



'Your Luck is Our Luck': Covid-19, the Radical Right and Low Polarisation in the 2022 Portuguese Elections

José Santana-Pereira  and Elisabetta De Giorgi 

ABSTRACT

In the 2022 Portuguese legislative elections, held nearly two years after the pandemic hit the country, the incumbent Socialists improved their position, being now able to govern with an absolute majority, while populist radical right *Chega* experienced considerable growth. Was the pandemic a relevant factor for vote choice in these elections? The main goal of this article is to shed light on this matter. In addition to portraying this election's background and results, we describe the degree of COVID-19-related polarisation in Portugal, analyse the salience of the pandemic in the campaign and measure the relative impact of pandemic-related perceptions vs other variables on voting behaviour. Our findings reveal that, although there was little politicisation of the pandemic and the incumbent enjoyed high levels of support among both political elites and public opinion, *Chega*, which was less involved in rallying around the flag, arguably sent signals that made COVID-19-related assessments relevant in terms of voting behaviour.

As we all know, the spread of the new coronavirus in 2020 led to a worldwide pandemic and most countries endured various restrictions with economic and societal impacts. While the study of the political consequences of this external shock is still in its early stages, there is already a plethora of studies on the impacts of COVID-19 on political attitudes, most of which report a pandemic-induced rallying around the flag effect. This phenomenon can be defined as increased support and consensus around incumbents resulting from a specific dramatic event that the population perceived to be an external threat (Mueller 1970, p. 21). At the aggregate level, some studies identified peaks in trust and support after the advent of the pandemic or the implementation of lockdowns (e.g. Bol et al. 2021; Baekgaard et al. 2020). At the individual level, there is evidence linking perceptions of threat, assessments of government anti-COVID-19 measures and trust (Kritzinger et al. 2021; Schraff 2021).

Further research went beyond trust and suggested that the pandemic might have been good for incumbents seeking re-election. For instance, Leininger and

Schaub (2020), Morisi et al. (2021) and Giommoni and Loumeau (2022) reported positive impacts on voting for municipal incumbents in France and Bavaria. Bol et al. (2021) also assert that lockdowns increased vote intentions for the incumbent parties in a selection of European democracies. This phenomenon can be linked to a flight-to-safety tendency that increases the preference for what is known, improving the prospects of mainstream/status quo candidates to the detriment of anti-system or populist actors (Bisbee & Honig 2021; see also Russo et al. 2021).

Nonetheless, as observed in other elections held during the pandemic, it was necessary for the government to have managed the pandemic well and consequently been evaluated positively by public opinion for this phenomenon to take place. If this were not the case, the incumbent could be harmed. For instance, the number of COVID-19 infections was found to have a negative impact on Donald Trump's county-level vote shares in the 2020 presidential elections (Baccini, Brodeur & Weymouth 2021; Miller, Woods & Kalmbach 2022); likewise, Jair Bolsonaro's support was negatively impacted by the pandemic (Béland et al. 2021).

The context of the 2022 Portuguese snap legislative elections is particularly interesting for the study of the possible effects of the pandemic. As the first parliamentary elections to take place in the country since the start of the pandemic,¹ they therefore gave Portuguese citizens the opportunity to punish or reward the incumbent for its COVID-19-related performance. What makes this case remarkable is the comparatively low levels of politicisation of this issue, a trend that confirmed the country as an exception in the Southern European context (De Giorgi & Santana-Pereira 2020; Silva et al. 2021).

COVID-19 Politicisation levels were initially very low in Portugal: a climate of cross-party collaboration, with only rare pockets of contestation from right-wing parties, was evident in early 2020 (De Giorgi & Santana-Pereira 2020; Silva et al. 2021). It must be stressed that the main opposition party, the centre-right PSD (*Partido Social Democrata*; Social Democratic Party), was extremely cooperative with the incumbent Socialists. For instance, when the first state of emergency was voted in March 2020, its leader Rui Rio told the prime minister (PM) that he could 'count on the collaboration of the PSD, because your luck is our luck' (Correio da Manhã 2020; our translation). This is not totally surprising given the general decline in the level of polarisation recorded in Portugal from 2019 onwards (Torcal & Comellas 2022) and its differences with the rest of Southern Europe (Bosco & Verney 2020).

Things changed slightly as time passed, but not too much. On the one hand, consensus surrounding the states of emergency diminished between the first and second waves of infection, especially at the fringes of the party system (both radical left parties and populist radical right Chega – Enough – changed their positions). Indeed, consensus fell from 95 per cent of favourable votes in the first wave to 82 per cent in Autumn 2020, with modest recovery to

88 per cent from January 2021 onwards. Nevertheless, we find a pattern of widespread support even when consensus was at its lowest. On the other, as regards parliamentary vote for other COVID-19-related measures, even though there was a decrease in support between the first and second-third wave among the small right-wing opposition parties, they voted in favour of these measures at least two times out of three; in turn, left-wing parties always or almost always voted for COVID-19-related laws – and the PSD became even more supportive over time (De Giorgi, Santana-Pereira & Piccolino 2021).

At the same time, public opinion displayed signs of rallying around the flag and overall support of governmental measures, especially during the first wave of the pandemic (Silva et al. 2021). The proportion of citizens positively assessing the government's record went from around 30 per cent in late February 2020 to 47 per cent in early March and almost 70 per cent in mid-April, with a slight decrease in consensus (but with figures superior or equal to 60 per cent) in May and June. The assessment of the PM's record followed a similar path (Silva et al. 2021). Moreover, throughout 2021, there was a great deal of consensus on COVID-19-related issues in public opinion, with no strong partisan cleavages on a number of burning issues: the involvement of experts in the decision-making process²; considering public health as a priority vis-à-vis the economy and the job market; whether the government had managed to balance political and public health motivations when designing measures aimed at combatting the pandemic; whether limitations to public liberties during the pandemic were completely justified; or whether the government protected the most vulnerable groups of society. Only the *Chega* supporters tended to express different opinions on some of these matters, when compared to other voters (Belchior et al. 2022). In short, public opinion in Portugal was generally supportive towards the government and its management of the emergency.

Turning to the 2022 election, while the incumbent PS was rewarded, similarly to what happened in other elections during the pandemic, *Chega* experienced a considerable growth. Given the panorama of low politicisation of the COVID-19 and high levels of consensus and support for the incumbent from most political elites and public opinion, we believe that those voters satisfied with the government's work might have voted for the PS (*Partido Socialista*; Socialist Party); on the other hand, the dissatisfied citizens (who were a minority) might have chosen not to vote for the main opposition party, PSD, which had proved very collaborative with the executive during the pandemic, but rather for one of the parties that had most clearly sided against. Furthermore, citizens more inclined to believe in COVID-19 conspiracy theories, including those regarding the true goals of the government, are likely to be among this minority of dissatisfied voters and, as Serani (2022) demonstrates through a study on the Italian case, to vote for populist parties. This, again, makes *Chega* the ideal candidate to channel the COVID-19-related protest vote in Portugal.

But was the pandemic in fact a relevant factor for vote choice in these elections? To what extent were pandemic-related attitudes significant? In this article, we aim to shed light on these questions, while offering the reader a comprehensive description of these elections. We start by presenting the background to the 2022 snap legislative elections and the structure of party competition. We then assess whether the pandemic was a key topic in the election campaign and explore the official election results; finally, we analyse post-electoral survey data to measure the relative impact of pandemic-related perceptions and other variables on vote choices. The article ends with a discussion of the main patterns identified.

Anatomy of a snap election: background and protagonists

The second socialist government led by António Costa (2019–2022) was a minority cabinet which, unlike its predecessor, did not enjoy the support of the radical left parties. In 2015, written agreements between the PS, on the one hand, and BE (*Bloco de Esquerda*; Left Bloc), PCP (*Partido Comunista Português*; Portuguese Communist Party) and PEV (*Partido Ecologista 'Os Verdes'*; Ecologist Party 'The Greens'), on the other, led to the establishment of a Socialist minority government inaugurating contract parliamentarism in the country (cf. De Giorgi & Santana-Pereira 2016; Fernandes, Magalhães & Santana-Pereira 2018; De Giorgi & Cancela 2021). But after the 2019 elections no such agreement was reached (see Jalali, Moniz & Silva 2020; Ferrinho Lopes 2023 for details) and a minority cabinet with no external support was formed.

From late 2019 to late 2021, Costa's cabinet managed to survive being a minority government – which was not a novelty in the Portuguese political system given the prevalence of a weak investiture regime that requires a negative majority in parliament to reject a newly formed government. Moreover, it survived the COVID-19 pandemic from March 2020 onwards, despite the marked economic and social impacts in the country (Silva et al. 2021; Ferrinho Lopes 2023). However, Costa's cabinet did not survive the 2022 State Budget (*Orçamento do Estado*) vote in parliament in October 2021: BE and PCP ended up voting against the State Budget, which was therefore rejected by the *Assembleia da República* (something that did not happen since 1978). The Communists and the Left Bloc reiterated that they rejected the budget because the government was too focused on deficit cuts and kept ignoring their demands for more worker protections, social security improvements and public investment in the national health service (see also Moury, De Giorgi & Barros 2020). While the government declared it had made long and meaningful attempts to meet the demands of the radical left and had even met with them on more than one occasion to try and reach an agreement (which, if reached, the BE wanted to be put in writing), the two left parties denied this. The President of the Republic had met the

parties and consulted with them but publicly warned them about the risk of a government crisis in such a problematic period. However, he did not conceal his lack of surprise at the stalemate, stating that the 2018 and 2019 budgets had already left him apprehensive due to what he defined muddled negotiations (Antunes & Carrapatoso 2021). He was reported to believe that the pandemic had only postponed a budgetary problem and latent conflict that had been expected since the 2019 legislative elections. The failure of negotiations led to the dissolution of parliament by the president, with snap elections scheduled for 30 January 2022.

The implementation of these elections was far from easy. Indeed, the pandemic represented a great challenge to the organisation of all electoral processes around the world. In the initial phase of the pandemic, from March to July 2020, elections were postponed in many countries. After a few months, different strategies were studied and implemented so that elections could be adapted to the pandemic context whilst also preserving electoral integrity (James 2021). In Portugal, the strategy was threefold: early voting, reducing the number of voters per polling station and reserving a specific time slot in which citizens in isolation (potentially 10 per cent of the total voters) could cast their votes (Luís 2022). As we will see below, the strategies seem to have worked, as participation was higher than in 2019.

Overall, there were no significant changes vis-à-vis-2019 in terms of the main protagonists. Indeed, contrary to what happened in both 2015 and 2019 (De Giorgi & Santana-Pereira 2016; Jalali, Moniz & Silva 2020), new parties were not expected to enter parliament. In fact, none of the 12 extra parliamentary parties running in the election were able to gather more than 0.5 per cent of the popular vote. Via the data divulged by the voting advice application *Votómetro*,³ the most trustworthy source of information on party positions available at the time of writing,⁴ the nine parliamentary political forces running in the election can be placed along two ideological axes: economic left vs. economic right⁵ and conservatism/nationalism vs. libertarianism/cosmopolitanism⁶ (Figure 1). While all left-wing parties are placed in the same quadrant, there is a division between right-wing parties with libertarian and cosmopolitan views – PSD and IL (*Iniciativa Liberal*; Liberal Initiative) – and those with a more conservative stance: *Chega* and CDS-PP (*CDS-Partido Popular*; CDS-Popular Party). IL is the most right-wing party in economic terms and *Chega* the most conservative/nationalist. Also, the ideological distance between PS and PSD, which is wider on the economic axis than on the other spectrum, is paramount. PS is in fact ideologically closer to both BE and CDU (*Coligação Democrática Unitária*; Unitary Democratic Coalition; a stable pre-electoral coalition between PCP and PEV) than to the PSD. In conjunction with other factors, this made a *Bloco Central* (i.e. a central block PS-PSD cabinet) highly unlikely despite after the dissolution of the Portuguese parliament some observers suggested that this might happen.

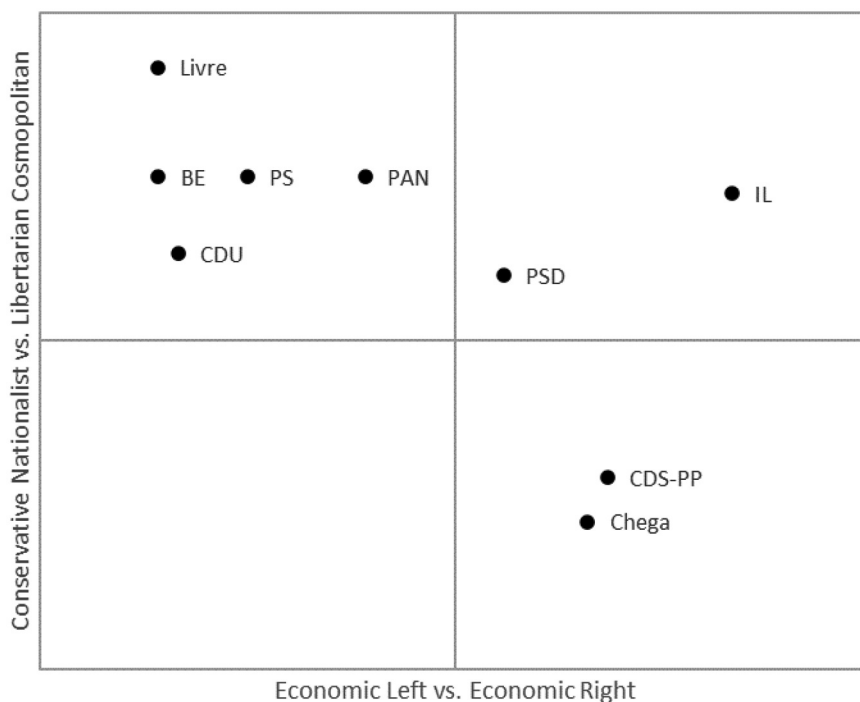


Figure 1. Position of the main Portuguese political parties along two ideological dimensions in 2022. Source: Adapted from *Votómetro* (<https://observador.pt/interativo/votometro-legislativas-2022/#political-compass>).

The relative strength of some parliamentary parties was nevertheless expected to change significantly after the 2022 election. To the right, late 2021/early 2022 polls predicted an impressive rise for *Chega*, with an expected increase from 1.3 to around 7 per cent of the votes, and for IL, which was expected to quadruple its 2019 electoral results. In contrast, there were reasons to fear that CDS-PP, one of the founders of the Portuguese democracy, would not be able to secure parliamentary representation. To the left, there was bad news for the BE, the animalist PAN (*Pessoas-Animais-Natureza*; People-Animals-Nature) and, to a lesser extent, CDU: their vote share was expected to be down on 2019. Also, poll results for left-libertatian *Livre* (Free) raised doubts about whether it would be able to elect an MP (Figure 2).

Regarding the two main parties, the polls published from November 2021 initially predicted a very modest increase in the prospects of PSD, and that the PS would be unable to achieve an absolute majority of seats. However, during the official campaign period, PS and PSD got closer and closer to each other to the point that, in the last campaign week, some polls reported a tie⁷ (Figure 2). As we discuss below, this scenario might have impacted mobilisation and strategic voting.

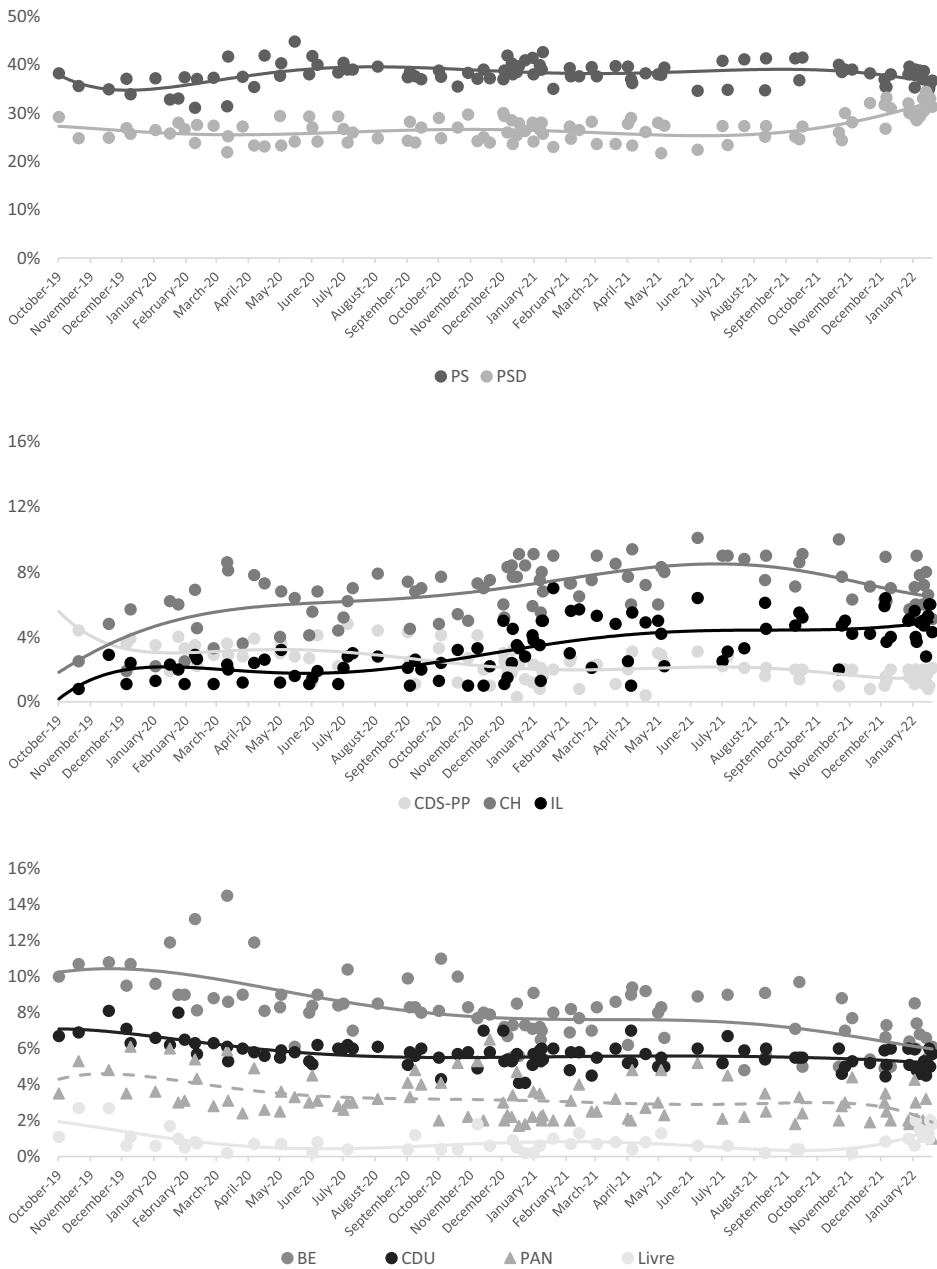


Figure 2. Vote intentions in opinion polls published by the media between the 2019 and the 2022 legislative elections. *Source:* Calculations based on the data on 97 opinion polls available at the ERC (Media Regulatory Entity) website (<https://www.erc.pt/>), shared by Hugo Ferrinho Lopes. *Notes:* Except for the very first markers on the left-hand side of the figure, which are the official election results of the legislative election on 6 October 2019, all markers represent individual opinion polls, whereas the lines represent smoothed values from kernel-weighted local polynomial regressions.



The election campaign: where's the pandemic?

The pandemic had quite a moderate impact on the campaign, arguably even smaller than on the presidential campaign one year before (Santana-Pereira, Ferrinho Lopes & Nina 2023). Due to the increase in infections from mid-December 2021, the government decided to implement restrictions to circulation until 10 January 2022, that is, five days before the beginning of the official campaign. However, the impact of this measure and the general pandemic panorama on campaigning was far from significant. The main difference from the previous legislative election campaign (2019) was that most people (but not everyone) wore masks during campaign events, avoided crowds, and refrained from kissing voters' cheeks (Borges et al. 2022). Investment in campaigning was only slightly lower than in 2019, especially in terms of campaign activities (Ferrinho Lopes 2023), perhaps because while some parties either gave preference to outdoor campaign activities or chose not to organise the traditional dinner-rally events, others engaged in a «back to normality» campaign mode, including indoor rallies, dinner parties, visits to factories/markets/hospitals, and *arruadas*.⁸ As in previous campaigns, parties engaged in campaigning on social media and organised online events, but none of those were apparently intended to substitute onsite activities (see also Ferrinho Lopes 2023). The campaign style adopted by most political parties in Portugal is close to the modern campaign ideal-type (Santana Pereira 2022), so appearances in the media were, as always, of paramount importance. These included participation in the 32 televised debates in January 2022, which aroused a great deal of interest: about half – namely those featuring the incumbent António Costa or the main opposition party leader Rui Rio – had an audience of more than one million citizens (Cardoso et al. 2022), corresponding to circa 10 per cent of the electorate.

More importantly, in terms of content, the pandemic was not the focus of the campaign. Several data sources confirm that COVID-19 had very modest saliency during the campaign. First, an automated content analysis of the newspaper coverage of the election campaign carried out by Santos (2022) shows that the pandemic was mentioned in less than 5 per cent of the newspaper articles. Indeed, the economy and the healthcare system were the two frequent topics.⁹ Of course, the discussion over the economy and the healthcare system may have revolved around the negative impacts or frailties exposed by the pandemic crisis, but it was not systematically nor exclusively pandemic-focused (Ferrinho Lopes 2023). Second, terms related to the pandemic¹⁰ were used quite seldom in the electoral manifestos. In the case of CDS-PP and *Chega*, they were not mentioned at all. PSD, CDU and *Livre* only made generic references to the pandemic, while BE and PS devoted comparatively more space to the issue. IL had the most references to the pandemic in its programme (83 times in its 614-page manifesto). Third, none

of the parliamentary parties' official slogans made explicit or implicit references to the pandemic. Fourth and last, a content analysis of the pre-electoral debates allowed us to conclude that the pandemic occupied less than one minute, on average, in the 25-minute-long televised debates.

References to the pandemic in the manifestos or debates served different goals. PS mostly argued that the country was on the right track before it was hit by the pandemic and claimed it was doing a good job in terms of pandemic management. In the debates, António Costa stressed the urgency of turning the page on the pandemic,¹¹ while blaming the radical left party leaderships for the political crisis and emphasising that it happened in a very unfortunate moment. Interestingly, PSD's Rui Rio used the debate platform to stress his cooperative stance during the pandemic and even justified the government's inability to fulfil the electoral pledges made in 2019.

In turn, the pandemic was used by BE as a weapon both against the government (its leader stressed how the need to strengthen the National Healthcare System had become clear and accused the government of not having invested enough in it) and the right-wing parties, which were accused of being willing to use the pandemic as a pretext to turn healthcare into a business. While CDU's framing of the pandemic in the televised debates followed a similar path, in the case of right-wing IL most references imply a negative assessment of the Socialist government's record. Lastly, *Chega's* leader mentioned the pandemic first and foremost to censure the PSD leader for using it as an excuse for not being an active opposition against the government, as well as to accuse the government of not having anticipated the Omicron wave.

Instead, one of the most debated issues during the campaign was government stability and post-electoral government arrangements – something that comes as no surprise considering these were snap elections following conflicts between parties and a parliamentary dissolution. To the left, Costa deemed the events leading to the snap election unforgivable (Diário de Notícias 2022) so a new *geringonça* was unlikely; the most foreseeable solutions on the table were either a PS majority (considered improbable by most polls; cf. Figure 2) or an alliance with *Livre*, PAN or both. To the right, the discussion focused on whether or not PSD should form a coalition that included *Chega* if it were the most voted party and consequently the *formateur* (e.g. Expresso 2022).

Election results: an unexpected single party majority

Table 1 depicts the official results of the Portuguese 2022 legislative elections. Five patterns deserve particular attention: the clear and incontestable victory of the incumbent PS, which secured an absolute (and unforeseen) majority of seats in parliament; the electoral stagnation of the main opposition party PSD; the electoral success of both *Chega* and IL; a clear defeat for the radical left parties; and a modest but celebrated increase in turnout.

The most surprising result is that PS won over 42 per cent of the votes, which translated into an absolute majority of seats (120 out of the 230 composing the Portuguese parliament).¹² On the other hand, PSD had a disappointing result given that it was presented as being very close to the PS until the eve of the elections. Indeed, pre-electoral polls and the official results differed quite significantly in this regard. One of the most intriguing explanations for these differences was that the polls showing that the Socialist victory was not guaranteed might have fostered the mobilisation of left-wing voters and strategic voting in favour of the PS in order to avoid a right-wing government (e.g. Constenla 2022), since an understanding between the left-wing parties seemed quite unlikely. There is evidence backing this assumption. First, Lobo et al. (2022a) analysis of vote switching between 2019 and 2022 shows that going from abstention to vote for the PS was more common than shifting from abstention to support for the PSD. Second, there is a correlation between the rise of PS and the fall of CDU and BE at the municipal level (Fernandes 2022). This relationship was later confirmed by survey data demonstrating that a great deal of vote switching vis-à-vis 2019 tended to occur within ideological blocs, and notably from the radical left parties to the PS (Lobo et al. 2022a) Moreover, this same data shows that 14 per cent of the electors decided their vote on election day (the highest figure ever since this question has been asked in Portuguese post-electoral surveys: 2002) and that about 28 per cent of these opted for the Socialists vis-à-vis just 11 per cent for PSD. Lastly, preliminary research suggests that the perception that the PSD was ahead in the polls was linked with higher odds of left-wing voters defecting from their preferred parties and voting instead for the incumbent (Ferrinho Lopes et al. 2022).

The electoral stagnation of PSD was accompanied by the disappearance from parliamentary politics of its former coalition partner CDS-PP, which was unable to elect a single MP for the first time in almost fifty years of democratic legislative elections. As we can see in Table 1, despite receiving more votes than PAN or *Livre*, CDS-PP was not able to elect an MP. This happened because their votes were more concentrated in low magnitude electoral districts than those for *Livre* and PAN. In turn, election night meant good news for *Chega*, which went from 1 to 12 seats, and IL, which went from 1 to 8 deputies, becoming the third and fourth parliamentary parties, respectively. It must be said that, given the comparatively high levels of disproportionality of the Portuguese proportional representation electoral system, a considerable amount of the votes for these parties (around 80 and 95 thousand, respectively, corresponding to circa 25 per cent) was not translated into the election of MPs (Tribuna 2022).

The same happened, and to a greater extent, to the BE. As compared to 2019, the party lost around half of the votes but more than 70 per cent of its seats (Table 1). The 2022 elections were the most dramatic in the history of the party. As noted above, the BE saw a part of its former electorate vote

Table 1. Results of the January 2022 Portuguese legislative election.

Party	Votes in 2022 (%)	Votes in 2019 (%)	Vote share change 2022–2019 (% points)	2022 Seats (N)	2022 Seats (%)
PS	42.5	38.2	+4.3	120	52.2
PSD*	29.9	29.2	+0.7	77	33.5
Chega	7.4	1.4	+6	12	5.2
IL	5.1	1.4	+3.7	8	3.5
BE	4.5	10	–5.5	5	2.2
CDU	4.4	6.7	–2.3	6	2.6
CDS-PP	1.7	4.4	–2.7	0	0
PAN	1.6	3.5	–1.9	1	0.4
Livre	1.3	1.1	+0.2	1	0.4
Others	1.7	4.2	–2.5	0	0
Blank/null	2.6	4.9	– 2.3	-	-
TOTAL	100	100	–	230	100
<i>TURNOUT</i>	51.5	48.6	+2.9	-	-

Source: CNE – National Electoral Commission (<http://www.cne.pt>).

Notes: The number of votes is rounded to thousands.

*Includes the vote shares and party seats obtained by the coalitions PSD headed in Azores (with CDS-PP and the monarchic microparty PPM – *Partido Popular Monárquico*; Monarchic Popular Party) and Madeira (with CDS-PP).

strategically for the PS (Lobo et al. 2022a), arguably to avoid a PSD victory and the possibility of *Chega* having any influence in the formation of the new government. Although less dramatically, CDU also lost votes and seats, causing the absence of green MPs in the current legislature. On election night, both political forces blamed the PS for creating a phoney and exacerbated bipolarisation that harmed its left-wing partners (Ferrinho Lopes 2023).

Finally, there was a modest increase in turnout (Table 1). Over the 2022 legislative campaign, several observers feared that abstention would rise significantly vis-à-vis 2019 because of the pandemic, namely due to the confinement of circa 10 per cent of the electorate due to active infections or highly-risk contacts. To the contrary, turnout actually increased for the first time since 2005 (which coincidentally, was when the Socialists had obtained their previous absolute majority). Unlike the 2021 presidential elections, when 11 per cent of survey respondents claimed they did not turn out to vote for fear of contracting COVID-19 (our calculations based on data by Belchior, Pequito Teixeira & Santana-Pereira 2021), the pandemic did not seem to scare Portuguese voters this time. Moreover, Dias (2022) showed that the difference in turnout between 2019 and 2022 is virtually the same regardless of the number of active cases in the municipality, allowing us to reject the hypothesis that in 2022 turnout increased more in municipalities in which COVID-19 was less present. As previously noted, pre-election polls might also have played a role here, fostering mobilisation: indeed, it seems that those who believed that the PS and the PSD were tied in the polls were more likely to have voted in 2022 (and to have voted in that election in spite of having abstained in 2019) than those with different

perceptions of what the polls said (Ferrinho Lopes, Nina & Santana-Pereira 2022).

The implications of these elections on the party system are worth underlining. First, these were the legislative elections with the highest level of volatility (13.7) in the 21st century and the first since 1987 in which such a high value was not accompanied by a change in the party in government (for the figures on electoral volatility in Portugal 1976–2022, see Ferrinho Lopes 2023). These volatility levels are associated with about one-third of electors shifting vote choices between 2019 and 2022 (Lobo et al. 2022a). Interestingly, such volatility lead to a less fragmented parliament (an effective number of parliamentary parties of 2.6, 0.3 points lower than that of 2019), to a greater concentration of the vote in the two main parties (72.4 per cent voted for the PS or the PSD, vis-à-vis 67.4 in 2019) and to a decrease in the level of polarisation as measured by Casal Bértoa (2023) – indeed, the percentage of votes for ‘anti-political-establishment’ parties fell about 3 percentage points (from 23 to 20 per cent) as *Chega*’s success was accompanied by a reduction in the votes for the radical left.

What were these elections about? Hints from the post-electoral survey

In this section, we explore the factors that might have impacted voting choices in January 2022: from traditional factors such as ideology and leader ratings to a desire for stronger political leadership (quite likely in the aftermath of parliamentary dissolution and early elections), and COVID-19-related variables (as this was the first time Portuguese citizens had been able to hold the government to account at the polls since the start of the pandemic). To this end, we rely on post-electoral survey data collected by Lobo et al. (2022b) between 11 February and 7 March 2022 ($N = 1010$).

Below, we present the results of a multinomial logistic regression intended to measure the impact of the aforementioned dimensions on the odds of having voted for the incumbent PS vs. the parliamentary parties to its left and former allies BE and CDU, vs. the main opposition party PSD, vs. the populist radical right *Chega*, vs. other right-wing parties with parliamentary representation at the time of the election (IL and CDS-PP) and vs. other parties, blank or null (OBN). We leave aside those who reportedly abstained in these elections, as we are interested in vote choice and not in turnout.¹³ Voters in radical left and right-wing parties were merged due to low numbers of respondents recalling having voted for them (from 8 in the case of CDS-PP to 26 in the case of CDU). While this is also true in the case of *Chega* ($N = 31$), we felt that merging its voters with non-populist right-wing party supporters was not only inappropriate but would prevent us from making interesting comparisons.

The model includes five independent variables. Ideology (0 = left, 10 = right) and assessment of António Costa (0 = strongly dislike; 10 = strongly like) are

introduced because both left-right self-placement and leader ratings have been amongst the most relevant variables explaining voting behaviour in the country (e.g. Lisi 2019). Our focus is specifically on the assessment of António Costa for two reasons. First, as Lisi (2019) shows, the assessment of the PS leader was a relevant predictor of vote in this party vs. any other party in all elections taking place between 2002 and 2015. Second, Costa is more than a party leader: he has served as PM since late 2015. Therefore, the inclusion of this variable sheds light on the extent to which these elections can be seen as a plebiscite on António Costa's figure.

The model also includes a variable aimed at dealing with the possibility that the desire for a stronger (and thus more stable) leadership under a majority cabinet was a key factor of voting behaviour, after the governmental mandate was interrupted due to a disagreement between a minority cabinet and the opposition parties to its left. We tackle this by using a proxy as neither this nor any other survey measured these opinions. We therefore resort to a variable measuring agreement with the sentence 'Having a strong leader in government is good for Portugal, even if that leader circumvents rules to move things forward' (1= completely disagrees; 5 = completely agrees). Though we are aware this is not a perfect measure of our dimension of interest, especially due to its second part, we believe that it constitutes an acceptable proxy. On the one hand, it is very likely that respondents unhappy with what happened in parliament during the fall of 2021 express agreement with this idea, which allows them to vent their frustration about the difficulties in passing the State Budget faced by Costa's minority cabinet. On the other, there is evidence that a preference for a strong leader is associated with a preference for majoritarian politics (e.g. Jou 2013), thus strengthening the validity of this proxy. At the same time, this sentence is sufficiently different from the traditional 'strong leader' variable often used to measure democratic mood or preference for autocracies (e.g. Claassen 2020) – it lacks the reference to a leader not having to worry about elections or a parliament – for us to be concerned about measuring blatant authoritarianism instead.

Lastly, the COVID19-related dimension is covered by a general assessment of António Costa's government's record in dealing with the consequences of the pandemic over the previous two years (1 = very bad; 4 = very good). This variable allows us to see the extent to which these elections were used to reward (or punish) the incumbent after two years of government under a «new normal» and widely unstable scenario. Our model also includes a variable covering perceptions of the pandemic's impact on how democracy works (1 = very negative impact; 5 = very positive impact). This variable has a more political nature and captures, albeit indirectly, the procedural and processual aspects of political decision-making during the pandemic, while the former variables focus on actual results. It therefore resonates, albeit

imperfectly, with several variables analysed in Belchior and colleagues' study on the political impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in Portugal (Belchior et al. 2022).

In addition to the independent variables, the model also contains some of the usual long-term suspects of impacting electoral behaviour, often referred to as social bases of the vote (cf. Cancela & Magalhães 2020), as controls: age (continuous), gender (1=female), education (7 levels, from no formal education to university degree), and religiosity (frequency of church/place of worship attendance: 1 – none, 6 – once or more than once a week).¹⁴

Table 2 presents the results of the multinomial logistic regression model computed to test the impact of the variables listed above. Starting with the control variables, we observe that they have a quite feeble impact. For instance, women were slightly more likely to recall voting for the radical left than for the incumbent party in January 2022. When all the other variables are held at their means, women display a 6 per cent probability of having voted for the former radical left incumbent allies and a 68 per cent probability of having voted for the PS, while the values for men are 3 per cent and 79 per cent, respectively. Regarding age, while older respondents display higher odds of having voted

Table 2. The role of traditional vote choice predictors, the desire for a stronger leadership and pandemic-related variables in the vote choices (multinomial logistic regression; reference category = PS).

	Radical Left	PSD	Chega	Other right-wing	OBN	Average Discrete Changes (Range)
Constant	7.39*** (2.42)	3.64 (2.12)	8.64** (2.93)	7.44*** (2.35)	7.81* (3.97)	—
Age	.03* (.02)	-.001 (.014)	-.03 (.02)	-.07*** (.02)	-.02 (.03)	.10
Gender	.99* (.51)	.58 (.39)	.22 (.58)	-.10 (.53)	.73 (.60)	.04
Education	.002 (.18)	.001 (.15)	-.45 (.24)	-.15 (.23)	.30 (.28)	.03
Religiosity	-.25 (.15)	.08 (.12)	-.15 (.20)	-.07 (.13)	-.21 (.22)	.03
Ideology	-.74*** (.20)	.79*** (.15)	.84*** (.23)	.59*** (.17)	-.03 (.16)	.31
Assessment of António Costa	-.93*** (.16)	-.92*** (.12)	-1.08*** (.17)	-.76*** (.16)	-.77*** (.21)	.33
Strong Leader	-.76*** (.19)	-.58** (.18)	-.41 (.25)	-.42* (.22)	-.12 (.27)	.13
Covid's Impact on Democracy	.04 (.29)	-.17 (.24)	-.72* (.37)	-.08 (.36)	-1.17** (.40)	.08
Government's Record Pandemic	.01 (.46)	-.58 (.41)	-1.04* (.48)	-.97 (.52)	-.98* (.50)	.15
Nagelkerke						46.9%
Pseudo-R2 (%)						
N						491

Source: Own calculations based on Lobo et al. (2022b).

Notes: For each comparison, the first set of values are unstandardised coefficients with robust standard errors between brackets. Average discrete changes (range) represent the difference, in the probability to vote for the incumbent PS vs. other political forces when we move from the lowest to the highest value of the independent variable, with all other variables kept constant at their means. It can therefore be read as a measurement of effect size, with higher values representing a stronger impact of the independent variable at stake (on a 0–1 scale). OBN: Other, Blank, Null. VIF values lower than 2 (average VIF = 1.21).

*** = $p < .001$; ** = $p < .01$; * = $p < .05$.

for the BE or CDU than for the PS, they also display lower odds of having voted for right-wing parties such as IL and CDS-PP instead of the incumbent. Education and religiosity, in turn, are nonsignificant in this model, but there is an almost-significant impact in the case of the PS vs. *Chega* comparison, with the odds of having voted for the latter being higher amongst the least educated (7 per cent) than amongst those with college education (less than 1 per cent), when the other variables are kept constant at their means.

The analysis of the average discrete change values supports the argument that these elections were, *grosso modo*, business as usual. In fact, both ideology and the assessment of António Costa are the most powerful predictors in the model (Table 2). The latter factor is relevant for all the five comparisons, with a more positive assessment of the incumbent PM being associated with higher odds of having cast a vote for the PS instead of the other parties. Interestingly, when the other variables are held at their means, those who strongly dislike Costa display a 56 per cent probability of having voted for the PSD, a 17 per cent probability of having voted for the former radical left incumbent allies, a similar probability of having voted for *Chega* and only a 1 per cent probability of having voted for the PS. In turn, a mildly positive assessment of the PM (6 in a 0–10 scale) is all it takes for a vote in the PS being the most likely outcome (67 per cent). The average voters who are strong admirers of António Costa are highly unlikely to have voted for a party other than the PS (Figure 3).

In turn, ideology is relevant in all the comparisons except for the PS vs. OBN contrast (Table 2). When the other variables are kept constant at their mean values, strongly left-wing respondents (0 in a 0–10 scale) display a 65 per cent probability of having supported the BE or CDU at the polls and a 33 per cent probability of having voted for the incumbent. On the other hand, the most likely vote choice for centre electors was PS (73 per cent), with PSD coming second (15 per cent). The latter party clearly surpasses the incumbent party amongst those positioning themselves as strongly right-wing (10 in a 0–10 scale; 76 vs. 7 per cent). It is also amongst the latter respondents that we find higher odds of voting for *Chega* (10 per cent) or for the other parliamentary right-wing parties (6 per cent; Figure 3).

Our proxy variable of desire for a majoritarian governmental solution behaves in an interesting way, increasing the odds of voting for the incumbent instead of for radical left parties, the PSD or the other non-populist right-wing parties in parliament at the time of the election (Table 2). Interestingly, this variable is nonsignificant in the PS vs. *Chega* comparison – perhaps due to the fact that radical right populist voters tend to vouch for strong leaderships (e.g. Donovan 2021) – and in the PS vs. OBN comparison. The desire for a stronger leadership (which we use in this article as a proxy for single-party majority government preference) is therefore at the core of voting for PS voting instead of for the radical left, a result that provided indirect evidence of possible strategic voting

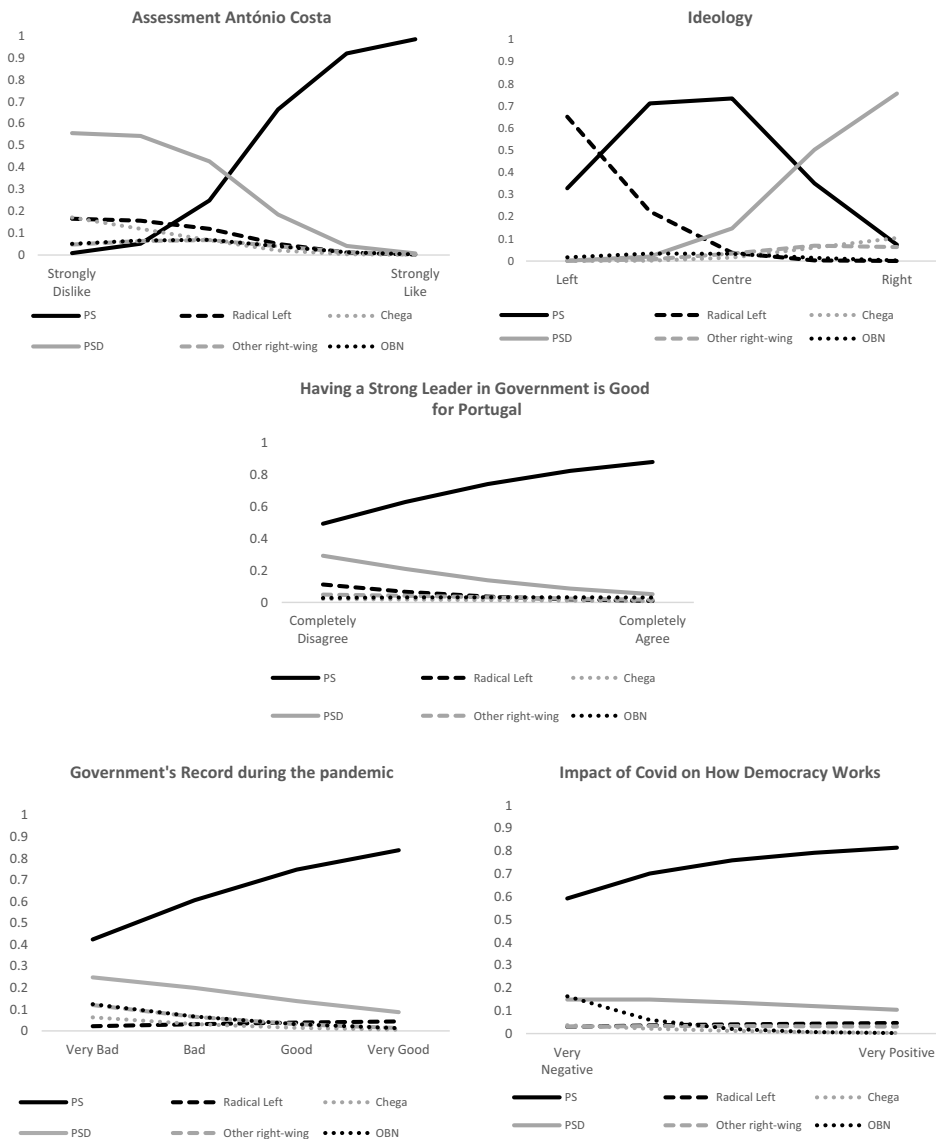


Figure 3. The impact of COVID-related and other variables on the vote: predicted probabilities. *Source:* Own calculations based on Lobo et al. (2022b). *Note:* Values are predicted probabilities computed holding the other variables at their mean values.

amongst left-wing voters. Also, agreeing that a stronger leader is necessary is related with stronger odds of voting for the incumbent than for the non-populist centre-right and right-wing parties; this makes sense as the odds for Rui Rio being a possible leader of a coalition between these parties, i.e. a weaker leader, were higher than for being a prime-minister supported by a majority PSD cabinet. When all the other variables are kept at their mean values, whereas those who discard the idea that a stronger leader is needed in Portugal have a 49 per cent likelihood of having voted PS,

those who completely embrace this notion display an 88 per cent probability of having cast a vote for the incumbent.

In spite of the importance of the latter variables, we cannot say that specific pandemic-related factors were completely irrelevant. This is especially true for the assessment of the government's performance in dealing with the consequences of the pandemic. While this variable does not clearly distinguish PS voters from those who supported the radical left, it is relevant for the PS vs. *Chega* and the PS vs. OBN contrasts (Table 2). Indeed, a negative appraisal of the government's record is associated with a higher likelihood of having voted for *Chega*, for other parties, blank or null. In the case of the PSD and the other right-wing parties, this variable does not reach statistical significance by a hair's breadth, but its impact on voting probabilities (when the other variables are held at their means) would be similar to what we describe above (Figure 3).

The second, more political, pandemic-related variable is less relevant (in comparative terms, it is less relevant than age but more relevant than gender), but still impactful in – again – the PS vs. *Chega* and PS vs. OBN comparisons (Table 2). The analysis of the predicted probabilities computed by holding the other variables at their mean values shows that those who believe that the pandemic had a negative impact on the way Portuguese democracy works were quite likely (16 per cent) to have voted for smaller parties, blank or null and equally likely of having supported the PSD (15 per cent), but the probability of a *Chega* vote is also nonnegligible (4 per cent). However, fairly positive or very positive assessments of the impact of the pandemic on the functioning of democracy lead OBN or *Chega* vote probabilities to become almost null, in a panorama in which electoral support for the incumbent is very likely (Figure 3).

Conclusions

The aim of this article was to frame the results of the January 2022 snap elections within the pandemic context, and to test the role of COVID-19 on voting behaviour. Our results point out that, even in a situation of poor politicisation of the pandemic, with high levels of consensus and support for the incumbent from both the political elites and public opinion, the signals sent by parties less involved in rallying around the flag might actually have mattered and made COVID-19-related assessments somewhat relevant in terms of vote choices.

Indeed, dissatisfaction with the PS cabinet performance in dealing with the pandemic and a negative assessment of the pandemic's impact on the way Portuguese democracy works impacted vote intentions, namely by increasing the odds of voting for *Chega* (as well as for small parties, blank or null). These results are particularly interesting if we think that, at the campaign level, the pandemic occupied a modest space. In fact, while discussions over the economy and the healthcare system revolved around the negative impacts or frailties

exposed by the COVID-19 emergency, the pandemic and its management were not the focus of party competition on either the left or the right, most likely because the opposition parties either supported the government in the management of the emergency or knew that the government's job had been appreciated by most of the Portuguese. In turn, *Chega*, which was persistently vocal against the government both during the last years and in the election campaign, turned out to be the most likely choice for those unhappy with the way the pandemic was managed in Portugal. On the other hand, the odds of voting for the incumbent were strong for those who were pleased with the way the pandemic was managed.

However, we can hardly say that these elections were about the pandemic. On the one hand, we see that the assessment of the PM (and PS leader) António Costa and ideology are amongst the most important factors (of those assessed in our model) impacting voting decisions. On the other, a desire for greater stability (measured through the agreement with the idea that Portugal needs a strong leader) is relevant, regardless of the opinions on the pandemic, increasing the odds of voting for the PS to the detriment of the PSD, the incumbent's former radical left allies and the parliamentary non-populist right-wing parties.

Sadly, while it seems that the Portuguese wanted stability, they did not get it. First, government formation had to be delayed by almost two months due to the need to repeat the elections in the electoral district for citizens living in other European countries (see endnote 12). Second, and perhaps more importantly, the first year of the third Costa cabinet has been plagued by a series of controversies and scandals, most of which related to lack of ethics in the management of public resources, leading to 12 members of government (including 2 ministers) resigning or being invited to resign (Fonseca 2023). In spite of this, and of the good results for the PSD in most of the polls carried out in early 2023 –31 per cent vs. 27 per cent for the PS (Carrapatoso 2023) –, a new parliament dissolution is unlikely as the President of the Republic considers that the country cannot have elections every single year, preferring instead to urge the government to fare better (Céu 2023).

Notes

1. In spite of being the first legislative elections in Portugal, these were the fourth elections since the outbreak of the pandemic in the country, following the regional elections in the Azores in September 2020, the presidential elections in January 2021 and the local elections in September 2021.
2. It must be said that the government grounded important decisions on scientific and technical advice, and experts and scientific reports became an actual source of legitimisation of political decisions. As Silva and colleagues point out, this was an important and successful strategy, 'given the general high level of citizens' confidence in scientists: in 2018, 34 per cent of Portuguese citizens reported high levels of trust in science, well above the EU average' (2022, p. 13).

3. Available at: <https://observador.pt/interativo/votometro-legislativas-2022/#political-compass>. This application was prepared by political scientist Jorge Fernandes for the online newspaper *Observador* and was used more than 600 thousand times before the beginning of the official election campaign (Ferreira 2022). Parties and users were positioned according to their opinion on 21 political issues.
4. Neither the Comparative Manifesto Project nor the Chapel Hill Expert Survey currently include information about the Portuguese parties running in the 2022 legislative election.
5. Positions regarding welfare, taxes, investment in the public sector, or privatisations.
6. Positions on abortion, adoption by same-sex couples, euthanasia, immigration, soft drugs or European integration.
7. Even if most polls placed PS ahead of the PSD, the margins of error were higher than the difference between them.
8. Crowds of supporters with flags and music accompany the party leader's periphus in a central or symbolic city street, with no social distancing at all being possible.
9. The automated content analysis focused on the two most important quality daily Lisbon-based newspapers, *Público* and *Diário de Notícias*, and included all the relevant articles published between 1 and 28 January 2022, thus encompassing both the official campaign period and the two preceding weeks.
10. *Pandemia, pandémico/a* (pandemic), COVID, *vacina/as* (vaccine/es), *vacinação* (vaccination), *estado de emergência* (state of emergency), *confinamento* (confinement), *restrições* (restrictions).
11. A soundbite similar to that of 'turning the page on austerity' used during his 2015–2019 cabinet (Moury, De Giorgi & Barros 2020).
12. These are the final official figures, computed after the elections in the 'Europe' electoral district were repeated. Indeed, about 80 per cent of the votes (157,205) in this electoral district were deemed null by the Constitutional Court because they did not meet all voting rules. Consequently, elections were held again in this district in mid-March.
13. Of the 553 respondents who shared their vote choice in the 2022 elections (159 preferred not to answer this question and 17 claimed they did not know), 302 stated they voted for the PS, 116 for the PSD, 51 for the radical left, 31 for *Chega*, 24 for IL or CDS-PP, and 29 for other parties, blank or null. These values are not completely equivalent to those of the official election results due to factors such as difference in the willingness to answer the vote recall question between electorates who voted and who did not vote the same as the majority. Since our goal is to test relationships between variables and not to describe the distribution of votes between parties, this imperfect match between the official results and the distribution of votes in the sample does not strike us as an important issue because these tests are considered to be robust to such sample biases (see, for instance, Mullnix et al. 2016, Coppock, Leeper & Mullnix 2018).
14. Other traditional factors impacting voting behaviour in Portugal (e.g. Lisi 2019) were not included in the model to avoid multicollinearity issues. For instance, party identification with the PS displays a very strong correlation with the assessment of António Costa (Pearson's $r = .701, p = 0.000$) and an almost perfect correlation with vote for the PS (Pearson's $r = .929, p = 0.000$) – something that resonates with common doubts on the extent to which party identification measured in post-electoral surveys and vote recall are indeed independent from one another. The correlation between the general assessment of the government's record and of its performance in dealing with the consequences of the pandemic is not strong enough to make us fear that the two

variables measure the same underlying opinion, but strong enough to eventually cause multicollinearity problems in the model (Pearson's $r = .696$, $p = 0.000$).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributors

José Santana-Pereira is Assistant Professor at ISCTE-Lisbon University Institute's Department of Political Science and Public Policy, and Researcher at CIES-Lisbon University Institute. His research focuses on issues such as media systems, media effects on public opinion, campaigns, political attitudes and voting behaviour. His work has been published in journals such as *Electoral Studies*, *International Journal of Press/Politics*, *Journal of European Public Policy*, *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, *South European Society and Politics* and *Swiss Political Science Review*.

Elisabetta De Giorgi is Associate Professor at the Department of Political and Social Sciences of the University of Trieste, Italy. Her main research interests are parliaments from a comparative perspective, political parties and party systems. She has published several articles in national and international journals – *Acta Politica*, *Journal of Legislative Studies*, *Parliamentary Affairs*, *South European Society and Politics*, *Government and Opposition*, among others – and book chapters. She also published a book entitled 'L'opposizione parlamentare in Italia' and co-edited the volume 'Opposition Parties in European Legislatures. Conflict or Consensus?' (2018).

References

- Antunes, R. P. & Carrapatoso, M. S. (2021) 'Marcelo avisou partidos sobre eleições antecipadas: "Se tiver de ser, é"'. *Observador*, 15 October.
- Baccini, L., Brodeur, A. & Weymouth, S. (2021) 'The COVID-19 pandemic and the 2020 US presidential election', *Journal of Population Economics*, vol. 34, no. 2, pp. 739–767.
- Baekgaard, M., Christensen, J., Madsen, J. K. & Mikkelsen, K. S. (2020) 'Rallying around the flag in times of COVID-19: societal lockdown and trust in democratic institutions', *Journal of Behavioral Public Administration*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 1–12.
- Béland, D., Rocco, P., Segatto, C. I. & Waddan, A. (2021) 'Trump, Bolsonaro, and the framing of the Covid-19 crisis: how political institutions shaped presidential strategies', *World Affairs*, vol. 184, no. 4, pp. 413–440.
- Belchior, A., Pequito Teixeira, C. & e Santana-Pereira, J. (2021) Os impactos políticos da COVID-19 - Inquérito à População Portuguesa (Abril-Maio e Setembro-Outubro 2021). Dataset, CIES-Iscte & FFMS, Lisbon.

- Belchior, A. M., Santana-Pereira, J., Pequito Teixeira, C., Martins, N., Brás, T. & Moniz, J. (2022) 'A democracia em tempos de pandemia: impacto da pandemia de COVID-19 no sistema político português', in *Um Novo Normal? Impactos e Lições de Dois Anos de Pandemia em Portugal*, eds C. Jalali, N. Monteiro, A. M. Belchior, B. C. Reis, H. Figueiredo & M. M. Calheiros, pp. 222-279, FFMS, Lisbon.
- Bisbee, J. & Honig, D. (2021) 'Flight to safety: COVID-induced changes in the intensity of status quo preference and voting behavior', *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 116, no. 1, pp. 1–17.
- Bol, D., Giani, M., Blais, A. & Loewen, P. J. (2021) 'The effect of COVID-19 lockdowns on political support: some good news for democracy?', *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 60, no. 2, pp. 497–505.
- Borges, L., Soldado, C., Botelho, L., Vieira, A., Dantas, M. & Moreira, C. F. (2022) 'Uma corrida nas ruas a correr o risco da covid', Público, 21 January.
- Bosco, A. & Verney, S. (2020) 'Polarisation in Southern Europe: elites, party conflicts and negative partisanship', *South European Society & Politics*, vol. 25, no. 3–4, pp. 257–284.
- Cancela, J. & Magalhães, P. (2020). As bases sociais dos partidos portugueses. IPRI Working Paper No. 60/2020. Lisbon: IPRI.
- Cardoso, G., Couraceiro, P., Vasconcelos, A., Paisana, M. & Pinto-Martinho, A. (2022) 'Legislativas 2022 – A inovação dos debates televisivos em análise. Report', Lisbon, Obercom.
- Carrapatoso, M. A. (2023) 'Sondagem. PSD à frente do PS pela primeira vez desde 2017', Observador, 25 January.
- Casal Bértoa, F. (2023) Database on WHO GOVERNS in Europe and beyond, PSGo. available online at: whogoverns.eu.
- Céu, B. (2023) 'Marcelo destaca o seu "bom senso" para dar três recados: o Governo tem de fazer melhor, a oposição também e eleições antecipadas nem pensar', CNN Portugal, 26 January.
- Claassen, C. (2020) 'In the mood for democracy? Democratic support as thermostatic opinion', *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 114, no. 1, pp. 36–53.
- Constenla, T. (2022) 'Antonio Costa, una mayoría absoluta que desafió a la pandemia y a las encuestas', El País, 1 February.
- Coppock, A., Leeper, T. J. & Mullinix, K. J. (2018) 'Generalizability of heterogeneous treatment effect estimates across samples', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, vol. 115, no. 49, pp. 12441–12446.
- Correio da Manhã (2020) 'Assembleia da República aprova Estado de Emergência para combater coronavírus', 18 March.
- De Giorgi, E. & Cancela, J. (2021) 'The Portuguese radical left parties supporting government: from policy-takers to policymakers?', *Government and Opposition*, vol. 56, no. 2, pp. 281–300.
- De Giorgi, E. & Santana-Pereira, J. (2016) 'The 2015 Portuguese legislative election: widening the coalitional space and bringing the extreme left in', *South European Society & Politics*, vol. 21, no. 4, pp. 451–468.
- De Giorgi, E. & Santana-Pereira, J. (2020) 'The exceptional case of post-bailout Portugal: a comparative outlook', *South European Society & Politics*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 127–150.
- De Giorgi, E., Santana-Pereira, J. & Piccolino, G. (2021) 'The pandemic crisis as an opportunity for power-sharing?' Paper presented at the 2021 APSA Annual Meeting, Seattle, USA.
- Diário de Notícias. (2022) 'Costa não perdoa quem quis «cortar pernas» ao seu governo', 19 January.

- Dias, A. (2022) 'COVID-19 e Participação Eleitoral', Paper presented at the Workshop Campanhas, partidos, comportamentos e geografia eleitoral: uma análise das Legislativas de 2022, ICS-University of Lisbon, 4 February.
- Donovan, T. (2021) 'Right populist parties and support for strong leaders', *Party Politics*, vol. 27, no. 5, pp. 858–869.
- Expresso (2022) 'Rio rejeita "coligação" com o Chega, mas não fecha todas as portas', 3 January.
- Fernandes, J. M. (2022) 'Legislativas. Como se construiu o novo mapa cor-de-rosa', *Observador*, 31 January.
- Fernandes, J. M., Magalhães, P. C. & Santana-Pereira, J. (2018) 'Portugal's leftist government: from sick man to poster boy?', *South European Society and Politics*, vol. 23, no. 4, pp. 503–524.
- Ferreira, B. (2022) 'Votómetro do Observador já foi usado 600 mil vezes', *Observador*, 17 January.
- Ferrinho Lopes, H. (2023) 'An unexpected socialist majority: the 2022 Portuguese general elections', *West European Politics*, vol. 46, no. 2, pp. 437–450.
- Ferrinho Lopes, H., Nina, S. R. & Santana-Pereira, J. (2022) O impacto das sondagens na mobilização eleitoral e voto estratégico. Presentation at the conference *Mudança Eleitoral em Tempos de Perma-Crise: Portugal, 2002-2022*, Lisbon, ICS-University of Lisbon, Lisbon, 21 November 2022.
- Fonseca, J. M. (2023) '12 baixas no executivo em menos de um ano. "Governo mantém-se firme", diz Costa'. *ECO*, 5 January.
- Giommoni, T. & Loumeau, G. (2022) 'Lockdown and voting behaviour: a natural experiment on postponed elections during the COVID-19 pandemic', *Economic Policy*, vol. 37, no. 111, pp. 547–559.
- Jalali, C., Moniz, J. & Silva, P. (2020) 'In the shadow of the 'government of the left': the 2019 legislative elections in Portugal', *South European Society & Politics*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 229–255.
- James, T. S. (2021) 'New development: running elections during a pandemic', *Public Money & Management*, vol. 41, no. 1, pp. 65–68.
- Jou, W. (2013) 'Public opinion and electoral system preference in New Zealand: a longitudinal study', *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, vol. 51, no. 4, pp. 524–548.
- Kritzing, S., Foucault, M., Lachat, R., Partheymüller, J., Plescia, C. & Brouard, S. (2021) 'Rally round the flag': the COVID-19 crisis and trust in the national government', *West European Politics*, vol. 44, no. 5–6, pp. 1205–1231.
- Leininger, A. & Schaub, M. (2020) 'Voting at the dawn of a global pandemic', Working paper available at: <https://osf.io/pre-prints/socarxiv/a32r7/>
- Lisi, M. (2019) *Eleições, campanhas eleitorais e decisão de voto em Portugal*, Lisbon, Sílabo.
- Lobo, M. C., Magalhães, P., Flores, I., Ramos, A., Santana Pereira, J. & Vicente, P. (2022a) 'Sondagem ICS-Iscte Março 2022: Relatório'. available online at: https://sondagens-ics-ul.iscte-iul.pt/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Sondagem-ICS_ISCTE_Mar%C3%A7o_2022.pdf
- Lobo, M. C., Magalhães, P., Flores, I., Ramos, A., Santana-Pereira, J. & Vicente, P. (2022b) *Portuguese Electoral Study 2022*, APIS. APIS0093, Lisbon available online at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10400.20/2113>.
- Luís, C. (2022) 'Eleições em Portugal em contexto de pandemia: implementação local e desafios à integridade eleitoral', *Polis, nº 5 (II série)*, pp. 21–30.
- Miller, J. D., Woods, L. T. & Kalmbach, J. (2022) 'The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in a polarized political system: lessons from the 2020 election', *Electoral Studies*, vol. 80, pp. 1–10.

- Morisi, D., Cloléry, H., King, G.K.K. and Schaub, M. (2021) 'How COVID-19 affects voting for incumbents: Evidence from local elections in France.' Working Paper.
- Moury, C., De Giorgi, E. & Barros, P. P. (2020) 'How to combine public spending with fiscal rigour? 'Austerity by stealth' in post-bailout Portugal (2015-2019)', *South European Society & Politics*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 151–178.
- Mueller, J. E. (1970) 'Presidential popularity from Truman to Johnson', *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 64, no. 1, pp. 18–34.
- Mullinix, K., Leeper, T., Druckman, J. & Freese, J. (2016) 'The generalizability of survey experiments', *Journal of Experimental Political Science*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 109–138.
- Russo, S., Colloca, P., Cavazza, N. & Roccatò, M. (2021) 'Moving away from populist votes. The role of anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic', *Polis*, no. 1, pp. 153–164.
- Santana Pereira, J. (2022) 'Election campaigns', in *The Oxford Handbook of Portuguese Politics*, in eds J. M. Fernandes, P. C. Magalhães & A. Costa, pp. 262-275, Oxford University Press, Costa: A. Costa Pinto Oxford.
- Santana-Pereira, J., Ferrinho Lopes, H. & Nina, S. R. (2023) 'Sailing uncharted waters with old boats? COVID-19 and the digitalization and professionalization of presidential campaigns in Portugal', *Social Sciences*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 45.
- Santos, N. (2022) 'Manifestos e Campanha Eleitoral', paper presented at the Workshop Campanhas, partidos, comportamentos e geografia eleitoral: uma análise das Legislativas de 2022, ICS-University of Lisbon, 4 February 2022. pp. 262–275.
- Schraff, D. (2021) 'Political trust during the Covid-19 pandemic: rally around the flag or lockdown effects?', *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 60, no. 4, pp. 1007–1017.
- Serani, D. (2022) 'The Covid pandemic enters the ballot box: the impact of conspiracy theories on Italians' voting behaviour during the COVID-19 crisis', *Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica*, advanced online publication. pp. 1–18.
- Silva, P., Costa, E., Moniz, J. (2021) 'A Portuguese Miracle: the Politics of the First Phase of Covid-19 in Portugal', *South European Society & Politics*, advanced online publication [10.1080/13608746.2021.1979741](https://doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2021.1979741).
- Torcal, M. & Comellas, J. M. (2022) 'Affective polarisation in times of political instability and conflict. Spain from a comparative perspective', *South European Society & Politics*, vol. 27, no. 1, pp. 1–26.
- Tribuna, M. (2022) 'Mais de 671 mil votos foram "para o lixo" nestas legislativas. Foi um em cada sete', *Expresso*, 31 January.