

Second-Order Elections in Democratic Portugal, 1975-2001

BAUM, Michael

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Massachusetts-
Dartmouth, 285 Old Westport Road, North Dartmouth, Massachusetts 02747-2300,
USA

mbaum@umassd.edu

&

FREIRE, André

Assistente, Department of Sociology, *Instituto Superior de Ciências do Trabalho e da
Empresa* (Higher Institute for Labour and Business Sciences), Av. das Forças Armadas,
Lisboa 1649-026, Portugal

andre.freire@iscte.pt

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is explore the relationships between presidential, parliamentary, local and European electoral behavior in Portugal during the democratic period, 1975-2002.

First, the paper tests the hypothesis that aggregate levels of turnout vary in relation to an election's degree of importance for the functioning of the political system. Our findings support the notion that electors give a differential importance to different types of elections, participating more or less in each of them accordingly. Using the available individual level data, we also found that the demographic, behavioral and attitudinal determinants of turnout across different types of elections (presidential, parliamentary, local and European) were quite similar and stable over time.

Second, the evolution of the party system and of aggregate levels of volatility (total and interbloc) were compared across different types of elections. At the individual level, we found support for the theoretical expectation that voters were more prone to change their vote in elections with less importance (local and European) compared to the most important ones (parliamentary). Aggregate volatility statistics led to the opposite conclusion. We also found that evolutionary trends in the party system in first-order elections were also reflected in second-order elections.

Third, we tested theories on electoral cycles by comparing aggregate electoral results across parliamentary, local and European elections in different periods of the electoral cycle, using as the baseline the winners in each previous parliamentary election. We found that in Portugal, as elsewhere, voters use second-order elections as a

way to express content or discontent with the national government, but other factors, such as the economy, also play an important intervening role.

The Role of Elections in the Portuguese Political System

Prior to Portugal's relatively bloodless Revolution of Carnations on April 25, 1974, free and fair elections with universal suffrage and a competitive party system were unheard of.¹ Elections served primarily as a tool for the dictatorship to ferret out elite discontent and as cover for the regime's external legitimacy (see Schmitter 1978 and Cruz 1988: 206). Unlike in neighboring Spain and in certain other democratic transitions, electoral politics played absolutely no role in bringing down the authoritarian regime. Instead, Portugal's transition was initiated by a coup lead by junior military officers (Schmitter 1975; Maxwell 1995; Linz & Stepan 1996: Ch. 7). While the coup may have been planned as a primarily political revolution, designed to liberalize society, overthrow a decrepit regime, and end the country's seemingly interminable colonial wars in Africa, it unwittingly created the political space necessary for a process of open social conflict and widespread political mobilization to quickly develop a revolutionary dynamic of their own (Bermeo 1986; Graham & Makler 1979; Graham & Wheeler 1983). What was critical, however, at least in terms of Portugal's democratic transition, was that despite an extremely unstable period of interim governments that lasted from 1974-76, the military nevertheless committed itself to holding free and fair popular elections one year from the date of coup.² The Portuguese Constituent Assembly elections were held on schedule on April 25, 1975, with 92% turnout, and these were followed by the first free constitutional parliamentary elections

¹ Schmitter (1978) has nevertheless analyzed in detail the logic of unfree elections during the Salazar-Caetano dictatorships, from 1933 to 1974.

² For a more complete analysis of the role played by elections in Portugal's democratic transition, see Linz & Stepan (1996: Ch. 7); Bruneau & Macleod (1986: Ch. 2); and Bermeo (1987) for a comparison with Spain.

one year later, on April 25, 1976. A stable party system quickly emerged, such that by 1976 four main parties represented nearly 91% of the electorate. Only one of these four parties, the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP), expressed clear doubts about the future of parliamentary democracy.³ The party system has since remained relatively stable, except for a brief period during the mid-1980s when a new center-left party experienced a meteoric rise and fall, and the general tendency has been for greater bipolarization between the two ‘catch-all’ centrist parties, the center-left Socialist Party (PS) and the center-right Social Democratic Party (PSD) (see Cruz 1995).⁴

Portugal’s political system is semi-presidential, and thus the only two institutions with national electoral legitimacy and a responsibility for forming government are the President of the Republic (PR) and the National Assembly. The Head of State is the directly-elected president, but this officeholder must share power with a Head of Government (prime minister) who is responsible to the National Assembly (see Lijphart 1992; Linz & Valenzuela 1992). Although the president had more significant powers from 1976-1982, leading to an unclear “presidential-parliamentary” balance of power, the 1982 revision of the Constitution substantially reduced some of these powers, thereby making the system more “premier-presidential”.⁵ The presidential term is 5 years with a maximum of two terms, and since the 1997 revision of the constitution, the right to vote in presidential elections was extended to citizens registered abroad. Since its transition to democracy began in 1974, Portugal has

³ The PCP has since normalized its relationship with parliamentary democracy. On the development of Portugal’s political parties and party system, see Bruneau (1997) and Costa Lobo (2001).

⁴ Costa Lobo (2001) has argued that Portugal’s semi-presidential political system has contributed to the stability of the party system, primarily by facilitating a bipolar logic to the system as a result of run-off elections. See Shugart & Carey (1992) for a comparative investigation of different types of semi-presidential systems, their specific rules, and their impact on party systems.

⁵ See Shugart & Carey (1992: Ch. 2) for a typology of semipresidentialism. For a discussion of the frequently overlooked powers still at the disposal of Portugal’s president, see Magalhães (2001).

had six presidential elections, only one of which required a second round runoff (see Freire 2001).

The legislative branch, the National Assembly, is unicameral and composed of 230 members elected in 20 multi-member constituencies--18 from the continent and 2 from Portugal's two autonomous island regions, the Azores and Madeira. Deputies' terms are four years maximum and they are elected under the d'hondt system of proportional representation in closed party lists (we discuss the electoral systems used in all four types of elections in greater detail below). National parliamentary elections ultimately determine which party will form the Government, who will become prime minister, and thus who will share executive power with the president. These are clearly the most important elections in the political system.

Less important elections (in terms of their contribution to the functioning of the national political system) also take place in Portugal at the local, regional and European levels. Local and regional-level elections under democratic rules only began in 1976, following the promulgation of Portugal's new Constitution. The Constitution provided for 3 distinct levels of local governance (autarquias locais) according to their respective territorial delimitations—the ward (freguesia), the county-level municipality (concelho), and the special administrative regions of the Azores and Madeira (Silveira, 1997). In this paper we only refer to elections in the latter two bodies. Despite some limited regional autonomy afforded to the Azores and Madeira, local and regional government structures in Portugal remain quite limited in terms of their actual competencies and financial independence.⁶

⁶ Lijphart (1999: 193, Fig. 10.1), for example, measures degree of government centralization in terms of the percentage of the total fiscal receipts collected by the central government, excluding those receipts that are automatically transferred to local/regional governments. According to this measure, Portugal shares the most centralized status in Europe with the Netherlands. The autonomy of the islands

European Parliament (EP) elections only began in Portugal and Spain in June 1987, following those two countries' accession to the European Community in 1986. Those elections were held concurrently with national parliamentary elections, and therefore are a poor indicator for conclusions about EP elections. For that reason we do not analyze the 1987 EP elections here. However, voters have gone to the polls 3 times for EP elections since 1987 and their importance for national politics is about the same as elsewhere in the EU.⁷

Electoral systems in different Portuguese elections

Electoral systems across different types of Portuguese elections are quite similar, except for the presidential contests. The latter are fought under a run-off majority system (Freire, 2001; Lopes and Freire, 2002). As in France, if there is no candidate with a majority of valid votes in the first ballot, a second election is held only between the two major candidates of the first ballot. Personalization is a central feature of presidential elections, although candidates usually receive partisan support. This system forces political parties to coalesce, and works against those parties that are not able to enter into larger coalitions, namely anti-system parties. All other elections (parliamentary, regional, local and EP) are fought under the d'Hondt system of proportional representation (PR), and voters are not permitted to express preferences for particular candidates (closed lists). During the democratic period there were no major changes in the parliamentary electoral system--the only significant change was the reduction in the number of MPs from the 1991 election on, from 250 to 230 (Lopes and

remains limited by the fact that the central government maintains a representative in each region, their budgets are still largely dependent on the goodwill of the central government, and perhaps most importantly, regional parties are forbidden by the Constitution (see Opello, 1993). Baum & Freire (forthcoming) also discuss in some detail Portugal's turbulent debate over regional government on the mainland territory.

⁷ For a critical analysis of the democratic deficit in the European Union, including its EP elections, and what might be done about it, see Schmitter (2000).

Freire, 2002). This latter change resulted in a minor reduction of the average district magnitude, from 11.4 seats/district between 1975 and 1987, to 10.5 from 1991 onwards (Freire, 2003). This system benefits large parties the most (those receiving more than 25% of the vote), is relatively fair to medium size parties (those with 15% to 25% of the vote), and can even allow for the entrance of very small parties (those with around 1,5% to 3% of the vote) due to the very large district magnitude of the Lisbon and Porto constituencies.

EP elections are fought in a single constituency (25 seats) and thus, on the one hand, the electoral system is not so fair for small and medium-sized parties, but on the other hand, it benefits them because fewer resources are needed for electoral campaigns (Bacalhau, 1996).

Local elections are fought in 308 municipalities. We consider only the most important of local elections⁸, i.e., those for the municipal executive (*Câmara Municipal*). These elections are fought in medium/small districts – the average district magnitude in the 1997 elections was 6.56 seats – and so the system works against smaller parties. Furthermore, a large amount of resources (human, financial, and organizational) are needed to campaign in all 308 units, and this is yet another feature that works against smaller parties-- especially those that lack a strong organizational structure at the national level. Another singularity of local elections for the municipal executive is that they are highly personalized. This is due to the fact that although people vote in closed lists campaigns, campaigns revolve around the mayoral candidates.

⁸ In Portuguese local elections there are two types of contests at the municipal level, for the executive and for the assembly, and one at the ward level, for the assembly – from which the ward's executive emanates.

The aim of this paper is to explore the relations between presidential, parliamentary, local and European elections in Portugal during the democratic period, 1975-2001. Given this brief introduction to the Portuguese political system, and the relative importance of the different bodies for its functioning, we could say that local, regional and European elections are second-order national elections, while parliamentary contests are of the first-order type. We use the definition of first-order and second-order national elections that is now standard in the literature (Reif, 1985b; and Reif and Schmitt, 1980; see also Marsh and Franklin, 1996; Marsh, 1998; and Norris, 1997). First order elections are those where there is much at stake, that is, the control of national executive power. This means that in parliamentary systems, legislative elections are first-order, as are elections for the head of state in presidential regimes. On the contrary, second-order national elections have no direct impact on the control of national executive power. In the case of EP elections, they do not even have any significant impact on the formation of executive power at the EU level. But second-order national elections are generally fought by the same actors (the same parties) as in the first-order ones, and are significantly influenced by national issues, despite their formally local, regional or European character (Franklin, 2001).

The relationship between parliamentary and presidential elections in semi-presidential systems is more problematic. For example, in describing the France 5th Republic, also a semi-presidential system, Reif considered that both presidential and parliamentary elections are first-order, except in certain circumstances (Reif, 1985b).⁹ However, semi-presidential systems are in reality quite varied. In some of them--France, Finland, Poland, and Lithuania--the role of the president is very strong; namely it has

⁹ See also Marsh (1998), who says that in those cases where the election of a non-executive head of state is at stake, then the contest is of the second-order type.

the power to propose legislation, call for referendums and preside over the council of ministers (this is where the president is the head of government, at least under some circumstances, not co-habitation). While in other systems– Austria, Bulgaria, Iceland, Ireland, Slovenia, Romania and Portugal after its 1982 constitutional revision– the president has only very limited control over the executive power (Duverger, 1980; Shugart and Carey, 1992; Sartori, 1994; Freire and Magalhães, 2002). So, in the latter cases we cannot say that presidential and parliamentary election results are of equal importance for the functioning of the political system, because they are not.

Parliamentary elections are clearly more important. Plus, at least in Portugal, the rationale of the competition and the actors contesting presidential elections has not always been the same as in the legislative elections – we will return to this point later. So, we must conclude that Reif's classification is neither very suitable for the Portuguese case, nor for other weak semi-presidential systems. Because of this we will concentrate our analysis mainly on the comparisons between parliamentary *versus* local and EP elections, although we also discuss the presidential results for comparative purposes.

But how are first and second-order elections related? Here, empirical studies are limited in scope, and in other dimensions there is only a limited consensus in the literature. At the aggregate level, turnout rates are usually lower in second-order elections (Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Reif, 1985b; Campbell, 1966; Marsh and Franklin, 1996; Franklin, Eijik and Oppenhuis, 1996; Eijk and Franklin, 1996; Freire and Magalhães, 2002), but individual level turnout factors are said to be identical across different types of elections (Franklin, Eijik and Oppenhuis, 1996). However, at least to the best of our knowledge, empirical studies on this issue in the European context have

usually compared parliamentary and EP elections, and usually without a longitudinal perspective. Consequently, these studies often lack an analysis of the evolution of aggregate rates of electoral participation and of the individual determinants of turnout across more than two different types of elections. Using only Portuguese electoral data (1975-2002), we intend to overcome some of these shortcomings of prior studies. First, we test the hypothesis that aggregate levels of turnout in second-order elections are lower than first-order contests during the Portuguese democratic period, 1975-present. Using the available individual level data, we also intend to see if the social and political determinants of turnout across different types elections (presidential, parliamentary, local and European) are also different, and if these differences (or similarities) remain stable over time.

Always using exclusively Portuguese electoral data, our second major objective is to compare the evolution of the party system and aggregate levels of volatility (total and interbloc) across different types of elections.¹⁰ So, here we will test two major findings in the literature. First, we want to see if there are any relevant differences between the party system in first-order and second-order elections, and if there is any trend in this area. Small and medium size parties, especially if they are out of national government, are said to perform better in second-order elections; whereas large parties and/or those who are in control of national government are said to perform worse in second-order elections (Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Reif, 1985b; Anderson and Ward, 1997; Marsh, 1998; Oppenhuis, Eijk and Franklin, 1996; Eijk, Franklin and Oppenhuis, 1996).

¹⁰ At the aggregate level, we will use the operational definitions of total and inter bloc volatility proposed by Stefano Bartolini and Peter Mair (1990: 19-46 and 311-314). See below.

The second hypothesis to be tested here is if electors are more prone to change their vote options in elections where less is at stake (local and European) than in the most important ones (parliamentary). Using the available individual level data, this assumption is also tested comparing the levels of social and ideological anchors of partisanship across different types elections (local and European *versus* parliamentary). Prior studies have not provided very clear predictions on these subjects. Some have found that people use second-order (or midterm) elections to express their feelings about their national government's performance (Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Reif, 1985b; Anderson and Ward, 1997; Marsh, 1998; Tufte, 1975). So they suggest that because less is at stake in these elections and their consequences for national government are reduced, people can express their discontent by changing their vote from say a leftwing party that is in control of government, to a rightwing party in the opposition, or vice-versa. But in second-order elections, small and/or protest parties are also said to do better (Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Reif, 1985b; Oppenhuis, Eijk and Franklin, 1996; Eijk, Franklin and Oppenhuis, 1996), and people are said to "vote with their heart", at least sometimes (Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Reif, 1985b; Oppenhuis, Eijk and Franklin, 1996; Eijk, Franklin and Oppenhuis, 1996; Anderson and Ward, 1997). In this case, the expression of protest can be done without voters crossing the left right boundary between elections, just by choosing more extreme parties of the same quadrant in the ideological spectrum. On the other hand, individual level empirical studies have shown that there is a stronger ideological anchor for the vote in EP elections than in parliamentary ones (Eijk, 1991). Based on this, we can expect larger electoral volatility in second-order elections than in first-order ones, but it is not clear if this larger volatility should result from crossing the left-right boundary (aggregate inter bloc

volatility and lower social and ideological anchors of partisanship) or whether the volatility comes from within each ideological bloc. This is exactly what we intend to analyze.

Our third objective is to test theories on electoral cycles, comparing aggregate electoral returns across parliamentary, local and EP elections in different periods of the national electoral cycle, and using as the baseline the winners in each previous parliamentary election. The hypothesis to be tested here is whether second-order elections have a singular character or if they are used by electors as a way to express content or discontent to the national government (Tufte, 1975; Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Reif, 1985a and 1985b; Anderson and Ward, 1997; Shugart and Carey, 1992; Shugart, 1995; Oppenhuis, Eijk and Franklin, 1996; Eijk, Franklin and Oppenhuis, 1996; Marsh, 1998). However, here too there is only a limited consensus in the literature. Most of the authors consider that government parties usually lose support in second order elections, especially when they occur in the midterm of the national electoral cycle (Campbell, 1966; Campbell, 1987 and 1993; Tufte, 1975; Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Reif, 1985a and 1985b; Anderson and Ward, 1997; Shugart, 1995); but using a very specific methodology, others found no support for this conclusion and instead say that in second-order elections individuals “vote with their heart” in the beginning of the national electoral cycle (second-order elections concurrent or shortly after first-order ones), and “with their boot” by the middle and/or the end of the national electoral cycle (midterm or later term elections) (see Oppenhuis, Eijk and Franklin, 1996).

The use of a single country, with very similar electoral systems in the different types of elections (except for the presidential ones), and a reasonable time series will allow us to test all three major hypotheses in a systematic way, while controlling for

other institutional, cultural, social and political factors that can get in the way of clear comparisons between first and second-order elections.¹¹ Plus, the long-run perspective used here will allow us to see if there is any structural influence of national parliamentary contests on second-order elections, namely in terms of trends in the party system.

Aggregate levels of abstention in different types of elections

Our findings for aggregate rates of abstention in different types of Portuguese elections generally support the theoretical predictions outlined earlier. As Fig. 1 illustrates, abstention rates are always higher in second-order elections, except for one presidential contest that went to the second round in 1986.

Insert Fig. 1 in this section on abstention rates

Notice that abstention has been on the increase in all Portuguese elections since the late 1970s, but at least some of this is due to accumulated errors in voter registration, or the problem of “technical abstention” (see Freire & Magalhães, 2002: Ch. 1). In any case, of the three types of second-order elections (presidential contests falling somewhere between the two, as Fig. 1 illustrates), EP elections illicit significantly higher abstention rates. The only exception to this rule was in the first EP election in 1987, which was held concurrently with national parliamentary elections.¹² Many commentators have suggested that these low turnout rates for EP elections are a natural reaction to the democratic deficit at the EU level (see Eijk & Franklin, 1996; Schmitter, 2000).¹³

¹¹ Franklin (2001: 191) mentions some of these contextual variations in his comparative analysis of the impact of EP elections—the characteristics of the electorate, the party system, whether compulsory voting is in effect, what day of the week elections are held, etc.

¹² Turnout would likely have been higher in that EP election anyway, since it was the first EP election held, but its concurrence with national elections guaranteed a lower abstention rate than would have otherwise been the case (see Franklin, 2001: 192).

¹³ More specifically, analysts have cited numerous contributing factors, including: the lack of interest in European questions for national political debates, the weakness of the EP relative to other EU institutions, less campaign spending by parties for EP elections, and the role of the mass media.

Barreto (1999) has even suggested that this deficit has infected Portugal's political system, delaying necessary improvements in the quality of its democracy.

While this may very well be true, careful individual-level cross-national research has suggested that when controlling for other variables, there is little relationship between attitudes to Europe and effects on turnout in EP elections (Schmitt & Mannheimer, 1992; Marsh & Franklin, 1996). Even at the aggregate level this makes sense, since Portugal and Holland are hardly Euroskeptic countries and yet they have above-average EP abstention rates. In fact, their respective 35.5 and 35.6% turnout rates in the 1994 EP elections were the highest of all member states, and their average turnout rates for EP elections in the 1990s were only slightly lower than Euroskeptic Great Britain. Below we run logistic regression analyses to try and explain abstention rates in the 1989, 1994 and 1999 EP elections in Portugal, as well as for parliamentary, presidential, and local elections. Our purpose in this case is not so much the development of a complete model for abstention in Portugal, but to see whether the factors that explain abstention in EP and other second-order elections are similar in nature to the ones which explain abstention in first-order contests. We also want to see if these predictors remain stable over time.

Correlates of abstention across different types elections

Presidential versus parliamentary elections

According to the theories on second-order elections in semi-presidential systems discussed above, abstention rates should generally be higher in the presidential contests, since less is at stake. Furthermore, cross-national differences in abstention should be related to the varying degrees of power afforded to the presidency in different semi-presidential systems. While our paper does not use cross-national data, Portugal's 1982

revision of the Constitution, which reduced presidential powers vis-à-vis the prime minister, nevertheless provides support for this conclusion. Note that in Fig. 1, abstention rates in the presidential races have only increased since the 1982 revision, except from 1991 to 1996, and that was primarily due to the extraordinarily uncompetitive nature of the 1991 contest.

But what happens when we move to the individual level? Due to data limitations mentioned earlier, we are only able to directly compare the 1999 parliamentary and 2001 presidential races.

Table 1. Operationalization of variables used for comparing Parliamentary (1999) and Presidential (2001) abstention profiles about here

Table 1 provides a summary of the variables tested, based upon data in two surveys conducted by Portugal's Catholic University Polling Center (CESOP).¹⁴

Table 2. Logistic Regression Modelling Abstention in Parliamentary (1999) and Presidential Elections (2001)

Table 2 presents the results of logistic regressions for the two races. Despite the rather modest R^2 scores of 18% and 17% respectively, the predictor variables for abstention were consistent across the two types of elections: age, whether the person sympathized with a political party, level of interest in politics, and the degree of confidence in elected/judicial institutions. Age was consistently a negative predictor of abstention in both races, but it was a much stronger predictor in the 2001 presidential contest. However, the strongest set of predictors overall were the attitudinal variables analyzed by Freire and Magalhães. For an easier visual comparison of the findings for abstention across elections, each of the more detailed regression results in Tables 2, 4, & 6 were summarized in a new table in the Appendix.

¹⁴ The data and analyses for this comparison were already published in Freire and Magalhães (2002: 145-49). The same thank you's contained therein apply here.

Local versus parliamentary elections

In this section we do the same type of analysis for another type of second-order election-- local elections held in 2001, compared to the latest parliamentary election held in March 2002. Our data in this case come from the first Portuguese NES study.¹⁵ Table 3 provides a summary of the variables tested. Notice that for ease of presentation these variables were grouped into three blocks: 1) demographic variables, 2) resource variables that are generally understood to be predictors of voter participation, and finally the same attitudinal predictors used in our first comparison above.

Table 3. Operationalization of variables used for comparing Local 2001 and Parliamentary 2002 abstention profiles, ICS Survey

Table 4. Regression results for comparison of Local 2001 and Parliamentary 2002 abstention profiles

As we can see from the results in Table 4, the predictors of abstention are generally similar to those for the presidential elections of 2001 and legislative elections in 1999, albeit with some modifications. Age, party sympathy, and interest in politics continue to be consistent predictors. However, education level only shows up in the 2002 parliamentary election as a significant negative predictor of abstention, as one would expect. The fact that education is an inconsistent predictor in Portuguese elections is probably due to the very low levels of education among older citizens, who as we know, tend to vote much more regularly than young, more educated Portuguese. Occupation also had divergent effects on abstention for these two contests, as it is a

¹⁵ The Portuguese NES survey, *Portuguese Electoral Behaviour and Political Attitudes in Comparative Perspective*, includes in the research team both authors of this paper, and is directed by António Barreto, André Freire, Marina Costa Lobo, and Pedro Magalhães. The Portuguese NES is a member of CSES, *The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems*. The post electoral survey was fielded in March 2002, shortly after the 2002 legislative elections of March 17, and was based on a multi-stage probability sample of the Portuguese people living on the mainland and aged 18 or more. The survey included questions on past vote in legislative elections (2002 and 1999), and also a recall question for electoral behavior in the previous local elections (December 2001).

stronger predictor for the second-order elections with lower turnout. Also noteworthy is that in this and subsequent analyses we included a measure of church attendance, and this was a very significant negative predictor of abstention in the 2002 parliamentary contest, but not a particularly significant predictor for the local elections.

EP elections 1989-1999

Finally we investigated the abstention profile for the three EP elections since 1987 and compared them to each other, since we already analyzed the 1999 and 2002 parliamentary elections above. Our data here come from three Eurobarometer surveys (EB 31.1- 1989, EB41.1- 1994 and EB 52.0- 1999).

Table 5. Operationalization of Variables Used for Abstention Analysis in EP elections (1999 & 1994)

Table 5 lists the variable codings utilized for each survey. Note that due to changes in question wording, it was more difficult to find measures that were consistent. For example, for EB 52 we used work status (dummy for working/not working), whereas for EB 41.1 we used an employment scale, and EB 31.1 and 41.1 included trade union membership whereas EB 52 did not. The reverse was true for the variable “discuss politics”. We also included in block two measures that were worded slightly differently for each survey. Be that as it may, Table 6 presents the pattern for the three elections.

Table 6. Logistic Regression Modeling Portuguese Abstention in EP Elections (1989, 1994 & 1999)

Our findings show that among the demographic predictors, only age remained a consistent factor across nearly all the elections. Education level again displayed an inconsistent importance, as did income. Among the behavioral variables, we see (Appendix Table) that church attendance had a very strong negative impact on abstention in the 2002 parliamentary elections, and a somewhat less decisive but

nonetheless significant effect on turnout in the two EP elections for which we have church attendance data; but the largest behavioral predictor was for those who pay attention to politics. Those who profess taking such an interest are dramatically more likely to vote in all elections, regardless of their perceived importance.

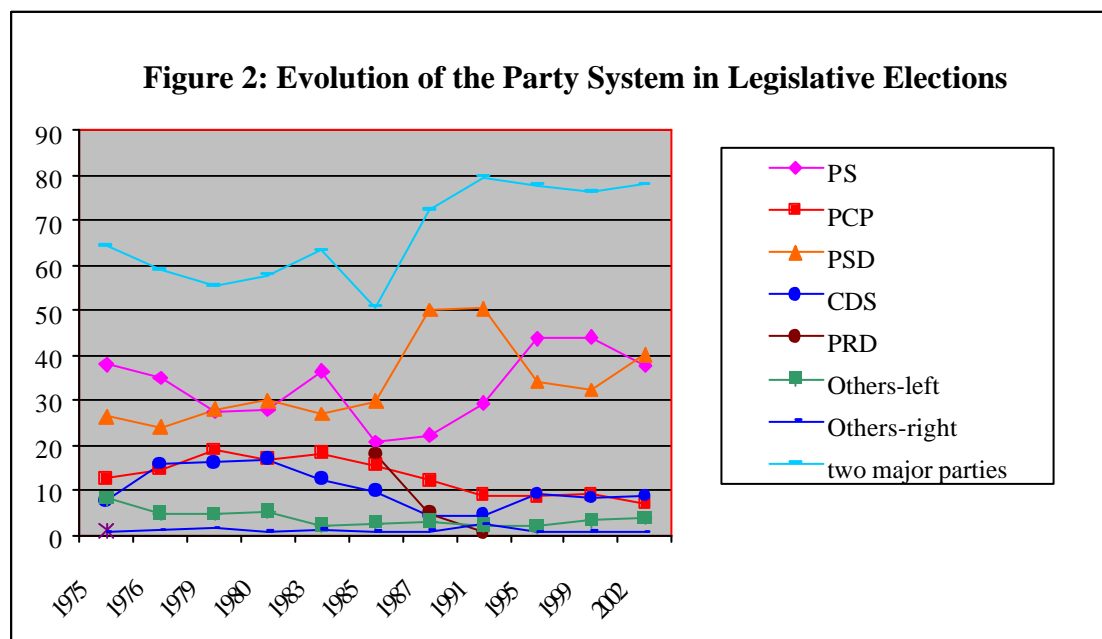
However, the attitudinal predictors of abstention present something of a muddle for us. On the one hand, those who report feeling sympathy for a national political party are significantly more likely to vote in elections, even EP elections. This is a clear and unequivocal finding for all Portuguese elections. However, contrary to what other cross-national studies have found (Schmitt & Mannheimer, 1992; Marsh & Franklin, 1996), voters' attitudes toward Europe and the EP did have a significant impact on turnout/abstention in the 1999 EP vote, and at least the variable "country benefits from EU membership" was also marginally significant in the 1989 poll. Whereas in the 1994 and 1989 contests, feelings about the "importance of the EU" were not significant predictors. These mixed results may be mostly a product of differences in the two surveys and the numbers of missing cases, so we don't wish to make too much of them. One consistent finding, however, was that party attachment consistently remains a significant predictor of abstention/turnout for all elections, regardless of their importance. This finding reinforces arguments we have made elsewhere (Baum & Freire, forthcoming), that political parties remain the crucial actors in Portuguese politics, both for turnout and voter decision-making.

In short, our analysis of turnout/abstention patterns across seven elections suggests similar patterns from 1994 to 2002, despite large aggregate differences in turnout, the differential importance of each election for the functioning of the national political system, and fairly similar institutional contexts for all elections except the

presidential races. In the next section we analyze the evolution of the party system across different types of elections (parliamentary *versus* local and EP). Does it follow a similar developmental pattern?

The evolution of the party system across different types of elections

Portuguese democratic politics have been dominated by four parties (see Figure 2). The only major party not already introduced is the CDS-PP (*Centro Democrático Social-Partido Popular*). This is a right-wing party with some Christian democratic origins, but which has recently changed its ideological profile to a more populist stance following their 1991 electoral defeat and a change in leadership. It also added the label *Partido Popular* to its name.



Additionally, micro parties both from the left and from the right have persisted in Portuguese politics, and are displayed in Figure 2 under the labels of “others left” and “others right”. The two major parties (PS and PSD) have always controlled government, be it in a single party format (PS: 1976-77; 1995-2002; PSD: 1985-1995) or in coalition

(PS-CDS: 1977-1978; PSD-CDS-PPM¹⁶: 1979-83; PS-PSD: 1983-85; PSD-CDS-PP: 2002-present date) (see Table 7).^{17 / 18}

(Table 7, list of all elections and dates around here)

Between 1976 and 1985, governments were mainly of a coalition type and never ended their terms (see Table 7; see also Bruneau et al., 2001). The 1985 general election was a critical one¹⁹ that initiated a huge transformation of Portuguese electoral politics, eventually ending the above mentioned cabinet instability. A new party instigated by the former president Ramalho Eanes (1976-86), PRD: *Partido Renovador Democrático*²⁰, fought that election, achieved 17.9% of the vote and reduced the PS to 20.8%, its worst result ever in parliamentary elections. However, the Socialists began recovering slowly in the next election (1987) and the PRD declined to about 5%, practically disappearing in the next election (1991).

The 1985 critical election is associated with five major features, some of which only began to reveal themselves in the 1987 realignment election.²¹ First, the enormous success of the new center-left party, the PRD, initiated a period marked by elections

¹⁶ PPM, *Partido Popular Monárquico*, is a micro right wing that advocates a monarchic regime.

¹⁷ Only in 1979 and 1980 was there a pre electoral coalition: AD, *Aliança Democrática*, which joined PSD, CDS and PPM in a single slate, except in the two islands of Azores and Madeira, where each of the three parties ran by its own. However, in order to trace the evolution of each one of the four major parties, and to compare the performance of large and medium/small size parties across different types of elections, we decomposed the votes in the coalition according to the following rules. First, we calculated the average vote percentage of each party (PSD, CDS, and PPM) in the elections before (1976) and after (1983) the coalition period. Second, we summed these three averages and determined the proportion of this total vote for each party of the coalition. Third, we used this proportion to determine the vote percentage of each party in 1979 and 1980, by multiplying the above mentioned proportion by the coalition's total vote in each election.

¹⁸ A similar procedure as the one described in the previous note was used in local elections – there were no relevant coalitions in EP elections. However, since in local elections coalitions have never included the entire country or something near, we could define the relative strength of each party in each election and then apply that information to estimate the part of the coalitions' vote percentages that belong to each coalition's partner.

¹⁹ We use Campbell et al's (1960) definition of a critical election. For more on this topic, see Freire (2003).

²⁰ The PRD's ideological profile is not easy to classify. However, the party intended to place itself in between the PS and PSD and most students of Portuguese politics place it in the center-left of the political spectrum.

²¹ Here too we use Campbell et al's (1960) definition of a realignment election.

with large electoral volatility.²² Second, the latter phenomena was the major antecedent of the realignment that occurred in the 1987 election and which gave the PSD a majority of the votes and seats in Parliament, a feat that was repeated in 1991. Third, the 1985 election marked the beginning of the decline of the vote in the Communist Party (PCP), which continues today. Fourth, the 1985 election also marked the beginning of the decline of the CDS' vote, which never recovered to its best results of the 1970s (1976) or 1980s (1983), in spite of some recovery from 1995 onwards. Last but not least, the 1985 election was the major antecedent to the most fundamental developmental pattern in Portuguese legislative elections to have taken place since the 1987 realignment: a concentration of the vote in the two major parties. From 1975 to 1985 the sum of the vote percentages in the two major parties (PS and PSD) was only twice slightly above 60%, but since the 1987 election onwards, the latter figure was always above 70%, and usually well above (see Figure 2).

The latter phenomenon fundamentally altered the Portuguese party system in legislative elections in a majoritarian direction (see Bruneau et al, 2001 and Freire, 2003) and had three major consequences. First, it ended a period of unstable cabinets-- from 1987 onwards all governments except one (PS: 1999-2002) finished their terms. Second, the 1987 election began a trend towards a two-party system in Portuguese politics, or 'bipolarization'. Third, since 1987 the changes in government control (1987, 1995, and 2002) have been marked by large inter bloc volatility (Freire, 2003; Gunther and Montero, 2001).

Following theories on second-order elections (Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Reif, 1985b; Anderson and Ward, 1997; Marsh, 1998; Oppenhuis, Eijk and Franklin, 1996;

²² For a comparative perspective on Portuguese levels of electoral volatility see Gunther and Montero (2001).

Eijk, Franklin and Oppenhuis, 1996), the first thing we want to know is if small (“others left” and “others right”) and medium size (PCP and CDS) parties have always performed better in Portuguese second-order elections (local and EP) than in first-order ones (legislative). The second question is whether the trend towards bipolarization in first-order elections is also present in second-order elections.

(Table 8 around here, Political Parties’ Average Vote Percentages by Decade in First-Order and Second-Order Elections)

Looking at Table 8 we can clearly see that the two largest parties (PS and PSD) almost always performed better in first-order elections than in second-order ones. The only exception is in the 1980s, when the average vote percentage of the two major parties was smaller in legislative elections than in local elections. This exception is due to the fact that the new party, PRD, was not as successful in local elections, and at the national level the success of this party was at the cost of the PS’ share. So, large parties seem to perform slightly better in first-order elections, as expected. On the one hand, the difference is not very impressive, especially if we take into account local *versus* legislative elections. For the whole period (1975-2002) the two largest parties averaged 69.2% of the vote for parliamentary elections; 68.1% for local and 65.9% for EP elections. But, on the other hand, the electoral system in EP elections and especially in local elections works in favor of the large parties, so the above mentioned differences actually become more significant.

Medium (PCP and CDS) and small parties generally performed better in Portuguese second-order elections (see Table 8). Again, differences in vote percentages are not particularly impressive, but keeping in mind the differences in electoral systems

lends them greater importance.²³ These differences are probably due to the electoral systems associated with each type of second-order election (average district magnitude is much lower in local elections than in EP contests, so the latter are less unfair to tiny parties), but also to the differences in the resources (human, financial and organizational) needed to fight local and EP elections. Many more resources are needed for contesting local elections (308 constituencies) than in EP elections (one constituency), and this works against smaller parties.²⁴

(Figure 3, Effective Number of Parties & Candidates in Portuguese Elections, 1975-2002 around here)

So, in terms of the performance of different types of Portuguese political parties, theories about first and second-order elections do seem to receive empirical support. But did the developments in the party system that occurred for legislative elections also take place in second-order elections (local and EP)? In Figure 3 we display the trends in the effective number of electoral parties (parliamentary, local and EP elections) and candidates (presidential elections) in Portuguese democratic elections. The “effective number of parties and candidates” measure is taken from Laakso and Taagepera (1979), and elaborated using our own Portuguese electoral data.

Let us begin by saying that we included presidential elections here only to show that these type of elections stands apart from the others. First, presidential elections were sometimes not fought under a left-right alignment of the candidates. In the first

²³ In fact, we tested for statistical significance (t-test for paired samples) and the differences only revealed significant in two cases. First, for the comparison between medium size parties’ vote in legislative and local elections ($p = 0,011$). Second, for the comparison between small parties’ vote in legislative and local elections ($p = 0,016$). However, in the latter case the relation is not in the expected direction, as we will mention below.

²⁴ The PRD stands apart as special case. In legislative elections, although it was a medium size party in 1985, it soon became a small party in 1987, and then disappeared from 1991 onwards. Second-order elections after 1985 only took place when the party was already in decline (EP: 1987 and 1989; local: 1989) and so the party never succeeded there as it did in the first-order contests of 1985. Plus, as a new party it lacked a strong organizational structure, which is especially needed in local elections.

years of Portugal's democratic transition, the presidency was used to integrate the military into the new regime-- it was in 1986 that a civilian became head of state. Plus, in 1976 all the so-called democratic parties, i.e. those that were clearly in favor of the liberal democratic model (PS, PSD and CDS), supported the winner, Ramalho Eanes. In 1991, the PSD was at risk of losing the presidential contest, so the party decided to support the leftwing candidate (Mário Soares) and the competition lost all its potential for ideological cleavage. Second, the electoral system clearly stands apart from those used in the other elections. Because of this it is no surprise that the effective number of candidates in presidential elections is usually much lower than the effective number of parties in the other types of elections, except in the highly polarized and competitive 1986 presidential election.²⁵ Also, there is no similar development between the effective number of candidates in presidential elections and the effective number of parties in all the other elections (see Figure 3).

Nevertheless, comparing first-order (legislative) with second-order (local and EP) elections in terms of the trends in the effective number of parties, we can see that there is a clear synchronicity. In all the three types of elections there is a majoritarian drive, with the reduction in the effective number of parties (see Figure 3). Furthermore, just as we found for aggregate turnout figures, we can see that second-order elections are losing their distinctive character vis-à-vis the first-order ones. In all the elections between 1999 and 2002, the effective number of parties in all three types of elections shows hardly any differences. Whether this is an indicator of a new era in Portuguese politics is unclear. Still, there seems to be some contamination from the first-order elections towards the second-order ones, a feature not predicted by second-order

²⁵ About Portuguese presidential elections between 1976 and 2001, see Freire, 2001.

elections theory. For us, this might mean that first-order elections are more important, in terms of financial state resources, mass media visibility and organizational structure. So if some parties lose their weight at the national level, this will tend to contaminate other levels of power (local and European). Plus, in a political system dominated by four major parties like the Portuguese, when the above mentioned phenomena arrives to two of the four major parties, such decline translates into a reduction in the number of effective electoral parties.

Levels of electoral volatility and social and ideological anchors of partisanship across different types of elections

In this section we will test if electors are more likely to change their vote options in elections with less importance (local and European) than in the most important ones (parliamentary). This hypothesis will be tested both with aggregate and individual level data.

At the aggregate level, we will use the concepts of total and inter bloc electoral volatility (Bartolini and Mair, 1990: 17-52 and 313-314). Considering that second-order elections might be used by voters to express their discontent to the government in place, and considering that these elections have no direct consequences for national government formation, it is possible that voters feel more free to change their vote options in second-order elections than in first-order ones. We expect that this might happen both in terms of vote swings within the same ideological quadrant (within bloc volatility) and between the left-right boundary (inter bloc volatility).²⁶

²⁶ The sum of within and inter bloc volatility gives us total volatility (Bartolini and Mair, 1990: 23).

Let us begin by presenting the operational definitions. First, total electoral volatility (TV) can be expressed as:

$$TV = (|P_iV| + |P_jV| + |P_kV| + |P_lV| \dots + |P_nV|) / 2$$

where P_iV represents the change – in *absolute* terms – in the aggregate vote for party i between two consecutive elections.²⁷

Note that P_iV to P_nV represents all parties competing and receiving votes in at least one of the two consecutive elections. Following Bartolini and Mair (1990: 20), we measured each party vote as a percentage of the total valid vote. The index is divided by two “on the assumption that accumulated net gains are equal to accumulated net losses” and also to make the index’s interpretation more intuitive: as it is it ranges from 0 to 100, instead of from 0 to 200 if it were not divided by 2.

Bartolini and Mair have already discussed in detail some of the methodological issues involved with the creation of this and other volatility indices (1990: 20-22), but we can summarize by saying that such indices can only be considered very crude measures of electoral change. First, because we can have a large amount of voting shifts that cancel each other out at the individual level and so are not detected by the aggregate measures. Second, because even completely stable elections at the individual level can be associated with aggregate electoral volatility because problems of abstention and electoral turnover.

In any case, let us move on to the inter bloc volatility (BV) formula, which can be expressed as:

$$BV = (|P(iV + jV + kV)| + |P(lV + mV + nV)|) / 2$$

²⁷ Bartolini and Mair, 1990: 20, italicized as in the original. The original formula is actually from Przeworski, 1975: 53.

Where $P(iV + jV + kV)$ represents the *net* change - in *absolute* terms – in the aggregate vote for parties *i*, *j*, and *k*, all of which come from the same bloc, between two consecutive elections.²⁸

The constitutive logic of the measure is the same as for TV, only now it is applied to blocs of parties and not to parties taken individually (Bartolini and Mair, 1990: 22).

We applied the BV formula to measure electoral shifts between the left and right blocs of Portuguese parties²⁹ in two consecutive elections -see the list of left and right parties in the Appendix. Since this political cleavage is linked both to the class and religious cleavage in Portugal, BV can also be taken as a measure of change across both class and religious cleavage boundaries.

(Figure 4. Total Volatility in Different Types of Elections around here)

(Figure 5: Inter-bloc Volatility in Different Types of Elections around here)

We can see in Figures 4 and 5 that neither hypothesis receive empirical support with aggregate level indicators. Total Volatility (TV) is usually larger in legislative elections than in both local and EP elections, sometimes very much larger (1985, 1987 and 1995) – Figure 4. The only minor exceptions are the 1980 and the 1999 legislative elections where TV is practically *ex aequo* in legislative and local elections (1980); or much lower in legislative than in EP elections (1999). As for inter bloc volatility (BV), Figure 5, we can say that the findings are also negative, although here the picture is a bit more mixed. The legislative elections of 1987 and 1995 had levels of BV much higher than those ever found in Local and EP during the whole democratic period. Plus, except in 1980, 1985 and 1999, legislative elections always displayed higher levels of BV than local elections – only three in ten cases. In the case of EP elections, the picture is more mixed. The 1989 and 1999 EP elections showed greater BV than the 1991 and 1999

²⁸ Bartolini and Mair, 1990: 22, italics as in the original.

²⁹ As is the case with Bartolini and Mair, 1990: see especially 22-47 and 313-314.

legislative elections, but if we compare the former EP elections with the 1987 and 1995 parliamentary contests, the picture is completely reversed.

How should we interpret these mainly negative findings? We believe that two major kinds of explanations are possible and these are not necessarily contradictory. The first one is more theoretical. Voters may use second-order elections to express their discontent with the national government in place, but this type of behavior includes only small segments of the electorate. The others segments of the electorate usually vote sincerely in second-order elections, i.e., for those parties they prefer the most without any tactical and/or protestative considerations.³⁰ On the contrary, tactical considerations may be much greater in first-order elections among larger parts of the electorate, and so the result is usually higher volatility in first-order elections.

The second type of explanation is methodological. Aggregate volatility is only a very crude measure of electoral change, in that it may sometimes represent very understated values for shifts in individual-level political preferences. As we said before, if there are many vote shifts that cancel each other out – for example, an equal share of the electorate moving from left to right and from right to left. This volatility is not revealed by the aggregate measure of inter bloc volatility, and this is probably the case in local elections, where many vote shifts from left to right and vice versa are canceling each other out.

Because of the limitations in aggregate measures of volatility, the best way of estimating electoral change is with individual level data and panel designs (Heath et al, 1991: 10-31). In Portugal, we had no National Election Study until very recently (2002 legislative elections), and even for these elections no panel design was used. Panel

³⁰ About the “sincere vote” in second-order elections, see Eijk and Franklin, 1996b; Eijk, Franklin, and Oppenhuis, 1996; Oppenhuis, Eijk, and Franklin, 1996

surveys have always been scarce in Portugal, but so have academic surveys on electoral behavior. However, using Eurobarometer data from the 1989 (EB 31.1) and 1994 (EB 41.1) European Election Studies³¹, and from the 2002 Portuguese NES survey, we can compare the relative anchors of partisanship across different types of elections. What we want to see is if the social and ideological anchors of partisanship are weaker in second-order elections than in first-order ones, thus indicating a greater probability of vote shifts between left and right in second-order elections.

(Table 9: Ideology, cleavages and the vote in local, 2001, and legislative elections, 2002 – OLS regressions around here)

Table 9 clearly indicates that the social and ideological determinants of the vote have a stronger impact in first-order elections than in second-order ones-- adjusted R^2 is 0.299 and 0.419 respectively for local and parliamentary elections. This result is all the more relevant if we keep in mind that both aggregate measures of volatility revealed that the 2002 Legislative elections were more volatile than the 2001 local elections (see Figures 4 and 5). But we know from prior studies (Campbell, 1966, 1987, and 1993; Eijk and Franklin, 1996c) that one of the major determinants of the different outcomes in first and second-order elections is turnout. Thus, the differences in the relative strength in the anchors of partisanship across elections might be due to differential turnout; those participating in second-order elections might be more sophisticated voters³² and their behavior might be less determined by cleavages and ideology. So, we re-ran the regression equation for the legislative elections including only those respondents who voted in both 2002 and 2001. The result clearly strengthens the

³¹ See Eijk and Franklin, 1996, for details on the European Election Studies of 1989 and 1994.

³² Of course, the term sophistication is used loosely here. We could just as easily say fickle. Voters who demonstrate consistent ideological positions and party loyalties that correspond to a predictable sociological position may be just as (if not more) sophisticated as voters who shift back and forth between parties.

argument (adjusted $R^2 = 0.415$). Ideological and social anchors of partisanship are more important in first-order elections.

(Table 10: Ideology, cleavages and the vote in European Parliament, 1989 e 1994, and legislative elections, 1987 and 1991 – OLS regressions around here)

Comparing the vote in legislative (1987 and 1991) and European (1989 and 1994) elections using the Eurobarometer data³³, we can see again that the social and ideological anchors of partisanship are always more important in first-order elections than in second-order ones--adjusted R^2 are 0.552 and 0.423 *versus* 0.504 and 0.381, respectively (Table 10). These differences are less dramatic than those found in Table 9, but they are very important because the 1987 election was a highly volatile one, both in terms of TV and BV, and most of all the aggregated measures revealed much higher values for the legislative than for EP elections. However, we re-ran the regression equations for legislative elections including only those who voted in both elections. The evidence shows that the picture stayed the same in the 1987 (0.554), but not in the 1991 election (0.381), which now is about equal with the 1994 EP election. So, only in the latter case do the differences in the strength of the anchors of partisanship seem to be due to differential turnout.

Thus, despite our analysis of only a limited set of elections, our individual level evidence suggests that we may conclude that people are more prone to change their vote across party blocs in second-order elections than in first-order ones. However, sometimes these differences between first-order and second-order elections might be due to differential turnout; and those who participate in second-order elections are, at least on some occasions, voters with less social and ideological anchors. On the other

³³ Both Eurobarometers include recall questions about past vote in EP (1994 and 1989) and legislative elections (1991 and 1987), which we used. Unfortunately, we could not find a question about party choice in the 1999 EP elections in Eurobarometer 52.0. So we restricted our analysis to 1989 and 1994.

hand, differences between aggregate and individual measures (or proxy measures) of volatility are mostly due to the methodological limitations of the former.

Electoral cycles and different types of elections

The hypothesis to be tested in this section is if second-order (local and European) elections have a singular character or if they are used by electors as a way to express content or discontent with national government (Tufte, 1975; Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Reif, 1985a and 1985b; Anderson and Ward, 1997; Shugart and Carey, 1992; Shugart, 1995; Oppenhuis, Eijk and Franklin, 1996; Eijk, Franklin and Oppenhuis, 1996; Marsh, 1998). We will do this by comparing aggregate electoral results across parliamentary, local and European elections in different periods of the electoral cycle, using as the baseline the winners in each previous (or concurrent) parliamentary election (Table 11).

Before proceeding with the analysis three major issues must be clarified. First, how to measure the dependent variable? Our dependent variable is the shift in the vote percentage for the party (or parties) that control the national government between the prior first-order elections (legislative) and the subsequent (or concurrent) second-order election (local or European) (a similar strategy as those used by Marsh, 1998; Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Reif, 1985a and 1985b; for a different approach in the US context, see Tufte, 1975).

Second, we have to decide how to define and classify the different parts of the electoral cycle. The notion of electoral cycle is related to the idea that during any national government's existence there are popularity cycles with differential political consequences depending on the time elapsed between the first-order and the second-order elections (Marsh, 1998; Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Reif, 1985a and 1985b; Tufte,

1975; Anderson and Ward, 1997; Eijk, Franklin, Oppenhuis, 1996; Oppenhuis, Eijk, and Franklin, 1996). Some authors use continuous measures for the electoral cycle variable (for example Marsh, 1998). Since we have very few cases, we used a discrete variable with three categories: the “honeymoon” period, i.e., until twelve months after the prior legislative election ; the “midterm” period, i.e., from thirteen to thirty six months after the prior legislative election; the “later term” period, i.e., from thirty seven to forty eight months after the prior legislative election. Note that in Portugal normal national government terms are four years (forty eight months), except if for any (special) reason the president calls for early elections (see Freire, 2001).

The third major issue to be solved before moving on to empirical tests is the one on the expected political consequences for national governments in second-order elections that take place during different phases of the national electoral cycle, in terms of citizens’ electoral behavior. For the “midterm” period there is a large consensus in the literature, with most of the authors considering that governmental parties will tend to lose vote share in second-order elections (Marsh, 1998; Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Reif, 1985a and 1985b; Tufte, 1975; Anderson and Ward, 1997; Eijk, Franklin, Oppenhuis, 1996; Oppenhuis, Eijk, and Franklin, 1996). In terms of the honeymoon period (sometimes concurrent elections), some defend that national governments will receive greater or near identical support in second-order elections as they did in prior first-order ones (Marsh, 1998; Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Reif, 1985a and 1985b; Tufte, 1975; Shugart and Carey, 1992; Shugart, 1995). Others defend that since second-order elections that take place during the honeymoon period have hardly any consequences for national governments, voters will tend to cast “sincere votes” (Eijk, Franklin, Oppenhuis, 1996; Oppenhuis, Eijk, and Franklin, 1996). Therefore, larger parties in

government and opposition will tend to lose vote share to smaller parties in multiparty systems. Finally, the later term period is for some authors a period of a certain recovery in national government popularity, and so parties controlling national cabinets will tend to lose less votes than in midterm elections (Reif and Schmitt, 1980; Reif, 1985a and 1985b). However, others defend that since second-order elections tend to better fulfill their function as markers of public opinion support for government the closer they fall to the next first-order election (later term), voters will tend to cast more “protest votes” in those periods (Eijk, Franklin, Oppenhuis, 1996; Oppenhuis, Eijk, and Franklin, 1996). Therefore, according to these authors, parties in control of government will also tend to lose votes in second-order elections if they take place in the later term of the national cycle.

Table 11: Electoral Cycles in democratic Portugal, 1976-2001: change in national government vote support in second order elections, and popularity trends

Setting aside the honeymoon periods, we can see that the party (or parties) controlling national government always lose electoral support (in terms of share of the vote) from the first-order elections to the subsequent second-order ones (Table 11). From the late eighties through the mid nineties these losses have always been very high, greater than 15 percentage points. Later term losses are always higher than midterm losses, as expected. However, since we have only one case for second-order elections in the later term, it is not possible to derive any conclusions from these data. The same is true for the honeymoon period, where we have only three cases, so here too it is not possible to derive any conclusions. From the few cases we do have in the honeymoon period, a kind of “bandwagon effect” seems to be in place for 1979 and 1985, but in the other election (1987) the “sincere vote effect” seems to be in place.

Does the decline in a government's popularity correlate with the decline in vote share in the second-order elections? Both in midterm and later term elections governments always lost popularity ("trend 1" and "trend 2") (Table 5).³⁴ However, when we correlated the government's lost vote share in second-order contests with the decline in popularity over time ("trend 1" and "trend 2"), correlations (Pearson r) were very near to zero and never significant in statistical terms. From these data we might conclude that declines in popularity do not seem to explain a government's performance in second-order elections—a counterintuitive conclusion to say the least! But can we say that there is no link between a national governments' popularity and their losses in second-order elections? Instead of using declines in the governments' popularity over time we used a static measure following Tufte's (1975) approach— a national government's level of popularity in the month of the second-order election (see notes in Table 11). As we might suspect with so few cases to analyze, the correlation between this measure and electoral performance is not statistically significant, but its value is now much more relevant (0.268). Plus, if we exclude the 2001 outlier, the correlation is 0.894 and statistically significant for a 2 or 3% margin of error ($p = 0.016$). So, now we can empirically support what seems to be a common sense conclusion, that a national government's popularity does explain changes in support from first-order to second-order elections; such that the higher the government's popularity is during the month of the second-order elections, the lower their losses in those elections. Of course, losses in national government support in second-order elections are also dependent on national

³⁴ Note that we only have survey data on governments' popularity from 1986 to 2001 (see Sources in Table 5). *Popularity trend 1* represents the difference between the average national government's popularity in the six months before the second order election, and their average popularity in the period 12 to 7 months before the second order election.

Popularity trend 2 represents the difference between the average national government's popularity in the six months before the second order election, and their popularity in the first six months after the prior first order election, with the election month included.

economic conditions. For example, the greater the annual growth in inflation (-0.253) or unemployment (-0.239), the greater the losses; the greater the annual growth in GDP (0.263) or household final consumption expenditure (0.400), the lower the losses.³⁵ All these data clearly indicates that the outcomes in second-order elections are, at least partially, affected by national factors.

Conclusions

We have argued that a comparison of first and second-order elections in one country over time presents a number of methodological advantages, insofar as it serves as something of test case for the literature. Since Portugal uses very similar electoral systems in the different types of elections (except for the presidential ones), we can analyze turnout and voting behavior trends while controlling for other institutional, cultural, social and political factors that can make cross-national comparisons somewhat more difficult. While our choice of case is also perhaps not ideal due to the limited number of data points in certain analyses, as well as the general scarcity of voter survey data before the 1990s, it nevertheless provides an interesting test for many of the theoretical claims made in the literature on second-order elections.

Our results for abstention/turnout generally confirm those found in cross-national studies. That is, abstention rates are almost always higher in second-order elections, and very much higher in EP elections. Similarly, our analyses of seven different first and second-order elections also supported the literature suggesting that the abstention profile remains similar across elections, despite the wide variation in turnout. However, our third major finding for turnout offered a somewhat muddy conclusion compared to the cross-national studies. Whereas others have found little relationship

³⁵ None of these correlations are statistically significant, but here again we remind the reader that we have only a few cases. Available economic indicators for midterm and later term periods go only from 1989 through 1997--five cases. Economic data is from the UN World Development Indicators, cd-rom.

between attitudes to Europe and effects on turnout in EP elections (Schmitt & Mannheimer, 1992; Marsh & Franklin, 1996), our multivariate models of EP abstention in 1989, 1994 and 1999 were clearly improved in 1989 and 1999 by adding attitudinal variables toward the EU and its institutions, even when controlling for the impact of socio-demographic and behavioral predictors. The same was true in our analyses of turnout in the other elections, both first and second-order. Thus, the political attitudes of Portuguese voters are clearly still relevant for explaining turnout, no matter how (un)important the elections are for the functioning of the political system, and this finding remained relatively stable from 1989 to 2002.

In terms of voting choices, we have several conclusions. First, as expected from theories of second-order elections, small and medium-sized parties perform better in second-order elections than in first-order ones. However, the latter finding is only partially true, since differences in electoral systems (average district magnitude) and resources can explain why small parties perform better in European than in national legislative elections, but not in local ones. Medium-sized parties perform better in all second-order elections, but the differences are larger when we compare local and legislative elections. Nevertheless, the differences between parties' performance in different types of elections are not very impressive. We believe that these relatively minor differences are at least partly due to the institutional contingencies discussed above (average district magnitude differences and resource requirements). In any case we believe that these issues are worth a closer look with comparative case designs.

Portugal shows up as a very interesting case because in the long run there is a mirroring of the changes going on in the party system in first-order and second-order elections. Since 1987, there is a majoritarian drive in legislative elections, such that the

party system exhibits a clear trend towards greater bipolarization. Despite a slight time lag, the same trend is present in second-order contests. One outcome of this trend towards bipolarization in both first-order and second-order elections is that it erodes the specificities of second-order elections (better performance of small and medium-sized parties). Is this phenomenon also taking place in other multiparty democracies? We believe that this is a line of inquiry worthy of further study.

Our other findings about electoral change in first-order and second-order elections resulted in rather mixed findings. At the aggregate level, electoral volatility (TV or BV) was almost always greater in first-order than in second-order elections, contrary to our expectations. However, individual level data revealed that voters are more prone to cross the left-right boundary in second-order elections than in first-order ones, as expected, although this is sometimes due to differential turnout. Those who participate in both elections are often voters whose vote choices are less determined by cleavages and ideology. We concluded that the differences found between the aggregate and the individual level were probably due to the limitations in the aggregate measures of volatility. However, since we did not have many surveys to test these questions, we believe that it is line of inquiry worthy of pursuing further, namely with different types of second-order elections (local, European, etc.) as we did.

In Portugal, as elsewhere, second-order elections are used by voters to express their discontent with national governments. Furthermore, losses in national governments' electoral support between first and second-order elections are dependent not only on a governments' popularity, but also on national economic conditions. However, the causal model at work here is complex and the number of cases in

Portuguese democratic history is very limited. More work on economic and retrospective voting in second-order elections is needed.

Portuguese electoral data revealed that the influence of national factors in second-order elections is not only evident in the short term but also in the long term—i.e. in terms of changes in the party system. Also, the increasing similarity between first and second-order elections, both in terms of aggregate turnout and party system developments, means that the second-order elections model is losing some of its heuristic value in Portugal.

However, this does not mean that local and supranational factors are not also important in local and EP elections, respectively, but that national factors have an important, persistent and structural weight in second-order elections.

Appendix. Predictors of Abstention Across Different Portuguese Elections, 1989-2002: Summary Results of Logistic Regressions

Signif Predictors		Parl 1999	Parl 2002	Pres 2001	Local 2001	EP 1999	EP 1994	EP 1989
	Direction	Signif (Wald)	Signif (Wald)	Signif (Wald)	Signif (Wald)	Signif (Wald)	Signif (Wald)	Signif (Wald)
Age	negative	.006 (7.6)	.000 (23.8)	.000 (29.6)	.001 (11.4)	.000 (26.5)	n.s.	.004 (8.1)
Church Attendance	negative		.000 (15.2)		n.s.		.009 (6.8)	.06 (3.6)
Education	negative	n.s.	.01 (6.6)	n.s.	n.s.	.027 (7.2)	n.s.	n.s.
Sex (men)	positive	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.01 (6.6)	n.s.	n.s.
Income	negative	n.s.	n.s.	.072 (3.2)	n.s.	n.s.	.006 (7.7)	.07 (3.3)
Party Sympathizer	negative	.000 (22.0)	.000 (12.6)	.000 (22.9)	.002 (9.3)		.000 (31.9)	.000 (14.2)
Interest in Politics	negative	.004 (8.1)	.000 (29.1)	.000 (19.1)	.000 (20.5)	.096 (4.7)	.031 (4.6)	.000 (17.8)
Institut. Confidence (higher)	negative	.001 (10.3)	n.s.	.001 (17.4)	n.s.			
Knowledge of EU	negative					.002 (9.6)	n/a	
Country benefited	negative					.004 (8.5)	n.s.	.05 (3.8)
Importance of EP	negative					.022 (9.6)	n.s.	n.s.
N (valid)		737	1303 (951)	1016	1303 (943)	1010 (590)	1002 (408)	1000 (497)
# missing cases		?	352	?	360	420	594	503
Cox & Snell R ²		.18	.20	.17	.16	.16	.15	.17

Figure 1. Abstention Rates by Type of Election in Portugal (1975-2002)
Color chart

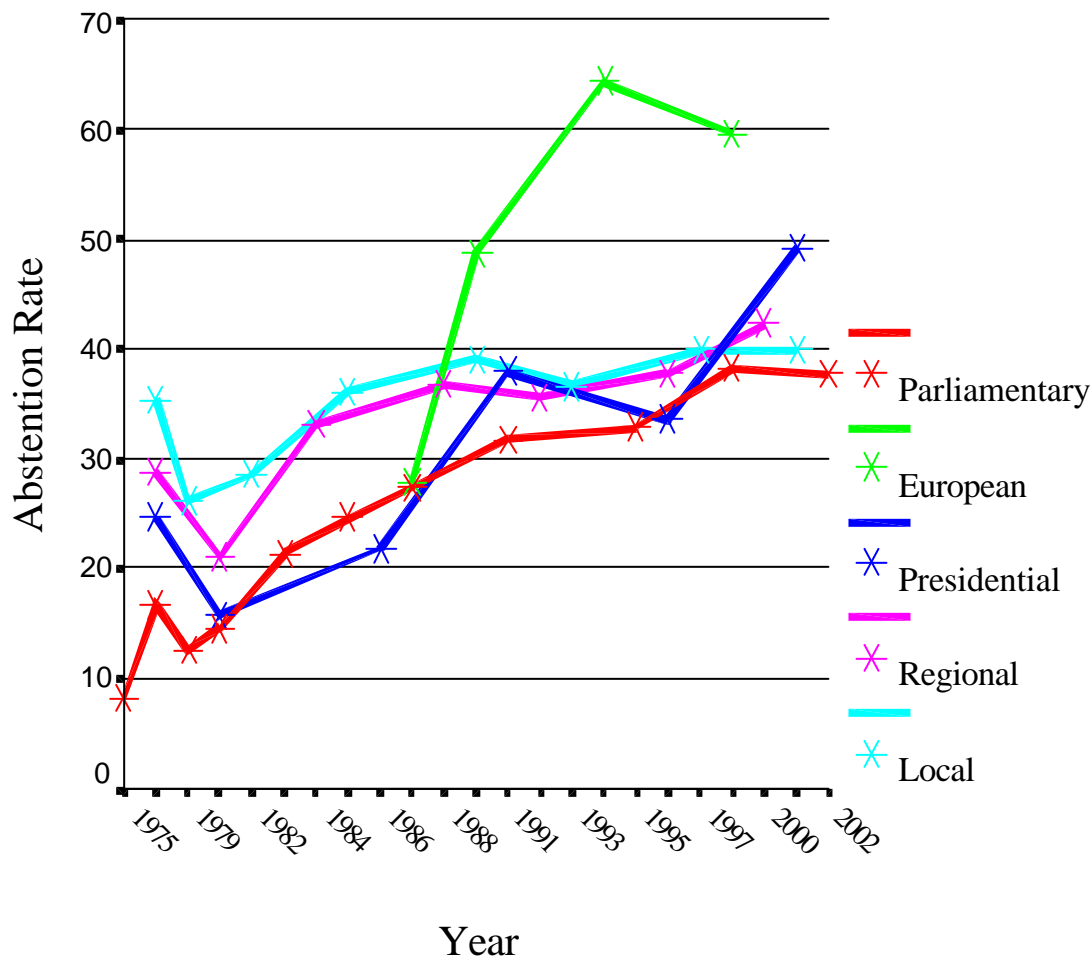


Table 1. Individual Determinants for Abstention in Parliamentary (1999) and Presidential Elections (2001)
Operationalization of Concepts

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Operationalization</i>
<i>Interest in politics</i>	<i>Scale: 0 (none) to 3 (a lot)</i>
<i>Identification/Sympathy for a political party</i>	<i>0 (doesn't sympathize) and 1 (sympathizes)</i>
<i>Confidence in Elected/Judicial Institutions</i>	<i>Average response, Scale 0 (none) to 3 (a great deal)</i>
<i>Sex</i>	<i>0 (men) and 1 (women)</i>
<i>Age</i>	<i>0 (18-24), 1 (25-34), 2 (35-44), 3 (45-54), 4 (55-64), 5 (+65)</i>
<i>Education</i>	<i>0 (less than primary), 1 (primary), 2 (secondary incomplete), 3 (secondary complete), 4 (university or more)</i>
<i>Work status</i>	<i>0 (Inactive) & 1 (Active)</i>
<i>Habitat</i>	<i>0 (Rural) & 1 (Urban)</i>

Source: CESOP, Barómetros May 2000 and April 2001

Table 2. Logistic Regression Modelling Abstention in Parliamentary (1999) and Presidential Elections (2001)

Independent Variables	Parliamentary Elections 1999			Presidential Elections 2001		
	B	Wald	Signif.	B	Wald	Signif.
Using Demographic Predictors						
Habitat	-.36	2.2	.137	-.09	.28	.594
Age	-.21	7.6	.006	-.33	29.7	.000
Education	.1	.78	.378	-.01	.01	.908
Sex	.17	.59	.444	-.01	.01	.966
Work Status	.1	.18	.674	-.1	.3	.581
Income	-.23	3.0	.083	-.2	3.2	.072
Adding Attitudinal Variables						
Party Sympathizer	-.99	22.0	.000	-.74	18.9	.000
Interest in Pols	-.41	8.1	.004	-.50	19.1	.000
Instit. Confidence	-.49	10.3	.001	-.37	17.4	.001
Pseudo R ²			.18	.17		
No Responses			14.3%	2.2%		
Declared Abstention			16.9%	24.2%		
Valid N			737	1016		

Notes: dependent variable is voted (1), declared abstention (2). Data analysis from Freire & Magalhães (2001: 147-148).

Table 3. Individual Determinants for Abstention in Local Elections (2001) and Parliamentary Elections (2002)

Operationalization of Concepts

Variables	Operationalization
<i>Dependent:</i> Abstention	Voted (0); Abstained (1)
<i>Explanatory:</i> Occupation	2(manual), 3(routine non-man), 4(profess); reference category is 2, manual
Age	Actual age (18-80)
Sex	1(men) 2(women); women are reference category
Education Level	0(<primary), 1(primary), 2(secondary incom.), 3(secondary), 4 (>secondary)
Habitat	0(rural), 1(urban>10,000); 0 is reference category
Household Income	Scale: 1-5, 5= approx. 2500 Euros/month or more
Freq. Church Attendance	1 (never)- 6(once/week or more)
Freq. Discuss Politics	1(frequently), 2(occasionally), 3(never); 3 is reference category
Member of at least 1 association (trade, professional, agrarian, or business)	1(member), 2(no memberships); 2 is reference category
Sympathy for a pol. party	1(yes), 2(no); 2 is reference category
Interest in Politics	1(a lot), 2(good deal), 3(a little), 4(none); 4 is reference category

Confidence in Elected/Judicial Institutions Avg. for 4 instits (scale, 1.0=none; 4.0 maximum)
Source: ICS Survey 2002.

Table 4. Logistic Regression Modelling Abstention in Local Elections (2001) and Parliamentary Elections (2002)

Independent Variables	Local Elections 2001			Parliamentary Elections 2002		
	B	Wald	Signif.	B	Wald	Signif.
Using Demographic Predictors						
Habitat	.12	--	.634	-.01	--	.953
	-.04	11.4	.001	-.05	23.8	.000
Age						
Education	-.27	2.5	.764	-.42	6.6	.01
Sex (men)	.21	1.2	.267	-.24	1.0	.332
Occupation		5.0	.083		--	.885
Routine non-man	-.69	4.7	.031	-.03	--	.952
Professional	-.06	--	.912	-.26	--	.365
Income	-.16	--	.336	-.12	--	.453
% of abstention predicted correctly			81.5			76.8
Adding Resource Variables						
Church Attendance	-.13	2.7	.1	-.23	15.2	.000
Discuss Pols		1.5	.468		2.6	.273
Frequently	-.66	1.2	.283	-.022	--	.957
Occasionally	-.27	.9	.355	-.335	2.2	.135
Assoc. Member	.22	--	.492	-.37	1.3	.246
% of abstention predicted correctly			82.0			78.6
Adding Attitudinal Variables						
Party Sympathizer	-.83	9.3	.002	-.83	12.6	.000
		20.5	.000		29.1	.000
Interest in Pols						
A lot	-2.6	6.0	.015	-3.2	8.8	.003
Good deal	-1.4	17.0	.000	-1.7	24.4	.000
A little	-1.0	11.0	.001	-1.3	16.6	.000
Instit. Confidence	-.25	1.3	.255	-.02	--	.94
Constant			3.56			3.508
Cox & Snell R ²			.15			.21
Declared Voters			75.8%			74.5%
Declared Abstention			21%			23.2%
Missing cases			710			705
Valid N			593			598
% of abst predicted correctly (total)			83.3%			81.1

Note: dependent variable is voted (0), declared abstention (1).

Table 5. Operationalization of Variables Used for Abstention Analysis in EP elections (1999 & 1994)

Variables	EB 52.0 (1999)	EB 41.1 (1994)	EB 31.1 (1989)
<i>Dependent:</i> Abstention	Voted (1), Didn't Vote (2)	V57 same code	
<i>Demographics:</i> Left-Right	Scale (1-10), 10 is right	V285 same code	
SP			
Age	Actual age (18-87)	D11 same code	
Sex	1(men) 2(women); women are reference category	D10 same	
Age at which stopped full-time Education	1 (<15 years), 2 (15-19 yrs), 3 (20+ years.); "still studying" coded as missing; reference category is <15 years	V324r same	
Cohabits- Lives w/ someone else	0 (no), 1 (yes); 0 is reference category	D7r= 0 (no); 1 (yes); 0 is reference	
Work status	0 (not working), 1 (working); 0 is reference category	Occupation V366, scale 1-6 (6= unemployed)	
Harmonized Income Scale	1 (--), 2 (-), 3(+), 4 (++); 1 is reference category	V352, same scale	
<i>Behavioral:</i> Discuss Politics	1 (freq), 2 (occasion), 3 (never); 3 is reference	--	
Pay attention to politics	1(a lot), 2(a little), 3 (none); 3 is reference category	V47 Interest in politics- scale 1-4 (4 none)	
Pay attn to EU	1(a lot), 2(a little), 3 (none); 3 is reference category	V48 Interest in EUaffairs- scale 1-4 (4 none)	
Frequency Church Attendance	--	Scale 1-5 (5 never)	
Trade Union membership	--	V320 0 (no) 1 (yes); 0 is reference category	
<i>Attitudinal:</i> Party Attachment	--	V299 scale 1-4 (4 close to no party)	
Knowledge about EU	Scale (1-10), 10 is "know a great deal"	--	
Satisfaction w/ democracy in EU?	--	Scale 1-4 (4= not at all)	
Country benefited w/ EU membership?	1 (benefited), 2 (not benefited); 2 is reference category	V51, 1 (benefit), 2 (not); 2 is reference category	
Importance of EP in EU life	1 (very), 2 (important), 3 (not very), 4 (not at all important); 4 is reference category	Power of EP - scale 1-10 (10= a great deal)	

Sources: Eurobarometer 52.0, October-November 1999 (ICPSR 2892). EB 41.1 June-July 1994 (ICPSR 6535).