepted; (11) It must have a ministerial approval; (12) It will be published in the official gazette (*Diário da República*). The Government outlines the second legislative path, it starts by being proposed legislation as an initiative of the Prime Minister and, possible, of the Ministers involved in a given issue. After that, the proposal is sent to the President of the Republic to be signed. It can also happen that a specific decree is presented and approved by the Council of Ministers and, then, sent for presidential

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4　This is the Portuguese official gazette, and all the legislative documents are only binding after being published there. To access these documents see: https://dre.pt/ or http://www.parlamento.pt/.

approval. In the case that there is a presidential veto, the Government can end the proposal, change it and send it again to approval, or present an executive law in the Parliament to be discussed and voted.

I started by coding all the initiatives produced in the *Presidência do Conselho de Ministros* (PCM)[5] and all the Law initiatives presented in the Parliament. After that data gathering and coding, I refined the information from the database by adding new variables. Most of them were related to law-specific characteristics and political and institutional country settings. Detailed information about that process and further analysis of the database will be given in the subsequent sections.

3 Constructing the Database

The coding of this database was done in several steps, as described in this section. It was important to see if the documents that I needed were available for coding after defining a time frame. At first, the entire set of data was not available on-line. The parliamentary legislative information was accessible for only a few legislatures and at this stage, only a subset of the information could be downloaded from the website of the Parliament. Nevertheless, I managed to access the full set of documents (i.e. all the digitalised information of the *Diário da República*, from the parliamentary archives) and from that point on I began the task of coding. Later, a list with all the legislative initiatives produced in the Portuguese Parliament was made publicly available on-line what helped me to crosscheck my previous work and contributed to a more accurate completion of this database.

Once I listed all the initiatives originated in the Council of Ministers, I listed all the initiatives and approved initiatives presented and approved by the Parliament. Then, with the two complete lists, which had been previously merged, plus some of the attributes of the legislation such as the title, reference, and type of legislation, among others, I created other variables. Starting from this structure, I added institutional variables (e.g., party(ies) in power, vetoes by the President of the Republic, European Union-related legislation, etc.). I describe the conceptualisation, the operationalisation and the measurement of these variables in the next subsection.

The total process of data compilation proved to be harder than expected, and this was essentially due to the way the information available on-line was structured. Looking at the Portuguese Parliament website, it is understandable that the legislative initiatives and the approved initiatives pages are connected by links but separately constructed. This linkage leads to the need of matching the data in order to have a procedural logic (proposal → approval).

Navigating on this website, one can see that in the left-hand menu of the initial page there is a connection to the Parliamentary Activity and Legislative Process. By following this link, one can see more specifically *Legislative Initiatives* and *Approved Legislation*. By clicking in the options, one will find distinct pages, each one with relevant aspects that can be chosen: the type of law, the legislature, the date, and the legislative session, among others. Thus, even with relevant information, the two types of actions (initiatives and accepted initiatives) are not directly connected. To find a relationship between them one must go through

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5   The Presidency of the Council of Ministers is the Cabinet. There, governmental policies are defined, their execution is planned and other actions directly related to the Government's duties and powers are materialised. For more information on the composition of the Council of Ministers see the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic, Article 184(1) and Calca (2013a).

several layers of information by clicking on several links. It was this structural aspect that made the data matching necessary and much more time-consuming and problem-prone than expected.

After listing all the initiatives and the approved initiatives in the Parliament, I had to download each page of legislative information containing the most relevant features of each entry. For this reason, and in order to match both sets of information–the listed and the downloaded data–I had to clean the database from features that were not needed. This action included mistakes in the introduction of the information on the website, spelling errors and typos, for example. This data cleaning was done both automatically (any time it was possible) and manually, given the specifics of the mistakes encountered. Aspects such as the titles and abstracts of the legislation, typically from the Portuguese encoding, were not simple, and typing mistakes, extra spaces before and after words within the cells, changes made by the alternate use of Macintosh and Windows environment, among other aspects, created extra problems to be solved. Only, after all, this process was the data ready to be matched and merged. As a consequence of this arduous cleaning process, I matched the initiatives with the approved initiatives. Thus, I was able to match the observations of the database, which changed its final structure. This means that in cases where several laws have the same legislative initiative and, therefore, the initiative is repeated, the output (final law) will be different. Or, various laws could have several legislative initiatives as origins. The next step was to check whether there were any repetitions, this could happen due to the automatic download of the data, and when they existed they were erased.

Once I had merged the two datasets, I still had to add the initiatives that were proposed for the Council of Ministers. The source of this information is not the same as the one for parliamentary initiatives and approved initiatives. For this reason, given the different structure of this dataset, I also had to adapt the features of it in order to merge them. Previously, this data also had to be cleaned since it had a high number of typos and spelling errors.

3.1   Measurement and Operationalisation

Because of its nature, dealing with legislative initiatives, legislation proposers, legislative inputs and outputs make the coding of variables with them related relatively straightforward to operationalise. Most of the time, it is the use of the law production that gives the variable values needed to test scientific hypotheses empirically and answer to research questions. I followed this same logic, that is, I coded legislation types, legislation reference numbers, proponents and two variables that can potentially reflect strategic aspects (the choice between an *executive law* and a *government bill*)[6] among others.

The definition of Government, as found in the *Constitution of the Portuguese Republic*, presents it as a collective organ that executes the political power within a state as a sovereign institution. This definition is the legal approach that I use in the operationalisation of Government legislative proposals. Although there

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6   Concerning the conditions in which the Governments are more likely to initiate an executive law (legislation that is defined in the Presidency of the Council of Ministers by the Government) or a government bill (legislation that is presented to the Parliament by the Government and all the other legislation proposed by opposition parties and approved or not) it was necessary to know which proposals were initiated by the Government in this time-period. Additionally, other relevant institutional features were incorporated in the database, such as the legislature where the proposals were initiated or the party(ies) that supported the President of the Republic's candidacy.

are a large number of conceptualisations about the Government, empirically using this concept means to adopt the definition that is present in the foundational document.[7]

3.2 The Variables

This database comprises a period of *27* years (1982-2009) and a total of nine legislatures. It compiles all the legislation initiated and approved by the Portuguese Parliament and all the initiatives that took place in the Council of Ministers for this time frame. Other institutional aspects were added to this information including the identification of the President of the Republic in office, which observations (legislation) were vetoed and the left-right positions of the parties represented in the Parliament.

The approved initiatives were matched with the information regarding the parliamentary initiatives. After this matching, it was possible to identify which of them became a law. I also had in mind governmental initiatives (because of the project that I was developing and because it was my primary goal to look at Governments' legislative behaviour), theoretically considering that the Government as a legislator makes strategic calculus in order to propose laws that, in principle, are approvable. I have coded all the legislative initiatives, distinguishing the ones made by the opposition (meaning: by all the parties that were not in office) and by the Government.[8]

As previously stated, each observation of the database is an initiative that may have its origin in the government or the opposition. I assumed that all the proposals made by the parties in office (even though not stated as Government proposals on the Parliament's website) were considered as governmental proposals in some of the variables created, and the same happened when I aggregated the proposals of the out-of-office parties in a broader category referring to the opposition proposals. I address the specificities of each one of the variables in the next points. In *Table 1*, one can see the variable names, which refer to the variables found in the database. The next points are a more detailed description of the database. I do not highlight all the variables that the database contains, but I give a more in-depth characterisation of the variables that do not have an easy and immediate interpretation, and somehow need further explanations.[9]

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7   According to articles 110 and 182 of the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic, the Government is the institution responsible for conducting the general affairs of the state and is the central agent of public administration. In order to access to more detailed information about the Portuguese Government's competencies, powers and obligations see Calca (2014b).

8   Not all the legislative initiatives are approved and enacted as laws and not all the approved legislation have its origins in an initiative in the Parliament, for example, international agreements or European Union transposition of Directives.

9   Not all the variables presented in Table 1 are content-wise relevant for eventual analyses, some are useful in organisational terms and were important to help in the construction of the final database. They are: (1) Orig - origin of the initiative (if it is a legislation proposed in the Parliament or Council of Ministers); (2) Filna - the name of the file that was downloaded from the website of the parliament in order to be able to match and merge the entries; (3) Pub - the publication reference; (4) Appr - the information of whether a given initiative was approved or not; (5) Obs - observations; (6) Prop - the type of proposal; (7) Legis - legislature; (8) Ini-Typ - the initial type of initiative; (9) TypLaw - the type of legislation created after approval; (10) Num - the number of the proposal; and the Ref - the reference to the proposal.

Table 1: Variable Name and Identification of Data Executive Laws and Government Bills (1982-2009)

Variable	Identification	Variable	Identification
Orig	Origin	*PropSig2*	Proposal Subscriber 2
Filena	File Name	*PropSig3*	Proposal Subscriber 3
Tit	Title	*PropSig4*	Proposal Subscriber 4
Pub	Publication	*PropSig5*	Proposal Subscriber 5
Aprov	Approved	*PropSig6*	Proposal Subscriber 6
Prop	Proposal	*PropSig7*	Proposal Subscriber 7
Legis	Legislature	*PropSig8*	Proposal Subscriber 8
PartPow1	Party in Power 1	*Veto*	Veto
PartPow2	Party in Power 2	*Titabst*	Title and Abstract
PartPow3	Party in Power 3	*CAPCod*	Comparative Agendas Project Code
PR	President of the Republic	*UE*	European Union
PRPartSupp1	President of the Republic Party of Support 1	*el_gb1*	Executive Law / Governmental Bill 1
PRPartSupp2	President of the Republic Party of Support 2	*str*	Strong Government Scenario
PRPartSupp3	President of the Republic Party of Support 3	*maj*	Majority Government Scenario
PRPartSupp4	President of the Republic Party of Support 4	*min*	Minority Government Scenario
PRPartSupp5	President of the Republic Party of Support 5	*wea*	Weak Government Scenario
PRPartSupp6	President of the Republic Party of Support 6	*el_gb2*	Executive Law / Governmental Bill 2
PRTer	President of the Republic Term	*med_leg_pos*	Median Legislator Position
IniTyp	Initial Type	*med_leg_part1*	Median Legislator Party 1
TypLaw	Type of Law	*med_leg_part2*	Median Legislator Party 2
Num	Number	*med_leg_part3*	Median Legislator Party 3
Ref	Reference	*Titabst*	Title and Abstract
PropSig1	Proposal Subscriber 1		

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Proposers

It is was important to differentiate between the proposers in legislative terms. Firstly, because I was mainly interested in the Government's proposals (or within the Parliament also in the proposals by party(ies) in office), and, secondly, because I also had to operationalise it by contrast to the majority in Parliament proposals. I aggregated the proposals of the party(ies) in the Government as governmental initiatives. If, at least one of the Government party(ies) was a signatory of a legislative initiative, I coded it as a Government's proposal. This is also valid if there was a proposal of one of the Ministries. I left outstayed proposals from committees and the Autonomous Regions. I also aggregated all the proposals made by the opposition parties into one, considering just one majority in Parliament. This variable is thus relevant to the creation of other variables, especially the ones related with the scenarios.

Party in Power

In order to know if it was any of these party members that proposed a given legislation, I had to match who was in office at the moment of the proposal and who was the proposer was within the Parliament. To operationalise the coding of this variable I had to consider that a law proposer in the Parliament could be in any one of the three possible parties in power (when more than one party divided the office), therefore coding it (together with the Government proposer in Parliament) as zero, *0*, (*government bill*), and all the legislation that was proposed in the PCM with a one, *1* (*executive law*). This variable helped me to attest if

any one of the parties in power was a proposer of a given law. When that happened, I considered the law a governmental proposal. The coding of this variable was made using the acronyms of the parties.

Legislature

The distinction between legislatures was important to see the political spectrum[10] of each one of the Governments. After that, I checked if whether this spectrum was coincidental with the President of the Republic. The same was made done concerning the idea of majority or minority Governments. I considered the legislature as the unit of time division. The definition of law proposals by the legislature also helped to aggregate other units that were relevant to the analysis, definition and description of the four scenarios. To code the *Legislature* variable I used the roman numerals. This is how in Portugal the legislatures are usually defined, and I decided to use an identical logic.

President of the Republic Supporters

To know who supported the President of the Republic is relevant to position this player in a given political spectrum.[11] Although he represents all the Portuguese citizens and cannot have an official party affiliation, in general, the institutional support for candidacies to the Presidency of the Republic comes from the parties. So, it is important to look at the distribution of parties, in and out of office, their arrangement in the political spectrum, and to know which of them supported the President of the Republic. To realise and code who supported the President of the Republic I used the acronyms of the parties.

President of the Republic Vetoes

I looked at the vetoes of the President of the Republic in order to see if they were related to the conditions present in the four scenarios. In fact, if one considers the rational-choice approach, in a perfectly rational world vetoes should not occur. But just a few appear in the variable *el_gb1* and none in the potentially strategic variable *el_gb2*. Also, the total number of few vetoes is compared with the large numbers of legislation cases that were proposed and approved. In Portugal two kinds of vetoes can be enacted. One is related with the Constitutional Court vetoes. These kinds of vetoes are related with disrespect for the *Constitution of the Portuguese Republic*. The President of the Republic also can enact vetoes that can be overridden by the Parliament if the institution decides to vote against them. Before the creation of this variable, I coded another, more general, one, in which all the vetoes were considered. After that, I created a new dummy variable coded for a President of the Republic veto, with a one (*1*) or a non-veto, with a zero (*0*). In the period of time that the database covers of the total number of presidential vetoes in this period comprising sixty, the annual average is of two point two ($\overline{x} = 2.2$ per year).

Issues

Since it could be possible that law proposals and eventual vetoes could be related to the significance of topics, I therefore used the *Comparative Agendas Project* coding that considers issue attention and classifies the policies into topics. The *issue factor* can lead to a potential increase or decrease in the likelihood of a certain legislative initiative to be proposed and even approved. In other words, according with the issue of

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10   When I refer to political spectrum I mean the positioning of the institutional actors in a one-spatial dimension of possible left and right positions.

11   In Portugal the citizens directly elect the President of the Republic. In the database, when I refer the President of the Republic supporters I am talking about the parties that publicly declared their support to the candidacy.

a certain initiative, its legislative relevance could be distinct what depends on the proposer and the conjuncture. Further, is to be expected that certain proposers pay more attention to certain issues than to others (for instance ideology driven issues).

Table 2: Coding Number and Respective Topic - Comparative Agendas Project

Codes	Issue Title
1	Domestic Macroeconomic Issues
2	Civil Rights, Minority Issues, and Civil Liberties
3	Health
4	Agriculture
5	Labour and Employment
6	Education
7	Environment
8	Energy
9	Immigration and Refugee Issues
10	Transportation
12	Law, Crime, and Family Issues
13	Social Welfare
14	Community Development and Housing Issues
15	Banking, Finance, and Domestic Commerce
16	Defence
17	Space, Science, Technology, and Communications
18	Foreign Trade
19	International Affairs and Foreign Aid
20	Government Operations
21	Public Lands, Water Management, and Territorial Issues
23	Cultural Policy Issues

Source: Comparative Agendas Project, Master Codebook, Codes per topic and issue title, available in: http://www.comparativeagendas.info/?page_id=101

The decision of introducing a specific law or not can be defined by the issue that the legislation is about. To consider issues as a relevant aspect of the law production is then included and presented in *Table 2*.[12] It is possible that some initiatives can relate to several topics. However, in the coding, I had to define just one topic per observation, so I always define it considering the stronger one and code it accordingly.

I used the twenty-one topics in order to organise the issues around the topics defined by the project. By using this coding I also facilitate future comparisons with data from other countries, giving a relevant and comparative feature to this database.

European Union Related Topic

Given that the European Union (EU) has legislative power extensive to the member-states, it could happen that EU-related legislation (not necessarily transpositions) drive the choice of the Government in what refers the type of legislation. It is because of the previous that I coded a dummy variable concerning the

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12 For more information about the Comparative Agendas Project see http://www.comparativeagendas.info. The standard coding procedure of the CAP project is to have at least two coders, however, due to resource constrains, for this database the coding was only done once.

fact that if is an issue related to the European Union is coded with a one (*1*) and the ones that are not, are coded with a zero (*0*).[13]

President of the Republic Term

It could be relevant to consider the first and the second term of the President of the Republic as variables because they may have been distinct. With this variable coded I wanted to check if the fact that the President of the Republic being in the first or in the second term has impact in the results, especially in the potentially strategic version of the dependent variable, the *el_gb2*. In other words, this variable will help to understand if the term (first or second) of the President of the Republic affects the governmental choice of the type of law (*government law* or *executive bill*). The coding of this variable was made by defining with a one (*1*) the first mandate and with a two (*2*) the second and limit mandate.

Median Legislator

The calculation of the median legislator was also included in the database.[14] I added the calculated effective position and also the party names that are the median legislator(s).[15] I also used a variable for the cases where there was more than one party sharing the median legislator position. In order to understand how this can change, I used a weight average and a simple average of the median legislator position that can be use to see if it exists any difference in the effects depending on who is the median legislator.

Strong, Majority, Minority and Weak Government Scenarios

I derived four possible scenarios that were created in order to solve the formal model of my dissertation. Empirically this can be relevant because it stylises the reality so that in different studies from the one that I develop this institutional feature can be relevant. These scenarios are related with specific conjunctures that drive players moves and, by that, are conditions framing their actions. As the result of an operationalisation of the political institutional features and conjectural aspects, it was relevant to create variables that would operationalise player's constraints in specific scenarios. Due to this logic, I defined *Strong*, *Majority*, *Minority* and *Weak Governments*. Like previously explained, they have to do with similar or distinct political spectra and the alignment of the players along them. When a *Strong Government Scenario* exists, all the political actors considered in the model are of the same political spectrum. In the case that there is a *Majority Government Scenario*, the majority in Parliament is from the same political spectrum as the Government and the President of the Republic is from a different one. When a *Minority Government Scenario* exists, the majority in Parliament is different from the political spectrum of the President of the Republic. Finally, the *Weak Government Scenario* occurs when the parliamentary minority and President of the Republic are from the same political spectrum but different from the one of the Government. To have a better idea of these possible scenarios when applied to the Portuguese case, see the following table:

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13   All the legislation (proposed and approved) that had in its title or abstract any reference to European Union affairs was coded as being a EU related topic.

14   Because in the Portuguese case there is party discipline I assume that the median party is the median legislator. I used this measure because it helps to understand the relative position of parliamentary parties along a left-right dimension. This is a standard measure of a spatial model of politics commonly used to position parties' preferences over policies within a spatial dimension. When I refer to the median legislator I highlight the partiy(ies) that is in the middle, being that 50% of the members of the Parliament are in the left and 50% are in the right.

15   About this data see the Manifesto Project dataset available in https://manifestoproject.wzb.eu/. For coding procedures, literature related and developed studies see Volkens et al. (2014).

Table 3: Possible Scenarios per Legislature and Actor

Legislature/Actor	Government	Parliamentary Majority	President of the Republic	Variable
II	=	=	≠	*maj*
III	=	≠	=	*min*
IV	=	≠	≠	*wea*
V	=	=	≠	*maj*
VI	=	=	≠	*maj*
VII	=	≠	=	*min*
VIII	=	≠	=	*min*
IX	=	=	≠	*maj*
X	=	=	=, ≠	*str,maj*

Source: Author's own elaboration.

Some relevant aspects are highlighted in *Table 3*; the first one concerns the 10th Legislature, there are two different indications in the variable column because the President of the Republic changed after the elections and he was from a political spectrum distinct from that of the Government; from 09.03.2006 the scenario changed from *Strong* to a *Majority Government Scenario*. The second is that, in the total of scenarios there was just one case of *Strong Government Scenario* (half mandate of the President of the Republic) and just one case of a *Weak Government Scenario*. The other institutional conjunctures produced five legislatures where the *Majority Government Scenario* existed (again, one of the cases was just for half a legislature), and three cases were *Minority Government Scenarios.*

Executive Law or Governmental Bill

By re-coding and combining several variables already present in the database it was possible to construct this variable that incorporates legislative features and institutional settings. The main strategic behaviour that I was interested in measuring in my initial research design and that relates directly to the choice of the Government between initiating an *executive law* or a *government bill*.[16]

When I coded this new variable (*el_gb1*) I created it as a dummy variable (I attributed the value one, *1*, in the cases of an *executive law* and the number zero, *0*, for the cases that a *government bill* was enacted). With the same idea in mind, I coded another variable that is a slight variation on this one. I am refer-ring to the variable called *el_gb2*. It follows the exact same logic as the previous one but, instead of con-sidering the total number of proposals, I only contemplated the ones that were potentially strategic for the Government (i.e. the ones that did not have as mandatory character to be proposed for the Presidency of the Council of Ministers or in the Parliament). When coding these variables I did not directly use the opposi-tion bills, since my interest at that point related to the strategic calculation of the Government when propos-ing a bill and, therefore, when the choice is made between an *executive law* and a *government bill*.

The type of legislation proposed and approved was particularly relevant to create the variable *el_gb2*. This potentially strategic variable concerns the law proposals that could be presented either as an *executive law*

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16   This variable incorporates the executive laws and the government bills plus several other types of legislation. Thus, the variable is an aggregation of specific laws proposed by the Council of Ministers, and for the sake of simplicity I defined them as executive laws; the other legislation is proposed via the governmental direction in the Parliament, and I named it as government bills.

or as a *government bill* (excluding all the others that are specifically from one of them). That means that I could derive this potentially strategic aspect of the type of law within the initiatives.[17]

4 Descriptive Statistics of the Database

After the matching between the *initiatives* and *approved initiatives* (done for the parliamentary legislation), my database had *43401* data entries and *47* variables.[18] The *Table 4* shows in a synthesised manner the descriptive statistics of the most relevant variables within the dataset (and the corresponding subset). There you one can see the same variables, with the exception of the vetoes, either by the President of the Republic or by the Constitutional Court. I opted to not include the standard deviation and median values in the table, since one cannot make sense of them because they are dummy variables, because of that not adding useful information to future analyses.

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17 There are ten possible types of initiatives in the Portuguese Parliament, which are: Legislative Parliamentary Consideration (Apreciação Parlamentar), Popular Initiative (Iniciativa Popular), Popular Inquiry (Inquérito Parlamentar), Draft Decision (Projeto de Deliberação), Member's Bill (Projeto de Lei), Drafted Rules of Procedure (Projeto de Regimento), Draft Resolution (Projeto de Resolução), Draft Amendments to the Constitution (Projeto de Revisão Constitucional), Government Bill (Proposta de Lei) and Draft Resolution (Proposta de Resolução). Referring to the approved initiatives, there are eleven varieties: Constitutional Decree (Decreto Constitucional), Decree of the Assembly of the Republic's Assembly (Decreto da Assembleia), Decision (Deliberação), Law (Lei), Constitutional Law (Lei Constitucional), Organizational Law (Lei Orgânica), Rules of Procedure (Regimento), Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of the Republic's Assembly (Regimento da Assembleia da República), Resolution (Resolução), Resolution of the Assembly of the Republic's Assembly Resolution (Resolução da Assembleia da República) and Correction (Retificação). The legislation with PCM as origin can have the following format: Agreement (Acordo), Warning (Aviso), Contract (Contrato), Declaration (Declaração), Declaration of Correction (Declaração de Rectificação), Extract-Declaration (Declaração-Extracto), Decree (Decreto), Executive Law (Decreto Lei), Regulatory Decree (Decreto Regulamentar), Decision (Deliberação), Order (Despacho), Joint Order (Despacho Conjunto), Order-Extract (Despacho-Extrato), Normaive Order (Despacho Normativo), Extract (Extracto), Instruction (Instrução), List (Listagem), Praise (Louvor), Ordinance (Portaria), Protocol (Protocolo), Correction (Rectificação) and Resolution (Resolução).

18 Although the number of initiatives presented in the Parliament are, in principle, all included, in regard to the data from the Council of Ministers it may be that they are not. According to the services of DIGESTO and given their capacities, legislation can be updated, which means that it may happen that more cases are currently presented there. However, also considering the services, the most important entries are certainly present, and what could be missing would be some minor information. Statistically, the possible missing cases would not interfere with the results and the directions they would take.

Table 4: General Descriptive Statistics

Variables	TOTAL			SUBSET		
	N	Min	Max	N	Min	Max
PRMandate	42,602	1	2	23,533	1	2
Veto	64	0	2	-	-	-
el_gb1	25,831	0	1	23,533	0	1
str	42,602	0	1	23,533	0	1
maj	42,602	0	1	23,533	0	1
min	42,602	0	1	23,533	0	1
wea	42,602	0	1	23,533	0	1
Majority	42,602	0	1	23,533	0	1
Minority	42,602	0	1	23,533	0	1
Gov_PR	42,602	0	1	23,533	0	1
Gov_MP	42,602	0	1	23,533	0	1
el_gb2	19,843	0	1	18,341	0	1

Source: Parliamentary archives and author's own elaboration

With *14* variables, the previous table presents two versions of the same database. The one I call *Total* presents the total gathered numbers and the other, named *Subset*, compiles the total numbers from which I have withdrawn possible repeated titles and sub setting the general database from the existence of the potentially strategic variable *el_gb2*.
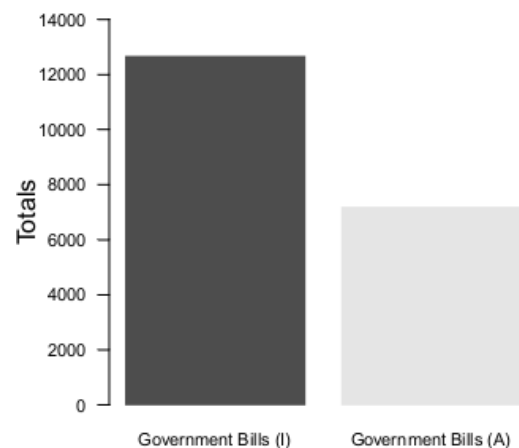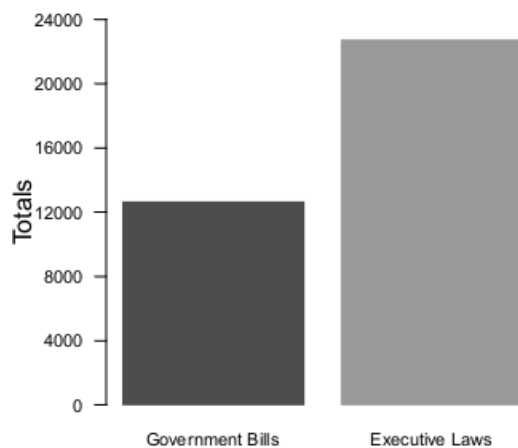

Figure 1:Total of Government Bill Initiatives and Executive Laws (1982-2009)

Figure 2: Total of Government Bill Initiatives and Approved Government Bills (1982-2009)

All things considered, in the frequencies of *Figure 1* one can see that *executive law* proposals (*22748*) are almost twice as many as the total number of law initiatives as *government bills* (*12674*).[19] When looking at *Figure 2* one can see that, as expected, the total number of approved initiatives (*7182*) is lower than the number of initiatives (*12674*), there being a 57% approval rating for the entire universe of proposals in the Parliament.
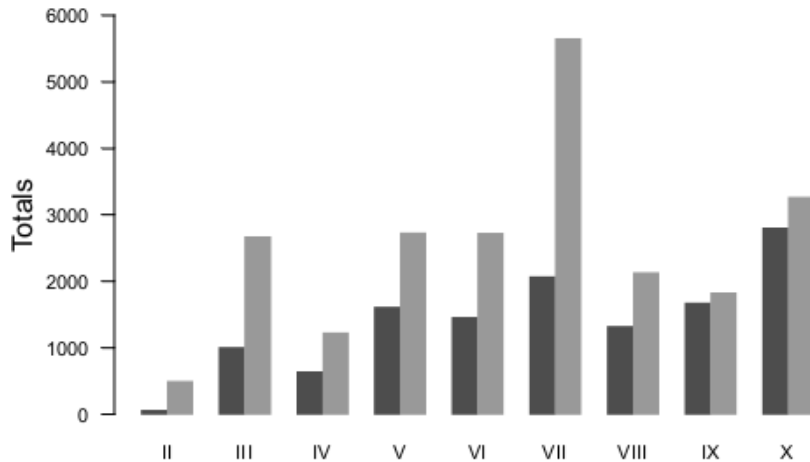

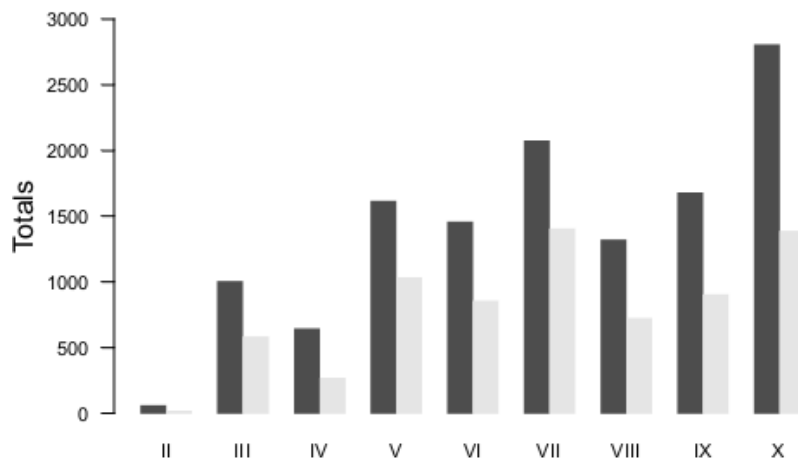**Figure 3**: Government Bill Initiatives and Executive Laws, per Legislature (1982-2009)

Figure 4: Government Bill Initiatives and Approved Government Bills, per Legislature (1982-2009)

Taking into account the proportion of *government bills* to *executive law* by Legislature, as shown in *Figure 3*, some trends can be found: the number of *executive laws* is always higher than the number of *govern-*

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19   Note that in the total of data entries that were coded as approved initiatives, there were some that did not have a first step as an initiative. In these cases, they do not count as initiatives because they have a distinct law-making process from the previous ones.

ment bills. This is especially evident in the 7th Legislature. On the other hand, the lower totals' differences between *executive laws* and *government bills*, in relative terms, occur in the 9th and 10th Legislatures. Looking at *Figure 4* one can have an idea of the totals of approved initiatives and initiatives in the Parliament, now by Legislature. On average, there were *1408* legislative initiatives. In terms of approved legislation, the total average of approved legislations was of *789* per legislature. Finally, looking at executive law initiatives, the number is higher, being, on average, *2528* legislative acts.[20]

The next graph, *Figure 5*, presents an outline of the types of legislation per legislature. It illustrates the evolution of total numbers per legislature, and it shows a common evolution. The trend of *government bill* initiatives, approved *government bills* and *executive laws* is very similar, with the exception of the 8th to the 9th Legislature where the *executive laws* decrease as opposed to the moderate increasing of Government *bill initiatives* and approved *government bills*.
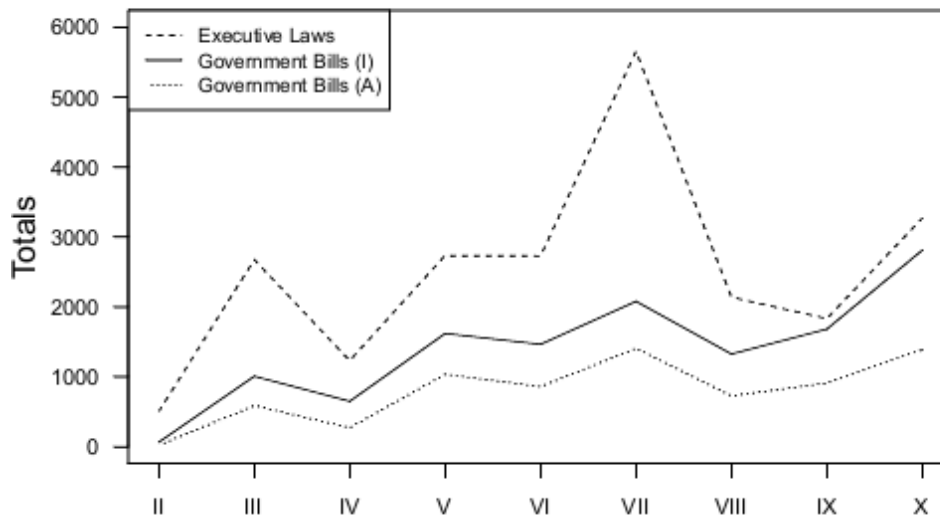

Figure 5: Executive Laws, Government Bill Initiatives and Approved Government Bills, per Legislature (1982-2009)

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20 When calculating the average of totals per year, there were 845 executive laws and 469 government bill initiatives (266 were approved).

5 Concluding Remarks

The Portuguese case has been presented in the academic literature on political systems as a non-consensual example. Because of this reason, it may be a good starting point to look at the institutional framing of the country, in order to understand it better. To pay close attention, not just to the electoral rules, but also, to the *praxis* in other areas of political action like the legislative behaviour of the political actors, is one way to go. This database does that and consequently, it includes other case to the already existing country-data, what may be helpful when empirically testing political theories, for instance.

Shedding light to how are made the laws, this new database could help with the clarification of the definition of the Portuguese political system. Because it has legislative and institutional data of one additional country, it can be combined with already existing available data. For instance, with electoral results, economic indicators, or survey results, this database can be useful for a broad range of political and social sciences studies. The time scope of it permits a wide range of possible analysis that contemplates the measurement of legislative initiatives and approvals over a time interval (1982-2009). One shall highlight that this database incorporates potentially strategic aspects related to the choice of types of legislation, being this innovative and a novelty concerning this sort of data.

In the near future, I intend to add to this database new observations from the more recent legislature. This extension will broaden the spectrum of possible investigations made by using the database. It will open the door to a different type of research related to the impact of the financial and economic crisis on legislative behaviour in a quasi-experimental design frame.

All in all, this database because of its time-frame and because it is dealing with a case that seldom appears in comparative studies, by using institutional and strategic variables, can be of a broader use. The empirical trends found in it may serve as starting points for legislative reasoning, institutional framings, comparative investigations, and other approaches that, I hope, will take place in the future.

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