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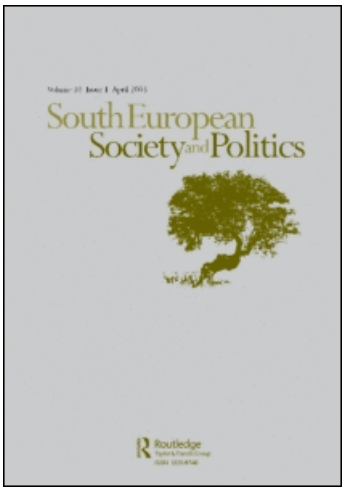

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Marco Lisi

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The Importance of Winning Office: The PS and the Struggle for Power*

Marco Lisi

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This work analyses the main dimensions of change and continuity of the Portuguese Socialist Party (PS) from 1976 to 2005. It will be argued that since the mid-1980s the socialist competitive strategy has remained substantially unchanged, whereas organization and political campaigning have undergone important transformations.

Keywords: Portuguese Parties; Party Organization; Socialist Party; PS; Party Change

Introduction

The Partido Socialista Português (Portuguese Socialist Party, PS) played an important role in the transition and consolidation of Portuguese democracy. After the 1974 military coup, the PS emerged as the leading party in the 1975 elections for the constituent assembly and in the first legislative elections held in 1976. From the earliest days of the new democratic regime the PS participated in minority or coalitional governments, giving priority to the building of the new democratic institutions rather than to the implementation of socialist policies. In the 1980s, the PS spent a very short period in office (1983–85) taking part in the Bloco Central (Central Bloc), a coalition between the PS and the centre-right Partido Social Democrata (Social Democratic Party, PSD). The rise of the Partido Renovador Democrático (Party of Democratic Renewal, PRD) in 1985—supported by President Ramalho Eanes—led to a huge electoral defeat for the PS, opening an entire decade in opposition which was marked by two absolute majorities of the PSD (1987–95). Yet, since the period of 'military tutelage', the socialists have been able to secure the presidential office first with Mário Soares (1986–96) and then with Jorge Sampaio, who was elected for the first time in 1996 and then re-elected with a strong majority in 2001. Since 1995, the PS has begun a new cycle of relative or absolute parliamentary majorities, broken only by a two-year

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period of centre-right coalitional government. After the two minority governments led by António Guterres (1995–2002), in February 2005 the PS gained its first absolute majority since Portuguese democratization under the leadership of José Sócrates.

These institutional and governmental experiences reflect an underlying feature of the socialist and social democratic parties of Southern Europe: since their formation they may be characterized as catch-all parties, giving priority to governmental power and the winning of office. This is a key point for understanding the evolution of the PS over the last three decades. Thus, it will be argued that the main challenges the party had to face in the recent period are related to the struggle for power. In particular, the relative stability of the main features of the political and electoral environment since the mid-1980s has led to a substantial continuity in different party dimensions. However, party changes took place when party leaders had to face challenges—within or outside the party—and needed to improve the electoral performance or to acquire more resources in order to achieve (or maintain) power.

This work will focus on the main dimensions of change and adaptation in the PS from 1995 to 2005. First the PS electoral performance and its political challenges between 1976 and 2005 will be examined. Then, the analysis will focus on the evolution of the PS programmatic orientations and ideological stances, while the third part will deal with changes in party membership and organization, stressing the relationship between the different faces of the party. The following sections will examine the competitive strategy and the organization of electoral campaigns. Finally, causes of party change will be pointed out in the conclusions, considering the whole trajectory of change undergone by the PS.

From Minority to Majority: The PS Electoral Performance

During the first decade of democratization, the PS held between 22 and 40 per cent of the parliamentary seats and it consolidated its position as one of the two largest Portuguese parties (Table 1). However, after the first socialist minority government led by Soares in 1976, the fragmentation of the party system made it necessary for the PS to join two coalition governments with the right-wing parties (in 1978 and again in 1983), since the orthodox Marxism–Leninism of the Communist Party (PCP) made a left-wing cabinet impossible.

This period was also characterized by a high degree of factionalism which finds its primary cause in the ideological heterogeneity of the groups that joined the PS during the early years of democratization.[1] Until the late 1970s the party's internal life was marked by several splits, while at the same time new groups entered the PS (Sablosky 1997). Consequently, Soares had some difficulties maintaining the party's unity and cohesion, as shown by his demise as secretary-general when the party decided to support Eanes's re-election as president of the Republic in 1981. However, after the internal adjustments and the fading of ideological divisions within the PS, Soares was able to re-establish his control over the party's organization and strategy.

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Table 1 PS Votes, Seats, Secretary-Generals and Participation in Government (1976–2005)

					Governments		
Election YEAR	PS votes* %	PS seats N	%	PS secretary-general	Prime minister	Inauguration date	Type of cabinet
1976	34.8	107	40.6	Mário Soares	Mário Soares (PS)	July 1976	Minority
					Mário Soares (PS–CDS)	Jan. 1978	Majority
					Nobre da Costa (Nonpartisan)	Aug. 1978	Presidential
					Mota Pinto (Nonpartisan)	November 1978	Presidential
1979	27.3	74	29.6	Mário Soares	Pintassilgo (Nonpartisan)	July 1979	Presidential
1980	26.6	71	28.4	Mário Soares	Sá Carneiro (PSD–CDS–PPM)	January 1980	Majority
					Pinto Balsemão (PSD–CDS–PPM)	January 1981	Majority
					Pinto Balsemão (PSD–CDS–PPM)	September 1982	Majority
					Pinto Balsemão (PSD–CDS–PPM)	December 1982	Majority
1983	36.1	101	40.4	Mário Soares	Mário Soares (PS–PSD)	June 1983	Majority
1985	20.7	57	22.8	A. Almeida Santos	Cavaco Silva (PSD)	November 1985	Minority
1987	22.2	60	24.0	Vítor Constâncio	Cavaco Silva (PSD)	September 1987	Majority
1991	29.1	72	31.3	Jorge Sampaio	Cavaco Silva (PSD)	October 1991	Majority
1995	43.7	111	48.7	António Guterres	António Guterres (PS)	October1995	Minority
1999	44.0	115	50.0	António Guterres	António Guterres (PS)	October 1999	Minority
2002	37.7	96	41.7	E. Ferro Rodrigues	Durão Barroso (PSD–CDS)	March 2002	Majority
					Santana Lopes (PSD–CDS)	July 2004	Majority
2005	45.0	121	52.6	José Sócrates	José Sócrates (PS)	February 2005	Majority

Source: Secretariado Técnico dos Assuntos para o Processo Eleitoral (STAPE). *Percentage of valid votes.

After reaching its lowest share of votes in 1985 (20.7 per cent) due to the rise of the PRD, the PS was able gradually to increase its support. The first success was the victory in local elections in 1989, which led Sampaio to be elected mayor of Lisbon; then signs of electoral recovery emerged in 1991, when the socialists reached 29.1 per cent of the vote at the expense of the Communists. However, the election of Soares as president in 1986 led to a leadership crisis inside the party and opened a period of internal struggles. After the attempt to elect Soares's right-hand man, António Almeida Santos, as party leader (1985), Vítor Constâncio was chosen as secretary-general in June 1986. The lack of control over the party's organization and the electoral defeats led to his replacement by Sampaio in 1989. The difficulties of being in opposition, after the second absolute majority obtained by Cavaco Silva, were to undermine Sampaio's leadership and party unity. Thus, in 1992 a new secretary-general was elected, António Guterres, who started a process of organizational and programmatic renewal. With the rise of Guterres a new generation of top leaders replaced the old cadres, as shown by the high turnover of the main party bodies—more than 80 per cent in the executive organ and 70 per cent in the deliberative one. Moreover, in 1993 Guterres started a process called *Estados Gerais* (General States), aimed at discussing the main programmatic orientations through the participation of independents and civil society in order to present a more attractive electoral manifesto.

In the 1995 elections the PS fell short by four seats of obtaining an absolute majority in the Portuguese parliament and formed a minority cabinet. This success was the consequence of the gradual move towards the centre of the political spectrum undertaken by Guterres. In addition to the new socialist leadership and programme, two factors—the crisis of the PSD government and its intra-party conflicts—contributed to the success of the PS strategy in the second half of the 1990s. However, the lack of a parliamentary majority led the PS to negotiate with the opposition, adopting a pragmatic orientation through ad hoc alliances with different parties. This contributed to the demobilization of the socialist sympathizers and to the rise of abstention in the 1999 elections, when the PS gained a higher percentage in terms of votes and seats, but did not manage to win an absolute majority.

The second Guterres government was marked by growing public dissatisfaction and the lack of coherent political action (Lobo & Magalhães 2002). Several cabinet reshuffles took place in 2001, showing the increasing difficulty of the Prime Minister to control both the executive and the relationship between the party and the government. In this sense, although Guterres officially resigned in December 2001 as a result of the defeat at the local elections, the crisis of the socialist government was due to the malaise emerging within both the PS and public opinion. The demise of Guterres as secretary-general led to the election of a new party leader, Eduardo Ferro Rodrigues, who had to face the negative conditions predicted for the socialists in the 2002 elections: the decrease in the government's popularity and the worsening of the economic situation. As foreseen, the socialist vote decreased by 6.3 per cent and the party went back to opposition (Table 1); yet, this was only the beginning of a new

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phase in the PS's history, characterized by a deep crisis at both the leadership and the civil society levels.

On the one hand, the loss of governmental resources made it difficult for the socialist leader to manage the centrifugal forces in the party elite and to stabilize the dominant coalition. On the other hand, the situation complicated further in 2003 with the involvement of some socialist leaders, close to the secretary-general, in a scandal involving child abuse. As a consequence, the support for the PS in the electorate dwindled and Ferro Rodrigues had to endure increasing criticism not only from voters but also within the party, as shown by the request of several socialist leaders that the secretary-general be removed, while others suggested convening a new congress and electing new party organs.

The 2005 early elections led to the return of the PS to government, this time with a comfortable absolute majority (45 per cent of the vote), the party's best result since 1976. The path to electoral success started with the election of José Sócrates as secretary-general in September 2004, after Ferro Rodrigues had resigned due to the political crisis that had led to the replacement of Durão Barroso—leader of the centre-right coalition and prime minister—by Pedro Santana Lopes (see Jalali, this volume). However, the recovery of the PS was due not only to the new leader—and the way he conducted the electoral campaign—but also to the programmatic incoherence of the new centre-right government and the inability of Santana Lopes to coordinate the executive. This seems to confirm what, according to Aguiar (2000, p. 73), is becoming a rule of the Portuguese party system: the electoral outcomes of the two main parties are linked, so that a party must benefit from the other party's failure in order to win a parliamentary majority. The high level of inter-bloc volatility (more than 98 per cent of total volatility) demonstrates that the PS was able to appeal to voters dissatisfied with the centre-right government (Magalhães 2005, p. 180).

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Towards the Centre: The Ideological and Programmatic Evolution of the PS

The move of the PS towards the centre of the political spectrum has been gradual and constant over the last three decades. Notwithstanding the Marxist ideological legacy inherited from the revolutionary period, the need to differentiate from the PCP and competition with the PSD forced the PS to adopt a moderate orientation. As various authors have stressed (Sabloski 1997; Canas 2005), the governmental responsibility of the PS during the first decade of the democratic regime represented a challenge for the ideological and programmatic evolution of the party. In a period characterized by a deep economic and financial crisis and international constraints—related to access to the European Community—the socialists had to adopt and implement pragmatic and realistic policies that ran counter to their ideological orientation.

The process of adaptation began in 1979 through the adoption of a new plan ('Dez anos para mudar Portugal' [Ten Years to Change Portugal]) developed under the coordination of Guterres, at the time only 30 years old. This was to constitute the guidelines for the PS's action throughout the 1980s, embracing democratic socialism

and a mixed economy (Puhle 2001, p. 283). The effort of the party to modify its identity culminated at the 1986 congress in the discarding of any references to Marxism from the party statutes. Besides the support of the PS for the European integration process—which has been the major dimension of continuity in the socialist programme since democratization—the new ideological orientations were based on political and economic pluralism, on the one hand, and on a commitment to improve the social and cultural conditions of citizens, on the other. After 1992, when Guterres became secretary-general, the move towards the centre was steered by the need to improve the country's social and economic modernization, but also by the greater proximity between the new party leader—with strong links to the Church—and Catholic voters. The party also adopted a new symbol—a rose instead of the traditional closed fist—as a sign of the renewal and moderation chosen by the party leadership. Finally, Guterres set out a more appealing political programme that was centred on social policies rather than on ideological issues.

Accordingly, in the 1995 electoral programme, the PS adopted a 'third way' orientation that combined pragmatic liberalism, the implementation of new social policies and financial orthodoxy (Lobo & Magalhães 2004). The constraints imposed by the EU were the most important factor in determining the economic and financial plans of the socialist governments. The European requirements not only made the PS collude with the opposition (especially the PSD) to adopt a number of economic policies,[2] but they also served as legitimizing principles of governmental choices. Notwithstanding parliamentary collaboration, the PS differed from the PSD in emphasizing the importance of education, through the implementation of the information society, and solidarity, through the reform of the welfare state in terms of health care regulation and the social security system.

These programmatic orientations have shown great continuity, even since the PS's return to power with José Sócrates. In the 2005 general elections the programme set out by the PS focused on a set of modernization policies (a package known as the 'technological shock'), such as the deepening of the information society both in public administration and in the education system, and the implementation of social policies. Thus, neither did the new socialist leaders decide to include new issues in their programme, nor have there been substantial changes in PS stances since the mid-1990s.

The evolution of the PS's ideology and programme over the past decades is confirmed by opinion surveys. In 1978 the electorate's average placement of the PS was 4.6 on a ten-point scale (from left to right), while in 1985 the score was five. Since then, the PS has swung from 4.6 to 5.2 but without a linear trend (4.8 in 1989; 4.6 in 1993; 4.7 in 1999; 5.2 in 2002 and 4.7 in 2005).[3] Yet these data underline an important pattern in the voters' perception of the PS, that is, when the party is in office voters tend to attribute a more moderate position to the socialists (the move to the centre in 1985, 1999 and 2002), whereas when the party is in opposition it is perceived to be more to the left. This seems to suggest that the electorate is more sensitive to the policies implemented by the socialist governments than to changes in ideological principles.

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In conclusion, two factors have contributed to the socialists' maintenance of the same programmatic stances: the first is the centripetal competition with the PSD, while the second is the continuity in the PCP's ideological orthodoxy and its exclusion from the national government (Jalali 2002; Lobo & Magalhães 2004). Interestingly, up to now the Bloco de Esquerda (Left Bloc, BE)[4] has monopolized the post-materialist themes. Even if the importance of these issues for the Portuguese electorate seems to be increased in the last decade, the socialist leaders have preferred to compete basically on the socio-economic and religious dimensions, instead of introducing a new dimension of competition (Freire 2005, pp. 346–347). This has enhanced the centripetal strategy of the PS and it has limited the ideological distance between the two main parties.

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The Organizational Change: Towards What Type of Party?

Organizational Structure and Party Membership

The PS built its organization according to the socialist mass party model, privileging a vertical structure, although it has never developed the participation of members inside the party—except in electoral periods—and it has endowed the membership with more rights than obligations, so that members only play a secondary role in party activities (Van Biezen 1998).

The main deliberative party bodies are the congress, the national commission and the political commission, while the executive bodies of the PS are the secretary-general (the party leader) and the executive committee (the secretariat). In addition to the main party bodies, the permanent commission has developed the important function of managing the relationship between the party in public office and the extra-parliamentary party. This body acts under the control of the party leader and includes members from the secretariat. In practice, the permanent commission has emerged as the inner circle of the party leadership under Guterres. In 2003 the commission disappeared from the party statutes but was restored in 2005, with the Sócrates government, first under the leadership of Jorge Coelho and then, after January 2006, under the direct control of the prime minister. The evolution of this party body shows the weak institutionalization of the PS.

The organizational model changed in 1992 after the rise of Guterres as secretary-general, as the PS structure was completely rebuilt—at least formally—with the introduction of a convention and the abolition of the congress. The national commission was now elected directly by party members and it replaced the congress as the main party body by electing all the remaining national organs (the political commission, the secretariat and the secretary-general). However, as observed by Van Biezen (2003), the convention model was bound to be just an intermezzo. In 1998 the PS leadership decided to return to the traditional model, reintroducing the congress as the main party body. One of the reasons adduced for the change was the lack of enthusiasm of party members and the failure to achieve a deeper mobilization during inter-elections periods. Therefore, the transformation undertaken in 1998 can be seen as a device to

re-establish the influence of the 'barons' within the party organization by controlling the election of delegates through the party federations (Van Biezen 2003, p. 72).

Turning now to the PS membership, a brief glance at its size shows the limited capacity of the party to establish strong links with the citizens. The low level of socialist members as a percentage of voters and of the electorate make clear how far the PS is from the classic mass party model, especially when compared with the PCP (Table 2). This is a relevant feature of the two main Portuguese parties—the PS and the PSD—which have shown more interest in attracting voters than members.

However, the most striking feature of the evolution of party membership concerns the deep qualitative changes undertaken in 2003. If we look at the channels for members' access and participation, the statutes approved in 2003 established new forms for the

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Table 2 PS and PCP Membership, 1974–2005

Year	PS members	PS membership (% of voters)	PS membership (% of electorate)	PCP membership (% of voters)	PCP membership (% of electorate)
1974	35,971	—	—	—	—
1975	81,654	3.77	1.31	10.6	1.60
1976	91,562	4.85	1.39	14.6	1.75
1978	96,563	—	—	—	—
1979	107,732	6.63	1.48	14.6	2.27
1980	115,762	7.21	1.61	18.6	2.60
1981	121,460	—	—	—	—
1982	125,648	—	—	—	—
1983	130,279	6.36	1.77	19.5	2.73
1984	—	—	—	—	—
1985	—	3.90	0.59	22.3	2.56
1986	46,655	—	—	—	—
1987	—	3.71	0.58	28.9	2.51
1989	62,117	—	—	—	—
1990	55,558	—	—	—	—
1991	59,869	3.58	0.70	32.4	1.93
1992	65,447	—	—	—	—
1993	68,498	—	—	—	—
1994	74,127	—	—	—	—
1995	81,358	3.7	1.01	27.8	1.60
1996	90,062	—	—	—	—
1997	96,107	—	—	—	—
1998	103,872	—	—	—	—
1999	114,974	4.2	1.06	27.1	1.51
2000	124,611 (100,000)*	—	—	—	—
2001	122.548 (80,000)†	—	—	—	—
2002	66,917	3.6	0.84	34.6	1.47
2003	74,949	—	—	—	—
2005	—	2.9	0.85	18.5	0.91

Sources: Martins (2004) and Silva (2005) for PS membership; Jalali (2002) for PCP membership as a percentage of voters. *Van Biezen (2003, p. 60). †*Público*, 24 April 2001.

integration of members, based not only on geographical criteria but also on thematic interests. Moreover, the possibility has been introduced of setting up cyber sections and to form 'politics clubs', which are informal structures promoted by members and open to citizens not necessarily linked to the party. Therefore, the status of 'sympathizer' was formally recognized, a sympathizer being 'any person who identifies with the programme and the Declaration of Principles' (PS 2003). Despite the lack of specific criteria to distinguish the different types of members, the statutes establish that sympathizers have the right to take part in several activities inside the party but without the right to vote, and they also have the chance to be registered in a specific file controlled by the secretariat. Overall, these changes show the loosening of the boundaries between members and voters, as well as the attempt to enhance the links between the party and civil society.

Another important change regards the recruiting system of the party, since according to the 2003 statutes the national organization—through the secretariat—controls the recruitment of party members, instead of local sections as happened in the past. However, there have been difficulties with the institutionalization of this change because of the conflicts between the central and local bodies of the party: at the end of 2003 the national commission re-established the payment of dues at the section level. This was interpreted as the result of the pressures from some powerful federations that wanted to counteract the increasing concentration of powers in the national party bodies (Lopes 2005, pp. 367–368).

Despite the tensions within the party regarding the delegates' election to the party congress and the recruiting system, the territorial cleavage—centre versus periphery—seems not to be a relevant feature of the PS organization. Since the early 1980s there has been a process of centralization and concentration of powers in the national party organs. This concerns the candidates' selection, party financing, the composition of national party bodies, and the strategy and organization of the electoral campaign (see below). Nevertheless, the organizational balance of power should be distinguished from the governmental dynamics; in this sense, holding a local office constitutes a key resource in order to gain an important position at the national level, namely, in the party national leadership or in the main political institutions (that is, government and parliament). Thus, local office holders are able to use their power to achieve more autonomy—often through clientelistic practices—and to influence party life in their own district or municipality for their own interests or careers, to the detriment of national party objectives and policies (Jalali 2002; Lopes 2005).

Party Leadership and the Internal Balance of Power

As regards the national party bodies, we must consider two different aspects: the first concerns the evolution of the size of deliberative and executive organs, whereas the second relates to the powers attributed to these organs. Observing the changes in the size of the national party bodies, it is possible to distinguish two different periods: the first, with Guterres as secretary-general, is characterized by the increase in the number of members of the secretariat and the permanent commission, while the

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second, starting with Ferro Rodrigues, is marked by a huge rationalization of national organs. Until 2001 the expansion of the executive bodies was a device used by the secretary-general to reward the more careerist leaders through appointments *ex officio*. However, under Ferro Rodrigues the size of the party executive was reduced in order to revitalize the party leadership, as also shown by the frequency of meetings of the political commission, which changed from intervals of two months to intervals of three weeks.

A closer look at the powers of the national party bodies shows that the underlying feature of the PS between 1995 and 2005 is the increasing concentration of powers in the executive organs and, in particular, in the hands of the secretary-general. This is due not only to the control of important organizational resources such as the management of party funding and the selection of candidates,[5] but also to the institutional role played by the PS, mainly through the governmentalization of party organs (Lobo 2003). This means that when the party achieves governmental power there is a strong overlap between the party leadership and the members of the cabinet, but gradually the party in government, and especially the party leader, acquires more autonomy, leading to control over the rest of the party. Although formally the secretary-general has maintained almost the same prerogatives vis-à-vis the national party bodies, in practice between 1995 and 2005 there has been a deeper concentration of powers in the party leader's hands. This evolution is reflected in the introduction of the direct election of the party leader.

The mechanism for the selection of the PS secretary-general has changed several times since 1976. While originally the socialist leader was elected by the party congress, after the introduction of the 1992 statutes the power to select the secretary-general was attributed to the national commission. Finally, in 1998 direct election of the party leader by party members was introduced. This is probably the most important organizational change in the last decade; after the failure of the convention model, this change was considered by the socialist leadership a mechanism to expand internal participation and legitimacy. The secretary-general is elected by the majority of votes polled by the party members.[6] At the same time, the secretariat is elected through a closed list presented by the secretary-general, who also chooses the members of the permanent commission. This allows the party leader to have strong support within the executive organs. Similar to what has been observed for other European parties, the direct election of the secretary-general does not entail greater intra-party democratization; instead, it seems that this organizational change prompts an increasing concentration of powers because of the 'atomization' effect on the membership and the neutralization of the middle-level elite (Mair 1994; Lobo 2003).

Centripetal Dynamics and Bilateral Oppositions: The PS's Competitive Strategy

The policy of alliances followed by the PS reflects both the characteristics of the democratic transition—through the formation of the party identity in opposition to the radical socialism advanced by the PCP and extreme-left groups—and the evolution

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of the Portuguese party system towards a bipolar system. These two elements are the main causes of the continuity of the socialist strategy of alliances since the mid-1980s. The underlying features of the competitive strategy adopted by the PS are the strengthening of the competition towards the centre of the political spectrum and the refusal to form any kind of alliance with the left-wing parties (PCP, BE) at the national level.

Since 1987 the Portuguese party system has become less fragmented, as shown by the decrease in the effective number of parliamentary parties (ENP). In the first decade of the democratic regime the average ENP was 3.3, which diminished to 2.5 in the 1987–2005 period (Martins & Mendes 2005, p. 104). This was the consequence of the increase in the share of votes for the centre parties (PS and PSD), which contrasted with the progressive weakening of the extreme parties (CDS and PCP). The sudden rise and fall of the PRD and the resulting high level of vote shifts have also benefited the PS and the PSD in the long term (Magalhães 2005). Between 1975 and 1985 the average share of the vote for the two main centre parties was 63 per cent, substantially below the 75.8 per cent of the following period (1987–2005). This suggests a progressive strengthening of the centre and a shift to a more centripetal competition, although this trend was partially reversed in the 2005 elections. The semi-presidential system has also contributed to reinforcing the bipolarization of the system—left versus right—as it forces the small parties in each bloc to support the PS and the PSD candidates for the presidency in the runoff election at the cost of eroding their partisan loyalties.

The second characteristic of the socialists' competitive strategy is the refusal to form alliances with the left-wing parties. Despite the Communists' attempts to enter an alliance with the PS, the socialist leadership—namely Soares—has always avoided any cooperation with the PCP at the national level. Initially, this strategy stemmed from the ideological differences emerging between the two parties in the revolutionary period. Things seemed to change in 1989, when the socialist leader Jorge Sampaio ran for the presidency of the Lisbon municipal chamber in alliance with the PCP, becoming mayor of the capital city. The rise of Guterres to the party leadership and the Communists' electoral decline since 1991, at both national and local level, were to interrupt any further rapprochement between the two left-wing parties. Yet, the 2002 and 2005 elections have shown that this issue still represents an important puzzle for the socialist leadership. While an absolute parliamentary majority allows parties of government—mainly the PS and the PSD—to overlook the smaller parties of their own bloc, a relative majority endangers governmental stability (Jalali 2002). In the 2002 electoral campaign, for instance, the socialist leader Ferro Rodrigues suggested that if the PS had obtained a relative majority it would have probably entered into an alliance with one of the smaller left-wing parties (PCP or BE). Likewise, the 2004 election of the secretary-general showed that the strategy of alliances was one of the main issues that divided the three candidates. While João Soares (Mário Soares's son) did not assume a clear position on this issue, Sócrates maintained the competitive position adopted by Guterres, as opposed to Manuel Alegre—supported by the party

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left wing—who suggested the possibility of negotiating an alliance with the left parties, especially if the PS were not able to achieve a strong parliamentary majority.

In the evolution of the competitive strategy undertaken by the PS, the main change took place in the mid-1980s through the progressive adaptation of the socialists' policy of alliances to the party system dynamics. During the Soares leadership the PS tried to play a pivotal role in forming the governmental majorities. Thus, the party's basic aim was to maximize its governmental potential through the establishment of alliances with the centre-right parties, while denying any kind of compromise with the PCP. After 1985, with the beginning of the rotation in government between the PS and the PSD, the Socialist Party (under Constâncio and Sampaio) tried to win the parliamentary majority by running alone and presenting itself as the only viable alternative to the centre-right parties. According to this strategy the PS was to become the 'common house' of centre-left voters. Since then, and despite the hesitations of some leaders, the competitive strategy has shown great continuity. However, as observed by Nunes (2005, p. 193), the bipolarization prompted by the PS after the mid-1980s took a different form with Guterres. Under the leadership of Constâncio and Sampaio the PS attempted to maintain a leftist identity in order to represent the left pole of the party system, whereas Guterres aimed to compete directly with the PSD in order to maximize the share of votes and to win a parliamentary majority.

Guterres's strategy was based on the appeal to the centre electorate and the direct competition for the PSD's social basis of support. Since democratization PS electoral campaigns have targeted voters with a centrist position and weak party attachment, without particular reference to any specific social class. Yet this strategy became clearer under Guterres, not only through the formulation of a more moderate and liberal programme, but also through the appeal to the Catholic vote. In addition, he attempted to mobilize potential abstainers, who constitute an important factor in determining which party will win the majority of parliamentary seats (Aguiar 2000; Freire 2001). This was indeed a priority of the message launched in 1999 for the winning of an absolute majority and also the basis of the 2005 electoral success.[7] In this sense, the competitive strategy adopted by Guterres has shown remarkable continuity and still characterizes the relationship between the PS and the other parties.

More Responsive or More Efficient? PS Electoral Campaigns

The organization of the electoral campaigns for the Portuguese parties has developed in the context of mass politics and the widespread use of mass media. As a consequence the PS has always attributed great importance to television through media-based events (conventions, rallies) and the face-to-face debates between the main party leaders which take place on the eve of elections. Moreover, the increasing importance of the means of communication and the dynamics of the presidential elections have enhanced the personalization of the electoral competition and the role played by party leaders (Lobo 2005). However, when compared with previous socialist campaigns, the 1995 campaign strengthened the technocratic and professionalized

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approach to the electoral competition; this was the result of the constitution of a specific electoral body—the electoral technical committee—on the one hand, and of the use of external consultants regarding marketing activities, on the other.[8] With the exception of the 2002 elections, these two elements have represented a constant feature of the socialist campaigns since the mid-1990s.

As regards campaign organization, the PS relies on ad hoc electoral committees rather than on a permanent department. While in 2002 and 2005 the committees were created as soon as the date of the early elections was known, in 1995 and 1999 Guterres was able to prepare the electoral campaign at least one year before the date of the elections. The party leader usually forms an electoral team with some of his closest collaborators—normally members of the executive committee—in order to decide the electoral strategy and to supervise and coordinate the campaign. From this point of view, the PS campaign is highly centralized as regards the conceptualization of the main strategy, and the secretariat and the permanent commission take care of all aspects of the leader's campaign. Party federations and local branches, however, usually have more freedom in making plans and supporting the candidates in their own districts. The prevalence of the central executive over the party local organizations also emerged during the 2005 elections, when a committee under the coordination of the PS organizational secretary, Jorge Coelho, and including some of the main party leaders (for example, António Galamba and António Vitorino), was established to supervise and plan the electoral campaign. More than for their expertise, the members of the committee were chosen according to the personal trust and confidence of the party leader, who maintained tight control over the whole process.

The most important change in the organization of electoral campaigns since the mid-1990s regards electoral marketing. While the national party bodies—usually the executive committee—took charge of marketing activities until the late 1980s, since the election of Guterres as secretary-general there has been an increasing use of external consultants; in particular, advertising agencies were asked to prepare posters, hoardings, slogans and other outdoor publicity. Experts on marketing and communication usually follow the guidelines of the electoral committee, though they are responsible for the conception of the material and the communication strategy. The use of opinion polls varies according to the institutional position of the party: when the PS is in government there is a widespread use of opinion polls, so that the party undergoes a sort of 'permanent campaign'. On the other hand, when the party is in opposition, it usually relies on opinion polls and other kinds of data produced by newspapers or magazines, although in specific situations the party leaders can decide to ask private agencies to monitor public opinion in order to have some kind of feedback. This activity usually takes place four or five times a year, but intensifies on the eve of elections.

The shift towards—and strengthening of—'new campaign politics' is shown also by the evolution of party funding. Between 1995 and 2005 two trends have emerged: the first is the huge increase in the expenditure on national legislative elections, while the second is the rise of state subventions (Martins 2004). Since 1995 there has been a

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Table 3 PS Revenue and Expenditure for Electoral Campaigns, 1995–2005 (thousands of euros and percentages)

	1995	%	**1999**	%	**2002**	%	**2005**	%
State subventions	284.8	11.6	346.6	13.9	1,310.2	49.4	3,453.7	74.3
Donations from companies	296.7	12.1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Donations from individuals	1,866.5	76.2	—	—	154.7	5.9	—	—
Fundraising campaigns	—	—	—	—	41.8	1.6	448.9	9.6
Contributions from the party	—	—	1,657	66.6	1,134.5	43.1	744.4	16.0
Other	—	—	481.4	19.0				
Total revenue	2,448.5	99.9	2,485	99.5	2,632.2	100	4,647.2	99.9
Total expenditure	2,470.0	—	2,490	—	2,631.6	—	4,647.2	—

Sources: Van Biezen (2003, p. 195) for 1995 and 2002; Comissão Nacional de Eleições for 1999; PS for 2005 (provisional data).

linear increase in the PS's expenditures. As Table 3 shows, in 2005 the cost of the electoral campaign almost doubled compared with 2002.[9] On the other hand, the funding for the electoral competition is based mainly on public subventions. In the 2005 elections state contributions accounted for more than 70 per cent of the electoral budget of the PS, while only 25 per cent was financed by party canvassing and party contribution. The weight of public subventions allows the Portuguese parties to give less importance to canvassing activities and to the contributions of their members, while electoral success has emerged as the guarantee for survival without other kinds of income.

Conclusions

This work aimed to examine the evolution of the main dimensions of change and continuity in the Portuguese Socialist Party. It has been argued that since the mid-1980s the PS has undergone important changes in terms of its ideological and programmatic orientations, as well as its competitive strategy. These changes, which went hand in hand with the shift from a multipolar to a bipolar political system, culminated in the leadership of Guterres.

More complex is to evaluate the organizational changes, since the analysis of the party statutes must be complemented with the evolution of the internal balance of power. Even if the powers of the national party bodies did not formally change during the decade 1995–2005, the relevance of the executive and deliberative organs varied according to the institutional role played by the party—whether in opposition or in government. Thus, incumbency is a major factor that influenced the PS's changes from the mid-1990s onwards. As the evolution of the size of the main party bodies and the increasing concentration of powers in the party leader have shown, during the two

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Guterres mandates the secretariat and the political commission played a secondary role; on the other hand, when the party was in opposition the executive committee emerged as the most powerful body. Overall, the variation of the internal distribution of power has shown an increasing autonomy and concentration of powers in the executive committee and in the party leader in particular (Canas 2005).

These organizational changes entail some considerations on the causes of party change. To explain the PS's changes, the most significant variable seems to be electoral performance: in effect, the changes undertaken under Guterres have uncovered a growing electoralist vocation and an increasing dependence on governmental power. The second variable that must be considered is the party leadership: intra-party consensus building has become a necessity of contemporary parties in order to present themselves as united and cohesive. The first challenge for the leadership of electoralist parties is thus to gain strong support within the party before appealing to voters. Meanwhile, the importance of party leadership depends on institutional resources: while it is easy for party leaders to ensure control over internal party life when they hold governmental power, this seems to be much more difficult in opposition. In this sense, the winning of elections is an important instrument for gaining more resources (and power) to spend both within and outside the party. The increasing concentration of power in the party leader can represent, however, an element of vulnerability by weakening the party organization and increasing its dependency on government resources at both the national and local level.

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Notes

[1] Besides the ideological factionalism, different tendencies emerged in the mid-1980s around different leaders (or 'barons'). This 'personalized' factionalism (Lopes 2005, p. 363) was the consequence of the pattern of democratic transition, the process of party building and the disappearance of the ideological conflicts after the mid-1980s.

[2] The pragmatic and moderate stance undertaken by the first Guterres government is reflected in the percentage of laws passed in parliament with the support of the centre-right parties, as opposed to that of the Communists (almost 20 per cent against eight per cent; see Filipe 2002, pp. 251–252).

[3] See Freire (2004) for 1978, 1985, 1989, 1999 and 2002; Gunther & Montero (2001) for 1993; and Barreto et al. (2005) for 2005.

[4] The Left Bloc is a coalition of three extreme-left parties (Socialist Revolutionary Party, PSR and People's Democratic Union, UDP) and a political movement (Politics XXI) which ran for the first time in the 1999 legislative elections.

[5] Besides the control of the extra-parliamentary party over the parliamentary group through the party discipline, according to the 2003 statutes the party leader has the right to appoint 30 per cent of the candidates for the legislative elections, while the political commission has a veto power on the remaining candidates—who are chosen formally by the party federations.

[6] In order to be a candidate for the party leadership it was necessary to be a member of the party for at least one year and to present the signatures of 1,000 party members. With the statutes approved in 2003, the limit of the signatures decreased to 100 in order to encourage intra-party competition. Only in 2004, however, has there been a real competition between different

candidates; before Sócrates' election, the selection of the party leader was a top-down process, since the secretary-general was de facto chosen by the main party leaders.

[7] The correlation coefficients between abstention and the socialist support at aggregated level are statistically significant both for the 1995 and 1999 elections; while in the first case the PS increased its votes where the amount of abstentions decreased ($r = -0.30$), in the second case the socialist losses corresponded to an increase in abstentions ($r = -0.13$; see Freire & Magalhães 2002, pp. 105–106).

[8] Most of the information about the PS political campaign is based on data collected through newspapers and magazines, as well as interviews with Socialist leaders.

[9] By and large, data on the financing of political parties in Portugal lack reliability and must be considered with care due to the limits of internal and external control.

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