



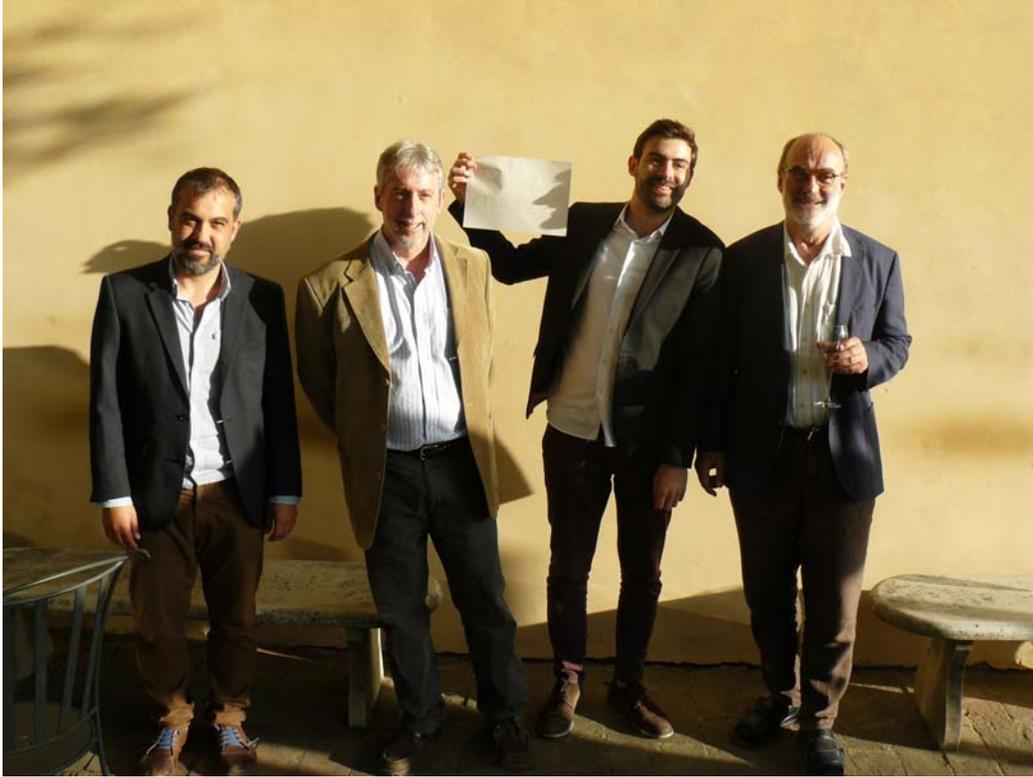
# The Political Consequences of the Great Recession in Southern Europe Crisis and Representation in Spain

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## Abstract

The Great Recession constituted a breaking point in several aspects of the cultural, economic and political life of southern European countries (i.e. Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain). This dissertation aims to shed light on the political consequences of the economic crisis in this region—with a specific focus on Spain as a paradigmatic case— by analysing different aspects of the political transformations that took place during the period of crisis. The underlying argument is that, albeit some relevant differences, the four countries experienced a common pattern: the incapacity of national politics to offer differentiated recipes to the deteriorating economic situation triggered a widespread crisis of representation that introduced new issues in the political agenda and drove the political transformations in these countries. The combination of a political and economic crisis at the national and European levels opened new political spaces that new parties capitalised by appealing to the need for democratic renewal and opposition to austerity politics. Furthermore, as illustrated by the Spanish case, and in particular the Catalan experience, the political crisis had far-reaching consequences beyond economic grievances, leading to the activation of different types of conflicts. Overall, the findings suggest that the transformations in the structure of political conflict in southern Europe in the aftermath of the Great Recession are not the by-product of a growing cultural divide—as is the case in several other continental and north-European countries—, but instead respond to the loss of credibility in the political system. Methodologically, the dissertation relies on an original dataset of media content as well as on several sources of survey data to test the empirical validity of the claims.



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### **Bio**

Guillem Vidal is a political scientist with a focus on comparative politics and political sociology. His PhD thesis investigates the political consequences of the Great Recession in Southern Europe with a focus on Spain. He holds an MA in International Relations from the Barcelona Institute of International Studies and a BA in Economics from the Utrecht University.