Check for updates

The emotional consequences of negative personalist framing in the 2023 Spanish general election

Ismael Crespo-Martínez, Alberto Mora-Rodríguez and José Miguel Rojo-Martínez*

Political Communication Laboratory (LABCOM), Department of Political Science, Social Anthropology and Public Finance, University of Murcia, Murcia, Spain

Introduction: The purpose of this research is to analyse the effects of the emotional reactions caused by the negative personalist "repeal Sanchismo" frame on voting for the main party that supported this frame (Partido Popular—PP) and for the party whose leader it was attacking (Partido Socialista Obrero Español—PSOE). In addition, the aim is to determine how these emotional reactions impacted on feelings toward Alberto Núñez Feijóo (PP) and Pedro Sánchez (PSOE).

Methods: We used the dataset of the Third National Survey on Political Polarization in Spain, based on a representative sample of the Spanish population ($n = 1,223$). Binary logistic regression (BLR) and ordinary least squares (OLS) linear regression techniques were then applied.

Results: Fear and anger toward the "repeal Sanchismo" frame increased the likelihood of voting for the PSOE and the sympathy expressed toward Pedro Sánchez. Furthermore, the emotions linked to this frame revealed more behavioral and attitudinal consequences than those connected to the frame proposed by the left ("stop the reactionary wave"), which did not adopt a "negative personalization" focus.

Discussion: Personalization and polarization are two defining features of contemporary electoral campaigns that are also closely linked. The emotional reactions achieved by electoral strategies of negative personalist framing are more polarized and also more influential on voting behavior and political attitudes; however, they can lead to undesired effects of consolidating the adversary, which harm the interests of those that put them into practice.

KEYWORDS

framing effects, emotions, political communication, personalization, negative personalization, negative campaigning, elections

1 Introduction

Political leaders have become a major explanatory factor for voting behavior (Garzia, 2012; Costa and Ferreira da Silva, 2015). Their image, their popularity levels, their qualities and even their private lives constantly attract the media's attention, influence how public opinion is formed and are also crucial when defining election campaign strategies (McAllister, 2007; Crespo et al., 2011; Ohr and Oscarsson, 2011; Stanyer, 2013; Cervi, 2023). The candidates' physical attractiveness also seems to give them an electoral advantage even in non-preferential voting contexts (Janusz and Carrión-Yaguana, 2025).

The theory of the personalization of politics attempts to prove how in most democracies in the world—including those with a parliamentary system—individuals play a leading role in explaining political dynamics to the detriment of collectives, such as parties and social groups (Garzia, 2014). Personalist forms turn parties into secondary communication agents and lead to substantial changes in political projects based on each leadership phase. The leader is no longer a mere instrument, the conveyer of a message that transcends the individual. They now become the message and imprint the direction of their party's programme with their own style. Even in parliamentary democracies where the electorate votes for the party and not directly for a person, and the president cannot be elected directly either, a presidentialist shift is occurring in both the design of electoral campaigns and in the internal life of governments and parties (Mughan, 2000; Fabbrini and Bressanelli, 2015; Karvonen, 2010). The digitalization of political activity has helped these trends to grow (Villaplana and Fitzpatrick, 2024). "Candidate-centered politics" (Wattenberg, 1991) results in more irrational positions and encourages populism (Aaldering, 2018; Helboe Pedersen and Rahat, 2021). Some authors have even posited that when political information focuses on individuals, more affective polarization is created than when mentioning impersonal sources (Barber and Pope, 2019; Thijssen et al., 2024). To date, the literature on personalization has focused on the positive aspect of leadership; in other words, how leaders can attract voters when strong affective links with parties are lacking. However, leaders are also the main targets of attack campaigns (Nai, 2020), which can cause negative feelings that trigger mobilization processes due to rejection. In this article, based on the specific context of the Spanish general elections of July 2023, we will provide evidence of the results of a "negative personalism" (Crespo-Martínez et al., 2025) or "negative personalization" (Pruysers and Cross, 2016; Helboe Pedersen and Rahat, 2021; Ferreira da Silva et al., 2021) strategy to reflect on the new role political leaders play in highly polarized contexts.

First, we will place our case study in context. On 28 May 2023, autonomous community elections were held in most regions of Spain and there were also local elections. The results were negative for the left-wing parties (PSOE—Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats—and Sumar—GUE/NGL and The Greens) forming the national government at the time. The 2023 regional and local elections had a high level of nationalization, so their results inevitably challenged the Prime Minister, Pedro Sánchez. In fact, the opposition (PP –European People's Party– and Vox –Patriots for Europe–) strove to prove that this election was a prelude to a national shift in the political cycle, and they interpreted the results as a rejection of the prime minister and of the policies pursued by the progressive coalition since 2020.

Given the apparent wave of change on Spain's horizon, Prime Minister Sánchez made a risky decision: calling an early election. On the morning of 29 May, at his official residence, Moncloa Palace, he announced the dissolution of parliament and called snap elections for 23 July. During this appearance, Prime Minister Sánchez took personal responsibility for the results and admitted that the political scene needed to be clarified after the increase in opposition. The left was aware that the bad result of the regional and local elections was primarily due to a problem of mobilizing their political bases; now there was a window of opportunity

to reverse this trend (Jaráiz Gulías and García Maseda, 2024). During the first days of June, PP and Vox came to agreements to assume power in cities and regions of great political importance, such as the Autonomous Community of Valencia. In all these pacts, Vox would take on governmental responsibilities, thus removing any semblance of a *cordon sanitaire* that would prevent the radical right from assuming power in Spain. This enabled the PSOE and its partners to demonstrate that the possibility of Vox joining the Cabinet was not merely rhetorical or a case of communicative hyperbole.

That threat now seemed more certain than ever (no poll gave the PP the absolute majority on its own), and they tried to convey the consequences that this would have for several collectives.

The four main state parties were organized into two clear blocs that shared the same frame throughout the electoral campaign. This was certainly a novel scenario. The right (initially the PP and later Vox) proposed to "repeal Sanchismo," targeting all their criticism at Prime Minister Sánchez and the polemical legislative agenda that he had advocated for in previous years. These parties assumed that a large chunk of the population rejected Pedro Sánchez, including people that were not right-wing. They also took for granted that this rejection extended to his policies, although that was actually not so clear. Using the neologism "*sanchismo*," they denounced this hyperleadership that had distanced itself—they said—from the PSOE's traditional values, although they avoided criticizing the party itself, to attract moderate socialist voters unhappy with Sánchez's performance without making them feel they were betraying their partisan identity (reject Sanchismo, not socialism). Focusing on Pedro Sánchez as an individual as the epitome of a series of laws they considered negative for the country could be a more effective form of persuasion for voters than if they attacked an ideological or partisan category. The growing personalization of politics was exemplified through the inverse use of leadership, attempting to encourage voting against a party due to antipathy toward its leader, an *ad hominem* vote (Barragán-Romero et al., 2025). As the PP candidate, Alberto Núñez Feijóo, himself explained in an interview for Onda Cero on 6 June 2023, "repeal Sanchismo" involved reversing the rights of transgender people, the historical memory act, the climate change act and the assisted dying act.[1] These were the main focal points of attention forming the content of the frame. Days later, Feijóo confirmed in another interview that he intended to "to repeal acts inspired by minorities and that undermine majorities".[2] He agreed with Vox in generally questioning these acts, although from less intense positions. All these measures formed part of the cultural battle and, therefore, they could spark defensive reactions. Consequently, a seemingly personal attack campaign led to a questioning of public policies with a strong ideological and identity element. Furthermore, "repeal Sanchismo" was not a proactive frame; everything was centered on what the prime minister had done, on

---

1 Source: https://www.ondacero.es/programas/mas-de-uno/audios-podcast/entrevistas/carlos-alsina-entrevista-alberto-nunez-feijoo_20230606647ed32fa7fe8d0001d6d0a6.html.

2 Source: https://www.telecinco.es/elprogramadeanarosa/politica/20230601/alberto-nunez-feijoo-frases-entrevista-elecciones_18_09681459.html.

how his conflictive leadership style had resulted in a polarizing legislative agenda and on trying to cancel his transformation project. The campaign proposals of the opposing parties faded into the background. In many cases, the alternative that would be offered to repealing these regulations was not explained.

The left, on the other hand, interpreted the proposal to "repeal Sanchismo" as a step backwards in hard-won rights and incited fear of the far-right to awaken their potential voters from their lethargy. They transferred focus from the prime minister. This campaign narrative had already been used by the PSOE in many other Spanish general elections, such as 1993, 1996, 2008, and 2011. Both the PSOE and Sumar counter-programmed the opposition's frame with another great slogan: "stop the reactionary wave." The result was a clear two-block system campaign in which the electorate had to respond to two questions arising from emotionally simplified discourses. Firstly: Did they want to repeal Sanchismo? Secondly: Did they want Vox to assume power? Given how singular this scenario was, this article presents data from the Third National Survey on Political Polarization in Spain to help us understand the emotions these frames caused; how these emotions could impact citizens' voting behavior; how profitable these communication strategies were for the interests of the parties that designed them; and the extent to which they influenced the affective attitudes shown toward the country's two major leaders: Pedro Sánchez and Alberto Núñez Feijóo. Although we could conclude from the result of the election on 23 July that the right-wing frame was not completely successful (the campaign objectives were not attained), the reason for this has not been studied academically. Where did this negative personalization campaign go wrong in preventing the possibility of Pedro Sánchez being elected Prime Minister again?

2 Literature review and theoretical framework

2.1 The personalization of politics in contexts of intergroup conflict

The personalization of politics has attitudinal and behavioral consequences, impacts aspects such as electoral participation, partisan loyalties, and the focal points of campaigns (Poguntke and Webb, 2005; Garzia, 2014; Martínez Fuentes and García Rabadán, 2024; Crespo-Martínez et al., 2025). The increasing importance of candidates over parties leads to more superficial debates, and decisions are often judged based on the voter's affinity for the politician adopting them rather than on a specific analysis of the issue (Bittner, 2021). Consequently, leaders serve as cognitive shortcuts that condition voters' opinions on public policies. As Nicholson (2012) demonstrated, when citizens realized that a policy was supported by the leader of their rival party, they came down against it. When the same policy was not connected with a specific leader, it generated more levels of support. Based on this evidence, the parties can mobilize public opinion against a law by emphasizing who proposed it without needing to explore the content of the regulation (Capelos, 2010). However, to which extent are the signals leaders provide independent of the public's partisan or ideological identity? Leaders can consolidate their pre-existing preferences, but they can also cause individuals without any major identity anchors to abandon parties when they reject a specific

leader or feel drawn by an external leader (Aaldering et al., 2018). Assuming that the importance of leadership as a positive voting factor occurs when the affective links with parties become weaker (Garzia et al., 2022), the effects of leadership are stronger among non-aligned voters, in other words, those that do not state that they identify with any party, and among those that decide how to vote late and usually change their vote from one election to the next (Lobo, 2015). Consequently, personalization of campaigns serves to persuade this floating voter positively (voting for a party because they like the leader, although they do not identify with the party) and negatively (voting for a party that they generally would not support to prevent a leader they detest from winning).

The strength of leaderships can be such that a leader's name becomes the label for a group or movement. *Kirchnerismo, Correísmo, Fujimorismo, Trumpism,* and *Sanchismo* are just some of the best-known examples (Kaushal et al., 2022; Vommaro, 2023; Rivera-Otero et al., 2024). In everyday vocabulary, they displace the "isms" connected with partisan identity, ideology, and social movements. Political eponymy denotes some politicians' ability to organize cleavages around them, which eclipse traditional political axes of competition. Support for or rejection of *Kirchnerismo* or *Trumpism* involves a clear ideological component; however, above all, it is based on the voter's emotional connection with these political figures. Hyperleaderships can become the gravitational core of new communities of meaning, and, ultimately, they can act as elements defining a new social identity. Applying the social identity theory (SIT) to the field of political personalization, the group recognizes a leader due to their strong representation ability, that is, because they embrace a symbolic content that facilitates categorization and intergroup differentiation (Hogg, 2001). The leader consolidates the group prototype and, by means of influence mechanisms, encourages their followers to adapt to them (Hogg, 2001). For these reasons, intergroup conflict primarily develops through leaders. If the leader is the group's top representative, the best way of devaluing the status of that rival group is to attack its "most stand-out member."

Therefore, we should consider whether the personalization of politics also has a "dark side," which is associated with the recurrent use of negative communication during campaigns (Nai and Sciarini, 2018). The increase in incentives to focus attack campaigns on rival leaders and not on the ideas they represent, which Pruysers and Cross (2016) call "negative personalization," also expands the influence of leadership in voting behavior. In Argentina, "Anti K" movements arose with the same force as "Pro K" devotion. *Correísmo* can mobilize as much as can the rejection of the former Ecuadorian president. In this respect, authors such as Garzia and Ferreira da Silva (2021, p. 3) highlight "the increasing tendency for voters' party choice to be shaped by their negative evaluations of the leaders of other parties."

2.2 Framing effects in electoral campaigns

The frames the elites use help shape the formation of public opinion by defining what actually lies beneath a particular social problem (Druckman, 2001; Nelson et al., 1997). Following the definition by Entman (1993, p. 52), "to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in

a communicating text." Consequently, frames define problems, diagnose their causes, make a moral assessment of the agents behind them and offer remedies (Entman, 1993, p. 52). The way in which the same facts or data are presented and interpreted can give rise to different reactions. The possibility of interpreting the same problem from different angles, which are equivalent on a logical level, is one of the major uses of framing (Druckman, 2001). In political debate, leaders do not just change how they present the same information (without altering its basic content). Instead, they develop issue framing strategies emphasizing certain aspects of a problem above others and extract the interpretation most favorable for them (Slothuus, 2008; Slothuus and De Vreese, 2010). Through discursive construction exercises, the elite give meaning to social events and facilitate understanding of them (Slothuus, 2008). These meanings are not neutral, and if they are adopted, they lead the individual to conclusions supporting the interests of the conveyor of the frame.

Electoral communication studies on framing have essentially focused on media coverage of campaign events (Tenscher and Maier, 2009; Schuck et al., 2013). This research analyses how the media interprets the campaign primarily using strategic game framing, focusing on the state of the competition (who is winning, who is losing, what the candidates are doing to improve their positions) and shifting attention onto public policies (Iyengar et al., 2004; Schmuck et al., 2017). Nevertheless, how political parties define the "essential election question" should also be included in electoral framing studies. Parties try to instill what is decided at each election, in other words, what citizens should respond to when they go to vote. Is this election about democracy or economy? Change or continuity? Making progress or going backwards? Formulating these frames simplifies the competition scenarios by creating two major sides and, frequently, false dilemmas. Besides the media, the political parties act as "frame generators," causing a clash to see which frame is adopted by the majority to define the meaning of the election (Ballesteros-Herencia and Gómez-García, 2020). In the case of the Spanish general elections in July 2023, the right proposed a referendum about Pedro Sánchez. According to them, the country's problems were caused by his leadership style, and all the laws they opposed reflected the values of *Sanchismo*. The legislative agenda and the figure of the prime minister formed an inseparable binomial. For the right, the election question was connected to whether *Sanchismo* would continue or not as a general way of going about politics, but also as a way of forming policies (substantive content of the eponymy). In contrast, the left opted for a construction of meaning in which the enemy was an ideological group and not an individual, thus turning the election into a huge dichotomy between right-wingers and social rights, and a yes or no to the far-right. Given that both frames concerned identity and divisiveness, studying their effects needs to address the emotional reactions they caused and how these emotional reactions turned into voter attitudes and behavior.

2.3 Emotions in political communication

People's states of mind influence their judgements and the importance they give to certain factors when emitting them

(Marcus, 2000). The role emotions play in creating processes to evaluate the environment and decision-making forces us to capture the emotional experience generated by communication stimuli in order to explore the chain of reasoning connecting the stimulus with final voting behavior (Neuman et al., 2007). In line with the "hot cognition" hypothesis, all sociopolitical concepts we have been aware of at some stage (leaders, issues, symbols) have a high affective load that returns whenever they are mentioned or presented (Morris et al., 2003; Bakker et al., 2021). Our past affective evaluation of which emotion that leader, issue or symbol aroused in us is instilled in our memory, releases cognitive associations, and the emotions end up becoming a source of information underlying our reasoning processes (Lodge and Taber, 2005). The words political parties carefully choose to integrate their frames and claims aim to awaken these automatic cognitive associations.

Based on the principles of the theory of affective intelligence (Marcus, 2002), we can differentiate between two major systems driving the influence of emotions in political behavior (Marcus et al., 2000, 2005): the disposition system (linked to emotions that lead us to behave based on our predispositions or routines) and the surveillance system (linked to emotions that increase attention and information processing levels). Positive emotions organized around the enthusiasm dimension are managed by the disposition system within an environment that makes us feel safe; while the surveillance system is associated with situations that cause us anxiety, encourage learning and political commitment (Wolak and Marcus, 2007). Activation of both systems is influenced by the individual's personality. The presence of traits such as extroversion, neuroticism or authoritarianism moderates emotional reactions (Wolak and Marcus, 2007). Furthermore, this theory highlights families of emotions (Brader and Marcus, 2013), including the following: (a) Enthusiasm, hope, joy and pride. These are emotions that encourage interest in politics and consolidate our convictions before making decisions. (b) Sadness and disappointment. These emotions are linked to defeats or failure to meet expectations and have not been much studied to date. (c) Fear and anxiety. These are activated in a threat and danger scenario, so they can be termed defensive emotions. This is the most studied family of emotions. It involves activating the surveillance system and it is thought that it makes individuals adopt risk-avoidant behaviors (preventive actions), while increasing the search for information. (d) Calm and serenity. These are anti-ethical states compared with the others (fear, anxiety). They have been less studied and occur without disruptive events or stimuli. (e) Anger. It is usually linked to fear, although they are discrete and clearly distinguishable emotions. Anger occurs when faced with scenarios where there is a threat, frustration or prejudice caused by an easily identifiable agent. Anger, like enthusiasm, activates and mobilizes; it even leads people to take risks and makes them feel vindicated. Anger is activated by being against the stimulus causing the undesired situation. It does not encourage the search for new information, and instead it mobilizes based on predispositions (Valentino et al., 2008). (f) Shame, guilt and pride. These emotions, arising from self-awareness, are clearly transferable in terms of status and group norms (Brader and Marcus, 2013, p. 175–181).

Despite this wide variety of emotions, recent research has assumed that fear and anger are the emotions with the most influence on political processes (Iyengar and Westwood, 2015;

Vasilopoulou and Wagner, 2017; Magni, 2017; Friedrichs et al., 2022; Rivera-Otero et al., 2025). If we refer in particular to studies that have estimated the emotional component of voting, their results tend to highlight the especially significant role of negative valence emotions (Close and Van Haute, 2020). For example, Rico et al. (2017) and Jacobs et al. (2024) prove that anger against the elite caused by unfavorable socioeconomic contexts encourages voting for populist or radical parties on both sides of the ideological spectrum. Jaráiz Gulías et al. (2020) highlight the effect of anxiety in explaining voting for the main Spanish parties, which they link to the context of uncertainty that the country was experiencing at that time. Finally, Rudi (2015) connects emotions toward leaders with voting behavior in Croatia: when someone was enthusiastic by a leader, they were far more likely to vote for this leader's party; however, emotions of aversion and anxiety did not reveal significant effects. The debate on the differential effect of positive and negatives emotions is far from over, demonstrating that it depends on the context of each election to a large extent. At the same time, a clear distinction should be made between emotions and feelings (Brader, 2006). Emotions are our brain's temporary responses to a stimulus; feelings are caused by conscious reflection of an emotional experience triggered by a stimulus, and they are not fleeting (Brader, 2006). From this perspective, the accumulated emotional experience gradually consolidates feelings and affective memory in the long term (to return to the hot cognition hypothesis).

3 Hypothesis, materials, and methods

The main objective of this research is to analyse the effects of the emotional reactions arising from the negative personalist "repeal Sanchismo" frame on voting for the main party that supported this frame (PP) and for the party whose leader it was attacking (PSOE). In addition, the aim is to determine how these emotional reactions impacted on feelings toward Alberto Núñez Feijóo (PP) and Pedro Sánchez (PSOE). Given these objectives, the following hypothesis system has been formulated:

- H1a: People who felt negative emotions of fear or anger about the "repeal Sanchismo" frame were more likely to end up voting for the PSOE. Boomerang effect.
- H1b: People who felt positive emotions of calm, enthusiasm or pride about the "repeal Sanchismo" frame were more likely to end up voting for the PP. Consolidation effect.
- H2: The emotional reactions caused by the "repeal Sanchismo" frame wielded more influence on the voting likelihood for both the PSOE and the PP than the emotional reactions aroused by the "stop the reactionary wave" frame. Relevance of the negative personalist framing compared with the ideological-identity framing.
- H3: The negative emotions caused by the "repeal Sanchismo" frame consolidated sympathy for Pedro Sánchez and weakened positive feelings toward Alberto Núñez Feijóo. Attitudinal effects.

This research has conducted a case study with an empirical-explanatory quantitative focus using data from the Third National

Survey on Political Polarization in Spain[3], implemented by the Murcia Centre for Studies on Public Opinion (CEMOP, 2023) on days prior to the elections of 23 July 2023 (10–21 July). The survey has a representative selection of the Spanish population of both genders aged 18 and over ($n = 1,223$). The sample was constructed using a stratified multistage procedure with a random selection of landline and mobile numbers within the strata (formed by the

TABLE 1 Variables considered in the study.

Variable	Categories	%
Gender	Male	48.9
	Female	51.1
Education	Other	52.8
	University	47.2
Employee	No	36.5
	Yes	63.5
Inactive	No	68.4
	Yes	31.6
Unemployed	No	95.1
	Yes	4.9
Religiosity	Other	40.1
	Religious people (believers)	59.9
Living environment	≤2,000 inhabitants	6.1
	2,001 to 10,000 inhabitants	14.9
	10,001 to 50,000 inhabitants	24.0
	50,001 to 100,000 inhabitants	12.8
	100,001 to 400,000 inhabitants	23.4
	400,001 to 1,000,000 inhabitants	8.3
	More than 1,000,000 inhabitants	10.6
Vote PSOE (DV)	No	56.7
	Yes	27.6
Vote PP (DV)	No	60.6
	Yes	23.7

Variable	Mean	SD
Ideology	5.0	2.2
Age	50.4	16.3
FT Sánchez	4.3	3.3
FT Feijóo	4.1	3.2

Descriptive statistics.
Source: Created by the authors.

intersection of the 17 autonomous communities and various living environment sizes) and applying gender and age quotas.

To measure the emotions caused by each frame, we used the methodological proposals by Jaráiz Gulías et al. (2020) and Rivera-Otero et al. (2023) as a reference, which, in turn, consider the orthogonal solution proposed by Marcus et al. (2000), superior to the mere distinction between positive and negative valence. Marcus et al. (2000) propose a broad set of emotions grouped into three independent dimensions: enthusiasm, anxiety, and anger/aversion. In survey-based research it is not always easy to include such a wide range of emotions and to consider at the same time whether they were caused or not, the intensity with which they occurred and how long the emotional reaction lasted (Rivera-Otero et al., 2025). Furthermore, we believe that the use of broad sets of emotions can prove complex for respondents as clear differences between many of the emotions cannot be established. This led us to ask the respondents the following question: "when you listen to political leaders say that what is at stake in these elections is "repealing Sanchism," do you feel fear, anger, calm, enthusiasm or pride?" The same was asked for the "stop the reactionary wave" frame. The five emotions caused by each frame were coded in a dummy format, differentiating whether the respondent experienced the emotion or not. Every respondent had to respond to the question by mentioning just one discrete emotion. Each of the emotions is used as a variable of interest to explain the likelihood of voting for the PSOE or for the PP and feelings of affinity or rejection toward their leaders. The impact of the emotions on the dependent variable (voting or feeling thermometer toward leaders) is controlled based on ideology, gender, age, educational level, religiosity, the size of the living environment in the municipality of residence and work situation (see Table 1).

To check H1a, H1b, and H2 we used a binary logistic regression (BLR) based on the coding of the dependent variable (voting). The multinomial logit technique was not selected since the objective was not to calculate the likelihoods of voting for the PSOE or the PP compared with the likelihoods of voting for the other parties. Instead, all we wanted to determine was the extent to which the emotions caused by the frames specifically affected voting for these two parties, irrespective of what the alternative was. To check H3, we used an ordinary least squares (OLS) multiple linear regression since the aim was to predict the variation of the scores in a 0–10 feeling thermometer.

Ordinary least squares (OLS)

$$\text{multiple linear regression}: Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \ldots + \beta_k x_k + \varepsilon$$

Binary logistic regression

$$(BLR): \log[P(Y = 1)/1 - P(Y = 1)] = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \ldots + \beta_k x_k$$

4 Results

The first binary logistic regression model we present estimates the likelihood of voting for the PSOE considering the emotions caused by both frames and another series of sociodemographic and attitudinal controls (Figure 1). Those who felt fear ($B =$
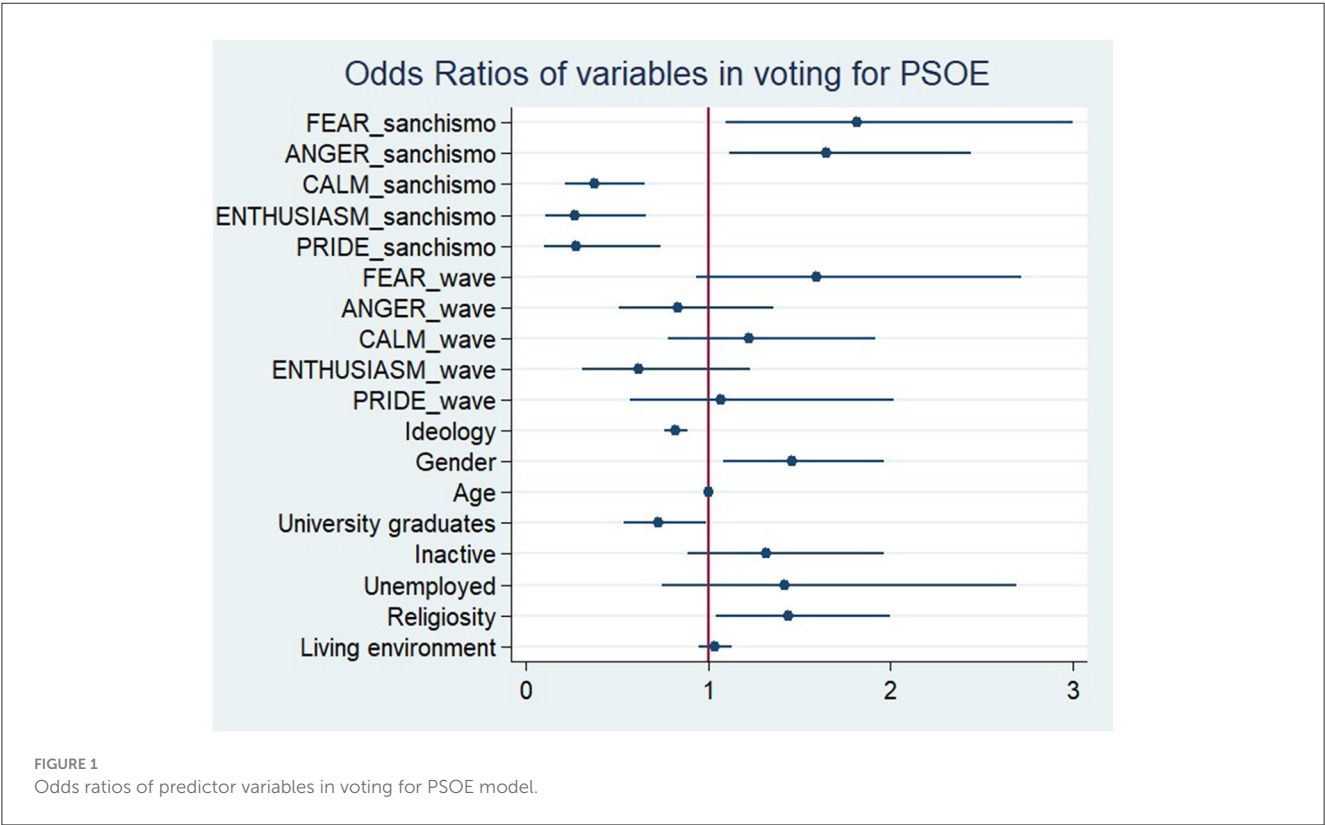

FIGURE 1
Odds ratios of predictor variables in voting for PSOE model.

TABLE 2 Binary logistic regression model PSOE vote.

	B	SE	Exp(B)
Emotions for "repeal Sanchismo" (Ref. None)			
Fear	0.596**	0.257	1.814
Anger	0.501**	0.201	1.651
Calm	−0.977***	0.281	0.376
Enthusiasm	−1.319***	0.461	0.267
Pride	−1.295**	0.507	0.274
Emotions for "stop the reactionary wave" (Ref. None)			
Fear	0.469*	0.272	1.598
Anger	−0.182	0.250	0.834
Calm	0.203	0.228	1.225
Enthusiasm	−0.477	0.351	0.620
Pride	0.070	0.322	1.072
Control variables			
Ideology	−0.195***	0.039	0.823
Gender (Ref. Male)	0.377**	0.152	1.458
Age	0.003	0.006	1.003
University graduates	−0.316**	0.155	0.729
Religiosity	0.367**	0.167	1.443
Living environment	0.034	0.045	1.035
Job (Ref. Employed)			
Inactive	0.278	0.203	1.320
Unemployed	0.350	0.326	1.420
Constant	−0.865**	0.452	0.421
−2 log-likelihood	1,102.548		
Cox-Snell R^2	0.153		
Nagelkerke R^2	0.213		

Source: Created by the authors.

*$p \leq 0.1$; **$p \leq 0.05$; ***$p \leq 0.01$.

N (cases included in the analysis) = 1,000. The model has an overall correct prediction percentage of 70.8%.

TABLE 3 Binary logistic regression model PP vote.

	B	SE	Exp(B)
Emotions for "repeal Sanchismo" (Ref. None)			
Fear	−1.446***	0.502	0.235
Anger	−0.518*	0.269	0.596
Calm	1.365***	0.250	3.916
Enthusiasm	0.944***	0.313	2.569
Pride	0.236	0.359	1.266
Emotions for "stop the reactionary wave" (Ref. None)			
Fear	−0.517	0.346	0.596
Anger	0.117	0.268	1.124
Calm			
Enthusiasm	−0.522	0.417	0.593
Pride	−0.956*	0.489	0.384
Control variables			
Ideology	0.270***	0.043	1.310
Gender (Ref. Male)	0.347**	0.176	1.414
Age	0.005	0.007	1.005
University graduates	0.323*	0.172	1.382
Religiosity	0.976***	0.201	2.655
Living environment	0.128**	0.051	1.137
Job (Ref. Employed)			
Inactive	−0.017	0.234	0.983
Unemployed	−0.354	0.406	0.702
Constant	−4.594***	0.553	0.010
−2 log-likelihood	912.796		
Cox-Snell R^2	0.240		
Nagelkerke R^2	0.346		

Source: Created by the authors. *$p \leq 0.1$; **$p \leq 0.05$; ***$p \leq 0.01$.

N (cases included in the analysis) = 1,000.

The model has an overall correct prediction percentage of 76.4%.

0.596, Exp(B) = 1.814, $p < 0.05$) or anger (B = 0.501, Exp(B) = 1.651, $p < 0.05$) on hearing the proposal to "repeal Sanchismo" present a higher likelihood of ending up voting for the PSOE and, therefore, of supporting Pedro Sánchez. The odds ratios included in Table 2 show that the people for whom the "repeal Sanchismo" frame caused fear were 1.81 times more likely to vote for the PSOE than those who did not experience this emotion (in the *ceteris paribus* condition). Those who felt anger present an odds ratio of 1.65. The campaign attacking Prime Minister Sánchez caused negative emotions in some of the population (specifically 20.6% of the entire sample felt anger and 9% fear in relation to this frame), thereby contributing to an initially unexpected boomerang effect (Pattie et al., 2011), since these emotions were

associated with a higher likelihood of voting for the PSOE. We confirm H1a.

If we consider the exercise of reframing (Ryan and Gamson, 2006) that the left performed in connection with the implications of "repeal Sanchismo," in other words, curbing rights and social regression, it is easy to suppose that some collectives would feel threatened. On the other hand, the effects of experiencing calm, enthusiasm and pride (emotions favorable to the frame) are also statistically significant and clearly reduce the likelihood of voting for the PSOE. The fact that all the emotions for "repeal Sanchismo" are significant in the models shows that this frame was central to the Spanish electorate's expression of their voting preferences. It was a highly reaction-provoking frame able to cause an emotional impact on the population even though it was intensely polarizing.

Looking at the descriptive data, it can be observed that "repeal Sanchismo" caused anger or fear in 54% of the socialist voters and in 56% of Sumar voters, while 54% of PP voters and 61% of Vox voters expressed calm, enthusiasm or pride, with calm predominating among the PP voters and enthusiasm among Vox voters. However, the frame that the PSOE tried to promote ("stop the reactionary wave") did not have a statistically significant effect on voting for this party. Its limited capacity to generate emotional mobilization (H2) may be explained by its explicitly ideological nature, whose effects are likely absorbed by the individual's pre-existing ideological orientation, as captured by the ideology variable in the model.

Addressing the results of the model explaining the likelihood of voting for the PP (see Table 3 and Figure 2), we conclude that feeling calm ($B = 1.356$, $Exp(B) = 3.916$, $p < 0.01$) or enthusiasm ($B = 0.944$, $Exp(B) = 2.569$, $p < 0.01$) about the idea to "repeal Sanchismo" strongly increases the likelihood of voting for the PP (H1b). In particular, feeling calm about the frame acquires an explanatory force that almost multiplies the odds of supporting the party by four. The problem is that the frame also caused negative emotions that impacted the vote in an equally significant and relevant manner. It generated support and rejection in similar measure, leading to doubts about its strategic net benefit. The people who expressed fear about the proposal to "repeal Sanchismo" present a strong negative relation with the likelihood of the dependent variable appearing. In the case of anger, the significance occurs only at the 90% confidence level, which makes us question its relevance. The impact of fear is greater in terms of electoral distancing from the PP, which is coherent with the results expressed in the previous model and with the

logic outlining calm in this model. It is true that this frame was capable of causing positive emotions in voters who, by means of this emotional experience, mobilized so that the desire to "repeal Sanchismo" would become possible. However, as in every negative campaign, the unintentional effects of bolstering the adversary and eroding the image of the message sender and attacker can end up being as widespread as the positive mobilization achieved. Similarly, with this second model we again found that the "stop the reactionary wave" frame did not have a notable impact on voting for the PP (H2). The frame instilled by the left did not manage to arouse any sufficiently important emotional reactions to be capable of reducing support for the main opposition party. Previously, we had found that it did not serve to increase voting for the PSOE. It was a relatively innocuous exercise in constructing meaning if we compare it with the centrifugal power of "repeal Sanchismo."

So far, we have found that emotions linked to the "repeal Sanchismo" frame form an important component of voting for the two main Spanish parties in the context of the general elections of July 2023. This demonstrates the influence of "negative personalization" campaigns. However, did the emotional responses caused by these frames transfer to the expression of feelings toward the country's two main leaders? It can be assumed that the positive emotions caused by the "repeal Sanchismo" frame led to feelings of more rejection toward this leader and more affinity for Alberto Núñez Feijóo, while the negative emotions improved affinity for Pedro Sánchez and worsened the levels of affinity for Alberto Núñez Feijóo (H3). Using the OLS multiple linear regression models in this case to explain variations in the scores of the feeling thermometer toward these two leaders (see Tables 4, 5), we found that feeling fear
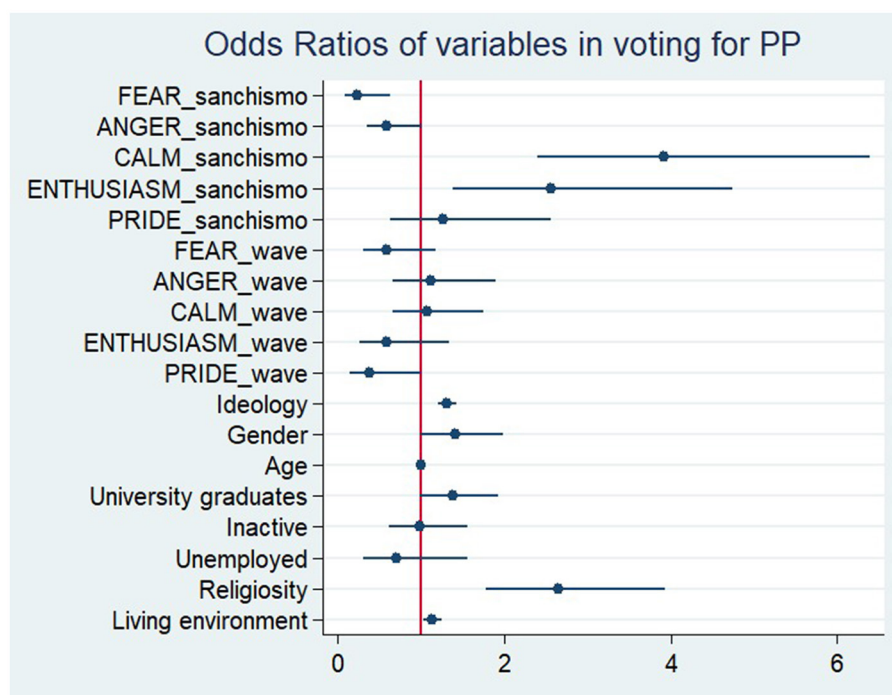

FIGURE 2
Odds ratios of predictor variables in voting for PP model.

TABLE 4 OLS linear regression model feelings about Pedro Sánchez.

	B	SE	β
Emotions for "repeal Sanchismo" (Ref. None)			
Fear	0.849***	0.315	0.075
Anger	0.928***	0.237	0.116
Calm	−1.548***	0.273	−0.164
Enthusiasm	−2.095***	0.360	−0.159
Pride	−1.908***	0.407	−0.126
Emotions for "stop the reactionary wave" (Ref. None)			
Fear	0.976***	0.316	0.081
Anger	−0.070	0.269	−0.007
Calm	0.751***	0.250	0.087
Enthusiasm	0.593	0.370	0.042
Pride	0.821**	0.376	0.058
Control variables			
Ideology	−0.516***	0.042	−0.343
Gender	0.492***	0.165	0.075
Age	−0.005	0.006	−0.024
University graduates	−0.387**	0.168	−0.059
Religiosity	−0.006	0.179	−0.001
Living environment	−0.010	0.048	−0.005
Job (Ref. Employed)			
Inactive	0.662***	0.222	0.093
Unemployed	0.370	0.375	0.024
Constant	6.363***	0.483	
R^2 (adjusted)	0.333		
N	1,147		

Source: Created by the authors.
**$p \leq 0.05$; ***$p \leq 0.01$.

TABLE 5 OLS linear regression model feelings about Albero Núñez Feijóo.

	B	SE	β
Emotions for "repeal Sanchismo" (Ref. None)			
Fear	−0.971***	0.298	−0.087
Anger	−0.743***	0.224	−0.095
Calm	1.408***	0.259	0.152
Enthusiasm	1.465***	0.340	0.114
Pride	0.968**	0.384	0.065
Emotions for "stop the reactionary wave" (Ref. None)			
Fear	−0.344	0.300	−0.029
Anger	0.375	0.253	0.040
Calm	0.301	0.236	0.036
Enthusiasm	0.194	0.349	0.014
Pride	−0.278	0.355	−0.020
Control variables			
Ideology	0.551***	0.040	0.371
Gender	−0.084	0.157	−0.013
Age	0.010	0.006	0.048
University graduates	0.383**	0.160	0.059
Religiosity	1.259***	0.170	0.190
Living environment	0.138***	0.046	0.073
Job (Ref. Employed)			
Inactive	−0.062	0.211	−0.009
Unemployed	0.279	0.360	0.019
Constant	−0.570	0.462	
R^2 (adjusted)	0.393		
N	1,124		

Source: Created by the authors.
**$p \leq 0.05$; ***$p \leq 0.01$.

($\beta = 0.075$, $p < 0.01$) or anger ($\beta = 0.116$, $p < 0.01$) about the "repeal Sanchismo" frame caused more affinity for Pedro Sánchez and, in the opposite direction, increased antipathy for Alberto Núñez Feijóo ($\beta = -0.087$, $p < 0.01$ and $\beta = -0.095$, $p < 0.01$). We confirm H3. The negative emotions caused by the "repeal Sanchismo" frame not only resulted in behavioral consequences in voting terms, but they also managed to mold citizens' affective attitudes: they consolidated support for the demonized leader and weakened positive feelings toward the perpetrator of the attack. Positive emotions about this frame had a completely contrary effect. The people who experienced calm ($\beta = -0.164$, $p < 0.01$), enthusiasm ($\beta = -0.159$, $p < 0.01$) or pride ($\beta = -0.126$, $p < 0.01$) about this "repeal Sanchismo" proposal reduced their feelings of affinity for Pedro Sánchez. These emotions (with the first two having a higher level of significance) helped to increase the levels of affinity for Alberto Núñez Feijóo, although the effect was more

moderate than the effect of the rejection of Pedro Sánchez ($\beta = 0.152$, $p < 0.01$, $\beta = 0.114$, $p < 0.01$, and $\beta = 0.114$, $p < 0.05$).

As in the voting models, the emotions associated with the "stop the reactionary wave" frame are, in general, less influential. Only in the case of feelings toward Pedro Sánchez are the emotions of fear ($\beta = 0.081$, $p < 0.01$), calm ($\beta = 0.087$, $p < 0.01$), and pride ($\beta = 0.058$, $p < 0.01$) significant and explain more levels of support for this political figure. However, they present an inferior β coefficient than the emotions associated with "repeal Sanchismo"; therefore, their capacity to cause changes in the dependent variable is less. Based on all these results, we can state that the right-wing frame was more effective at eliciting rejection of Sánchez than encouraging more affinity for Feijóo. The progressive frame was successful at consolidating support for Pedro Sánchez, since those who reacted with fear, calm or pride to the request to "stop the reactionary wave" improved their assessment of this leader; however, it was not polarizing because it did not manage to generate

notable levels of rejection of the rival leader, as occurred with the "repeal Sanchismo" proposal. Consequently, it seems that it was more successful as a retention strategy than as a new voter attraction strategy.

As these results corroborate, the election campaign for 23 July in Spain was affected by the polarization between two major ideological blocs who fought to define what would actually be decided at this election. The two blocs tried to position their frames into personalist on the one hand and ideological on the other. The "repeal Sanchismo" frame was the one with the most effects on both voting and affective attitudes. In pure communication terms, it was more impactful as it combined identity antagonism elements and attracted more emotional responses. As it focused on the prime minister and proposed a measure as categorical as eliminating the majority of the regulations approved in the preceding years, this frame made it possible to consolidate voting for the PP; however, at the same time, it generated negativity among some voters in the PSOE's orbit, who viewed the proposal as a threat and reacted adversely. This prevented conversion processes from being activated and, consequently the PP was not able to achieve the electoral results it desired.

5 Discussion and conclusions

Personalization and polarization are two defining features of contemporary electoral campaigns that are also closely linked. We often study the first feature focusing only on the positive effects of leadership as an element capable of attracting unaligned or less-sophisticated voters. Charismatic leaders are those with traits or qualities that enable them to establish emotional connections with the public at a time when major group affiliations (both social and political) seem to be constantly changing. In polarization contexts such as current ones, leaderships can create dividing lines and identities around them: fan movements as strong as hate groups. This incentivizes the design of negative campaigns in which the target of the attack is neither a party nor an ideology, but a hyperleadership that, to a certain extent, has replaced other categorization elements. Some voters can decide to support a party by rejecting a leader they find disagreeable. It is similar to the concept of negative partisanship, in which voters form their preferences by opposing something they detest rather than through positive support for any option (Mayer, 2017; Anderson et al., 2022). Furthermore, when studying polarization trends, we focus on feelings and identities, but rarely do we discover which emotional reactions underlie the conscious expressions of affinity (Bakker and Lelkes, 2024; Pereira and Oñate, 2024). Our research has tried to overcome this limitation by measuring which specific emotional reactions were caused by two polarizing framing exercises to then appraise the consequences of these emotions.

Returning to the principles of the theory of affective intelligence (Marcus, 2002), fear and anger toward the "repeal Sanchismo" frame increased the likelihood of voting for the PSOE and affinity for Pedro Sánchez. Therefore, this proposal was able to generate a threat scenario that led voters to become interested in the campaign, seek information on what was being debated and finally to adopt a position of preservation consisting of ensuring the continuity of government. For disengaged and apathetic voters, who were not too happy with the PSOE's performance, the "repeal Sanchismo" frame activated the surveillance system and caused them to worry about the consequences of the PP-Vox coalition gaining power. It managed to make them aware of what was really at stake. For another voter profile, people who felt angry, the frame led them to consolidate their predispositions of a strong rejection of this proposal. The PP and Vox may not have appreciated precisely what the "secondary effects" of their frame would be and the extent to which they would result in a defensive response through emotions, such as fear and anger, which are crucial for studying political behavior. This rejection occurred in voters that, in principle, were the PP's priority communication targets with the aim of transferring their vote from the PSOE. Data from the survey used for our analysis also tell us that adverse emotional reactions to the "repeal Sanchismo" proposal were especially notable in women, which would reinforce the relevance of the gender variable as shown in Table 2 (being a woman increased the likelihood of voting for the PSOE). Women demonstrating anger and fear responses was 33% compared to 27% of men.

The risk of polarization-driven attack strategies lies in their potential to energize your own voters—through emotions that activate the disposition system—but they may simultaneously mobilize your opponent's supporters, whom you are ostensibly trying to attract if your goal is to win the election with a clear majority rather than simply avoid falling behind. In some cases, the first effect (boosting your own votes) can be less than the second (boosting the other's votes on the rebound). As Martin and Nai (2024) stated, attack campaigns consolidate the identity of the attacked groups and also encourage rejection of the attacking group. In other words, they further affective polarization between parties. The "repeal Sanchismo" frame was effective at creating negative feelings toward Pedro Sánchez, but it was not as successful at mobilizing support for Alberto Núñez Feijóo. It managed to bolster votes for the PP, but, simultaneously, it increased support for the PSOE among voters who felt that a PP victory was a potential threat. The comparative advantage that this strategy provided is marginal if the aim of the campaign was to aspire to a comfortable majority. In contrast, this type of statements is opportune when the aim is to avoid a vote drain. By simplifying the competition with a choice between "Sánchez yes" and "Sánchez no," some indecisive voters or those that previously had no especially positive feelings toward the prime minister were forced to adopt a position and, after becoming aware of the substantive content of Sanchism (the type of public policies that were at stake), they ended up backing him both as a risk-reduction strategy and an accommodation–compromise strategy (Brader and Marcus, 2013). Failing to appropriately measure the tone of the attack and the opportunities the individual being attacked will for a reframing or victimization actions leads to effects contrary to those expected. Beyond our case, it can be theorized that the emotional reactions achieved by electoral strategies of negative personalist framing are more polarized and also more influential on voting behavior and political attitudes. Therefore, they should be incorporated into the expanding debate on the climate of affective polarization happening in contemporary democracies and the responsibility the elites bear for this situation.

Despite these findings, our research is not without limitations. Firstly, it only measured the presence or absence of emotion, but not its intensity and duration, which could have made some results more specific. Secondly, although theoretically it is assumed that emotions come before feelings, as they are spontaneous reactions to stimuli, we can question whether the emotions the respondents felt toward the frames were influenced by their identities (feelings of belonging). In this respect, political predispositions would make the individual have reactions that, even if they seemed to be automatic physiological responses, would be preconfigured by worldviews or more far-reaching cognitive shortcuts. The two-way relationship between emotions and feelings/identities is an extremely interesting topic deserving of more attention in the future.

Data availability statement

The dataset from the Third National Survey on Political Polarization in Spain, on which all analyses in this article are based, is publicly available at the following link: https://www.cemopmurcia.es/estudios/iii-encuesta-nacional-de-polarizacion-politica-2023/.

Author contributions

IC-M: Conceptualization, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Project administration, Supervision, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. AM-R: Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Software, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. JR-M: Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

Funding

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Generative AI statement

The author(s) declare that no Gen AI was used in the creation of this manuscript.

Publisher's note

All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers. Any product that may be evaluated in this article, or claim that may be made by its manufacturer, is not guaranteed or endorsed by the publisher.

References

Aaldering, L. (2018). The (ir)rationality of mediated leader effects. *Elect. Stud.* 54, 269–280. doi: 10.1016/j.electstud.2018.04.010

Aaldering, L., Van Der Meer, T., and Van der Brug, W. (2018). Mediated leader effects: the impact of newspapers' portrayal of party leadership on electoral support. *Int. J. Press Polit.* 23, 70–94. doi: 10.1177/1940161217740696

Anderson, C. D., McGregor, R. M., and Stephenson, L. B. (2022). Us versus them: do the rules of the game encourage negative partisanship? *Eur. J. Polit. Res.* 61, 1060–1079. doi: 10.1111/1475-6765.12485

Bakker, B. N., and Lelkes, Y. (2024). Putting the affect into affective polarisation. *Cogn. Emot.* 38, 418–436. doi: 10.1080/02699931.2024.2362366

Bakker, B. N., Schumacher, G., and Rooduijn, M. (2021). Hot politics? Affective responses to political rhetoric. *Am. Polit. Sci. Rev.* 115:150164. doi: 10.1017/S0003055420000519

Ballesteros-Herencia, C. A., and Gómez-García, S. (2020). Battle of frames during the electoral campaign of April 2019: engagement and promotion of political parties' messages on Facebook. *Prof. de la Inf.* 29:e290629. doi: 10.3145/epi.2020.nov.29

Barber, M., and Pope, J. C. (2019). Does party trump ideology? Disentangling party and ideology in America. *Am. Polit. Sci. Rev.* 113, 38–54. doi: 10.1017/S0003055418000795

Barragán-Romero, A. I., Caro-Castaño, L., and Bellido-Pérez, E. (2025). The appropriation of memes by the parties: fandom and propaganda in Spanish 2023 general elections. *Rev. Lat. Comun. Soc.* 83, 1–25. doi: 10.4185/rlcs-2025-2304

Bittner, A. (2021). The personalization of politics in Anglo-American democracies. *Front. Polit. Sci.* 3:660607. doi: 10.3389/fpos.2021.660607

Brader, T. (2006). *Campaigning for Hearts and Minds: How Emotional Appeals in Political Ads Work.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Brader, T., and Marcus, G. E. (2013). "Emotion and political psychology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology,* eds. L. Huddy, D. O. Sears, and J. S. Levy (New York, NY: Oxford University Press), 165–204. doi: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199760107.013.0006

Capelos, T. (2010). Feeling the issue: how citizens' affective reactions and leadership perceptions shape policy evaluations. *J. Polit. Market.* 9, 9–33. doi: 10.1080/15377850903583038

CEMOP (2023). *III Encuesta Nacional de Polarización Política 2023.* Available online at: https://www.cemopmurcia.es/estudios/iii-encuesta-nacional-de-polarizacion-politica-2023/ (accessed February 1, 2025).

Cervi, L. (2023). El uso de TikTok en las elecciones municipales: de candidatos a políticos-influencers. *Más Poder Local* 53, 8–29. doi: 10.56151/maspoderlocal.175

Close, C., and Van Haute, E. (2020). Emotions and vote choice: an analysis of the 2019 Belgian elections. *Polit. Low Countries* 2, 353–379. doi: 10.5553/PLC/258999292020002003006

Costa, P., and Ferreira da Silva, F. (2015). The impact of voter evaluations of leaders' traits on voting behaviour: evidence from seven European countries. *West Eur. Polit.* 38, 1226–1250. doi: 10.1080/01402382.2015.1004231

Crespo, I., Carletta, I., Garrido, A., and Riorda, M. (2011). *Manual de comunicación política y estrategias de campaña: candidatos, medios y electores en una nueva era.* Buenos Aires: Biblos.

Crespo-Martínez, I., Mora Rodríguez, A., and Rojo Martínez, J. M. (2025). It's Not the What, It's the Who: the importance of the political leader in getting the message across. *Rev. Lat. Comun. Soc.* 83, 1–22. doi: 10.4185/rlcs-2025-2354

Druckman, J. N. (2001). On the limits of framing effects: who can frame? *J. Polit.* 63, 1041–1066. doi: 10.1111/0022-3816.00100

Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *J. Commun.* 43, 51–58. doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x

Fabbrini, S., and Bressanelli, E. (2015). "The presidentialization of American political parties," in *The Presidentialization of Political Parties: Organizations, Institutions and Leaders,* ed. Passarelli (London: Palgrave Macmillan), 49–66.

Ferreira da Silva, F., Garzia, D., and De Angelis, A. (2021). From party to leader mobilization? The personalization of voter turnout. *Party Polit.* 27, 220–233. doi: 10.1177/1354068819855707

Friedrichs, J., Stoehr, N., and Formisano, G. (2022). Fear-anger contests: governmental and populist politics of emotion. *Online Soc. Netw. Media* 32:100240. doi: 10.1016/j.osnem.2022.100240

Garzia, D. (2012). Party and leader effects in parliamentary elections: towards a reassessment. *Politics* 32, 175–185. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9256.2012.01443.x

Garzia, D. (2014). *Personalization of Politics and Electoral Change*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan London. doi: 10.1007/978-1-349-66993-6

Garzia, D., and Ferreira da Silva, F. (2021). Negative personalization and voting behavior in 14 parliamentary democracies, 1961–2018. *Elect. Stud.* 71, 1–11. doi: 10.1016/j.electstud.2021.102300

Garzia, D., Ferreira da Silva, F., and De Angelis, A. (2022). Partisan dealignment and the personalisation of politics in West European parliamentary democracies, 1961–2018. *West Eur. Polit.* 45, 311–334. doi: 10.1080/01402382.2020.1845941

Helboe Pedersen, H., and Rahat, G. (2021). Political personalization and personalized politics within and beyond the behavioural arena. *Party Polit.* 27, 211–219. doi: 10.1177/1354068819855712

Hogg, M. A. (2001). A social identity theory of leadership. *Pers. Soc. Psychol. Rev.* 5, 184–200. doi: 10.1207/S15327957PSPR0503_1

Iyengar, S., Norpoth, H., and Hahn, K. S. (2004). Consumer demand for election news: the horserace sells. *J. Polit.* 66, 157–175. doi: 10.1046/j.1468-2508.2004.00146.x

Iyengar, S., and Westwood, S. J. (2015). Fear and loathing across party lines: new evidence on group polarization. *Am. J. Polit. Sci.* 59, 690–707. doi: 10.1111/ajps.12152

Jacobs, L., Close, C., and Pilet, J. B. (2024). The angry voter? The role of emotions in voting for the radical left and right at the 2019 Belgian elections. *Int. Polit. Sci. Rev.* 46, 144–159. doi: 10.1177/01925121231224524

Janusz, A., and Carrión-Yaguana, V. (2025). Party elites and beauty biases: candidate attractiveness and list placement. *Party Polit.* 13540688251327562. doi: 10.1177/13540688251327562. [Epub ahead of print].

Jaráiz Gulías, E., and García Maseda, M. (2024). "El impacto de las emociones en el voto," in *Elecciones generales de 2023,* eds. E. Jaráiz, C. Ortega y, and P. Oñate (Madrid: CIS), 159–177.

Jaráiz Gulías, E., Lagares, N., and Pereira, M. (2020). Emotions and voting decisions: components of the vote in the general elections of 2016 in Spain. *Rev. Esp. Investig. Sociol.* 170, 115–136. doi: 10.5477/CIS/REIS.170.115

Karvonen, L. (2010). *The Personalization of Politics: A Study of Parliamentary Democracies*. Colchester: ECPR Press.

Kaushal, N., Lu, Y., Shapiro, R. Y., and So, J. (2022). American attitudes toward COVID-19: more Trumpism than Partisanship. *Am. Polit. Res.* 50, 67–82. doi: 10.1177/1532673X211046251

Lobo, M. C. (2015). "Party dealignment and leader effects," in *Personality Politics? The Role of Leader Evaluations in Democratic Elections,* eds. M. Costa Lobo and J. Curtice (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 148–166.

Lodge, M., and Taber, C. S. (2005). The automaticity of affect for political leaders, groups, and issues: an experimental test of the hot cognition hypothesis. *Polit. Psychol.* 26, 455–482. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9221.2005.00426.x

Magni, G. (2017). It's the emotions, Stupid! Anger about the economic crisis, low political efficacy, and support for populist parties. *Elect. Stud.* 50, 91–102. doi: 10.1016/j.electstud.2017.09.014

Marcus, G., Neuman, R., and Mackuen, M. (2000). *Affective Intelligence and Political Judgment.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Marcus, G. E. (2000). Emotions in politics. *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* 3, 221–250. doi: 10.1146/annurev.polisci.3.1.221

Marcus, G. E. (2002). *The Sentimental Citizen: Emotion in Democratic Politics.* University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Marcus, G. E., Sullivan, J. L., Theiss-Morse, E., and Stevens, D. (2005). The emotional foundation of political cognition: the impact of extrinsic anxiety on the formation of political tolerance judgments. *Polit. Psychol.* 26, 949–963. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9221.2005.00452.x

Martin, D., and Nai, A. (2024). Deepening the rift: Negative campaigning fosters affective polarization in multiparty elections. *Elect. Stud.* 87:102745. doi: 10.1016/j.electstud.2024.102745

Martínez Fuentes, G., and García Rabadán, J. (2024). "Liderazgo político: valoración y capital de voto," in *Elecciones generales de 2023,* E. Jaráiz, C. Ortega y, and P. Oñate (Madrid: CIS), 145–159.

Mayer, S. J. (2017). How negative partisanship affects voting behavior in Europe: evidence from an analysis of 17 European multi-party systems with proportional voting. *Res. Polit.* 4:2053168016686636. doi: 10.1177/2053168016686636

McAllister, I. (2007). "The personalization of politics," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behaviour,* eds. R. J. Dalton and H.-D. Klingemann (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 571–588.

Morris, J., Squires, N., Taber, C., and Lodge, M. (2003). Activation of political attitudes: a psychophysiological examination of the hot cognition hypothesis. *Polit. Psychol.* 24, 727–745. doi: 10.1046/j.1467-9221.2003.00349.x

Mughan, A. (2000). *Media and the Presidentialization of Parliamentary Elections.* New York: Springer. doi: 10.1057/9781403920126

Nai, A. (2020). Going negative, worldwide: towards a general understanding of determinants and targets of negative campaigning. *Gov. Oppos.* 55, 430–455. doi: 10.1017/gov.2018.32

Nai, A., and Sciarini, P. (2018). Why "Going Negative?" Strategic and situational determinants of personal attacks in swiss direct democratic votes. *J. Polit. Market.* 17, 382–417. doi: 10.1080/15377857.2015.1058310

Nelson, T. E., Oxley, Z. M., and Clawson, R. A. (1997). Toward a psychology of framing effects. *Polit. Behav.* 19, 221–246. doi: 10.1023/A:1024834831093

Neuman, W. R., George, G. M., Ann, N. C., and Michael, M. (Eds.) (2007). *The Affect Effect. Dynamics of Emotion in Political Thinking and Behavior.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Nicholson, S. P. (2012). Polarizing cues. *Am. J. Polit. Sci.* 56, 52–66. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-5907.2011.00541.x

Ohr, D., and Oscarsson, H. (2011). "Leader traits, leader image and vote choice," in *Political Leaders and Democratic Elections,* eds. K. Aarts, A. Blais, and H. Schmitt (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 187–214.

Pattie, C., Denver, D., Johns, R., and Mitchell, J. (2011). Raising the tone? The impact of 'positive' and 'negative' campaigning on voting in the 2007 Scottish Parliament election. *Elect. Stud.* 30, 333–343. doi: 10.1016/j.electstud.2010.10.003

Pereira, M., and Oñate, P. (2024). "La polarización ideológica y la polarización afectiva," in *Elecciones generales de 2023,* eds. E. Jaráiz, C. Ortega y, and P. Oñate (Madrid: CIS), 191–213.

Poguntke, T., and Webb, P. (2005). "The presidentialization of politics in democratic societies: A framework for analysis," in *The Presidentialization of Politics: A Comparative Study of Modern Democracies*, eds. T. Poguntke and P. Webb (New York, NY: Oxford University Press), 1–26.

Pruysers, S., and Cross, W. (2016). Negative personalization: party leaders and party strategy. *Can. J. Pol. Sci.* 49, 539–558. doi: 10.1017/S0008423916000779

Rico, G., Guinjoan, M., and Anduiza, E. (2017). The emotional underpinnings of populism: how anger and fear affect populist attitudes. *Swiss Polit. Sci. Rev.* 23, 444–461. doi: 10.1111/spsr.12261

Rivera-Otero, J. M., Lagares Diez, N., Pereira López, M., and Jaráiz Gulías, E. (2024). Correísmo y anticorreísmo: una fractura emocional en Ecuador. Elecciones presidenciales de 2021. *Colomb. Int.* 119, 91–121. doi: 10.7440/colombiaint119.2024.04

Rivera-Otero, J. M., Lagares, N., Jaráiz, E., and Pereira, M. (2025). Information, social networks and emotions: fear and anger towards Pedro Sánchez 2019–2021. *Front. Polit. Sci.* 6:1456412. doi: 10.3389/fpos.2024.1456412

Rivera-Otero, J. M., Mo-Groba, D., and Vicente Iglesias, G. (2023). Emotions and media: emotional regime and emotional factors of selective exposure. *Soc. Sci.* 12:554. doi: 10.3390/socsci12100554

Rudi, T. (2015). "Emotions towards leaders and voting behaviour," in *Personality Politics? The Role of Leader Evaluations in Democratic Elections,* eds. M. Costa Lobo and J. Curtice (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 215–236.

Ryan, C., and Gamson, W. A. (2006). The art of reframing political debates. *Contexts* 5, 13–18. doi: 10.1525/ctx.2006.5.1.13

Schmuck, D., Heiss, R., Matthes, J., Engesser, S., and Esser, F. (2017). Antecedents of strategic game framing in political news coverage. *Journalism* 18, 937–955. doi: 10.1177/1464884916648098

Schuck, A. R., Vliegenthart, R., Boomgaarden, H. G., Elenbaas, M., Azrout, R., van Spanje, J., et al. (2013). Explaining campaign news coverage: how medium, time, and context explain variation in the media framing of the 2009 European parliamentary elections. *J. Polit. Market.* 12, 8–28. doi: 10.1080/15377857.2013.752192

Slothuus, R. (2008). More than weighting cognitive importance: a dual-process model of issue framing effects. *Polit. Psychol.* 29, 1–28. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9221.2007.00610.x

Slothuus, R., and De Vreese, C. H. (2010). Political parties, motivated reasoning, and issue framing effects. *J. Polit.* 72, 630–645. doi: 10.1017/S002238161000006X

Stanyer, J. (2013). *Intimate Politics: Publicity, Privacy and the Personal Lives of Politicians in Media Saturated Democracies.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Tenscher, J., and Maier, M. (2009). European parliamentary elections 2004: studies on political campaigning and media framing of a second-order event. *J. Polit. Market.* 8, 1–6. doi: 10.1080/15377850802592023

Thijssen, P., van Dijk, R., and van Erkel, P. (2024). Exploring the effect of personalized voting on affective polarization: prototypical leadership and campaign effects. *Acta Polit.* 60, 189–215. doi: 10.1057/s41269-023-00319-1

Valentino, N. A., Hutchings, V. L., Banks, A. J., and Davis, A. K. (2008). Is a worried citizen a good citizen? Emotions, political information seeking, and learning via the internet. *Polit. Psychol.* 29, 247–273. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9221.2008.00625.x

Vasilopoulou, S., and Wagner, M. (2017). Fear, anger and enthusiasm about the European Union: effects of emotional reactions on public preferences towards European integration. *Eur. Union Polit.* 18, 382–405. doi: 10.1177/1465116517698048

Villaplana, F. R., and Fitzpatrick, J. (2024). Digital leaders: political leadership in the digital age. *Front. Polit. Sci.* 6:1425966. doi: 10.3389/fpos.2024.1425966

Vommaro, G. (2023). Elecciones Argentina 2023: la política amenazada por la crisis económica. *Más Poder Local* 54, 135–139. doi: 10.56151/maspoderlocal.208

Wattenberg, M. P. (1991). *The Rise of Candidate-Centered Politics: Presidential Elections of the 1980s.* Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Wolak, J., and Marcus, G. E. (2007). Personality and emotional response: strategic and tactical responses to changing political circumstances. *Ann. Am. Acad. Pol. Soc. Sci.* 614, 172–195. doi: 10.1177/0002716207306086