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8 Portugal

The primacy of 'independents'

António Costa Pinto and
Pedro Tavares de Almeida

Democratization and the semi-presidential government

Portugal inaugurated the third wave of democratization with a bloodless military coup on 25 April 1974, putting an end to four decades of dictatorship (1926–74). Unshackled by international pro-democracy forces and occurring in the midst of the Cold War, the coup led to a severe crisis aggravated by the concomitance of two processes: the transition to democracy and the end of what was the last European colonial empire (Pinto 2003). As Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan have noted, 'we all too often tend to see [Portugal] in the framework set by later transitions processes', forgetting the greater degree of uncertainty and the 'extreme conflict path' of the regime change (Linz and Stepan 1996).

The decolonization process was the main reason for the conflict that broke out between some conservative generals and the Armed Forces' Movement (MFA – Movimento das Forças Armadas) – which had planned and executed the coup – in the immediate wake of the regime's collapse: a conflict that was also at the root of the military's active intervention in political life following the dictatorship's overthrow.

The revolutionary period of 1974–75, when powerful tensions emerged within Portuguese society, was the most complex phase of the transition to democracy. Following the military coup of 25 November 1975, which was led by moderate officers, tensions began to subside, and in 1976 a new Constitution was approved and the first legislative and presidential elections were held, opening the political arena for democratic consolidation.

Alone out of the four principal founding parties of Portuguese democracy, the Communist Party (PCP – Partido Comunista Português) had a long history of clandestine organization within the country. The Socialist Party (PS – Partido Socialista), founded by Mario Soares in Germany in 1973, was heir to the republican and socialist elements of the electoral opposition to Salazarism. The parties that were to represent the right and centre-right, the Social Democratic Centre (CDS – Centro Democrático Social) and the Popular Democratic Party – later renamed Social Democratic Party (PSD) – were formed after 25 April 1974. In spite of periodic challenges,[1] these parties have structured, in a stable way, Portuguese democracy (Bruneau 1997; Jalali 2007).

The nature of the transition had several legacies for the political system, namely the initially prominent constitutional role of the military (Pinto 2006). After difficult negotiations, and as a result of a pact between the military and the parties, the 1976 Constitution established the Council of the Revolution (CR – Conselho da Revolução). The creation of the CR, which was to be led by the head of state, was closely connected with the implicit agreement that the first president would be a military officer – as actually happened in July 1976, when General Eanes was elected with the support of PS, PSD and CDS. The CR was granted relatively extensive powers. It had exclusive legislative powers over the organization, operation and discipline of the armed forces, and could approve international agreements on military matters via decree. Moreover, the CR was the guarantor of the Constitution, and had to be consulted by the president before the appointment of a new prime minister. The temporary ascendancy of the military was also of particular relevance for the constitutional design of a mixed form of government: the semi-presidential system.

The dual responsibility of government towards the president and the parliament, which is common to all semi-presidential regimes, meant that the president could withdraw his political confidence, forcing the government to resign even if it enjoyed parliamentary support (Freire and Pinto 2005). Moreover, the president could dissolve parliament at will. During President Eanes's first mandate, he oversaw the formation of three successive governments (1978–79) led by independents (see Table 8.1).

The president was granted veto powers over both parliamentary and government bills, and could also request the verification of the constitutionality of the bills, either *ex ante* or *ex post*.[2] The parliament and the CR also enjoyed powers that constrained the government's overall steering function. Yet the 1976 Constitution placed the government at the helm of policy-making and of public administration. The president's powers vis-à-vis the government were, in turn, limited in several respects. First, the president needs the prime minister's countersignature in such matters as the appointment of government ministers, the dissolution of the governments of the autonomous regions (Azores and Madeira) and in the declaration of a state of emergency. Secondly, the president might preside over the Council of Ministers only if asked to do so by the prime minister. Lastly, the president had no formal capacity to influence the selection of ministers in the formation of party governments, and informal vetoes on individuals were rare.

In 1982, when the balance of forces had evolved considerably with the decline of the military's power, the Constitution was revised – largely to circumscribe the powers of the president and subordinate the military to political control. This was achieved with the support of the parties of the right in parliament – the PSD, CDS and Popular Monarchist Party (PPM – Partido Popular Monárquico) – and the PS. The CR was dissolved and its powers redistributed amongst two new bodies, the Constitutional Court and the Council of State. With respect to presidential power, the most important change was that the government became politically responsible only to parliament. This meant that, in contrast to the original text, the president could no longer dismiss the government by claiming a lack of political trust. Nevertheless, the president retained limited authority to dismiss the government in 'exceptional' political circumstances. As to parliamentary accountability, the original rules were kept unchanged, but for one procedure.[3] Hence, the government is dismissed under three circumstances: (1) the government's programme is rejected by the absolute majority of deputies; (2) a confidence vote (*moção de confiança*) is not approved; and (3) a no-confidence vote[4] (*moção de censura*) is approved by an absolute majority.

The 1982 constitutional revision reduced the president's powers to a level that is below average in semi-presidential regimes (Siaroff 2003). Following General Eanes's two mandates (1976–80 and 1980–86), Mário Soares – historic leader of the PS – became the first civilian president of Portuguese democracy. Soon after he took office the PSD won the first of two absolute majorities (1987–95). Thus, Mário Soares's presidency of 1986–96 was almost entirely one of cohabitation with a single-party majority government. Indeed, it seems that the consensus surrounding the reduction in presidential powers may have been cemented not on the decrease in constitutional powers *per se* but rather on the changes in the party system that produced stable government majorities. From 1987 until 1995, stable single-party absolute majorities, coupled with a president who regarded himself as a referee rather than as a policy-maker, combined to frame the Portuguese president as an active observer, but not as the locus of executive power, which rested firmly with the prime minister and his government (Lobo, Pinto and Magalhães 2008).

President Jorge Sampaio also served two mandates (1996–2001 and 2001–2006). The first one coincided with a single-party minority government led by António Guterres (see Table 8.1). Thus, between 1996 and 2001 both the government and the presidency were held by the Socialists. Following Guterres's resignation at the end of 2001, new elections were held and a right-wing coalition government was formed by the PSD and the CDS. In July 2004, the abrupt resignation of Prime Minister Barroso, then appointed president of the European Commission, opened up a political crisis that was aggravated by the erratic performance of his successor (Santana Lopes). A few months later, the president decided to dismiss the government, to dissolve parliament and call for elections. This event shows clearly that constitutional powers still allow great presidential authority during times of political instability.[5] In 2005, one year before the end of his second mandate, Sampaio saw the PS return to power, with its first absolute majority (Tavares de Almeida and Freire 2005).

As regards the government structure, the 1976 Constitution established the post of vice-prime minister, but it has rarely been implemented.[6] Besides this position there is no formal hierarchy between ministers; yet the title of 'ministro de Estado' has been used to describe those who occupy pivotal positions in the cabinet (e.g. the Minister of Finances). According to the constitutional rules, junior ministers (*secretários de Estado*) depend on the respective minister and are forced to resign with him. They might also occasionally participate in cabinet meetings as substitutes for their ministers, but the recent institutionalization of the Meeting of Junior Ministers (Reunião de Secretários de Estado) – which meets regularly under the leadership of the Minister of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers – made this procedure quite rare. There is a formal incompatibility between a parliamentary seat and a ministerial office, hence deputies who are appointed

ministers should be replaced, although maintaining a 'sleeping mandate'. Afterwards, if they leave the government, they can resume their parliamentary seats.

The overall size of the government has had some significant variations, namely as a result of the expansion or reduction of the number of distributable positions to junior ministers (see Table 8.1). The portfolio allocation of senior positions is limited, and most governments comprised between 16 and 18 ministers (including the prime minister). There is no correlation between changes in government size and changes in the number or the ideological orientation of government parties (both the smallest and the largest ones were single-party cabinets of the PSD).

Table 8.1 Type, party composition and size of governments in Portugal, 1976–2005

Government	*Type*	*Ministers*	*Junior ministers*	*Total*
23 July 1976 M. Soares	Single party PS	18	45	63
23 January 1978 M. Soares	Coalition PS+CDS	16	36	52
27 August 1978 Nobre da Costa	Independents	15	31	46
21 November 1979 Mota Pinto	Independents	16	35	51
31 July 1979 Pintasilgo	Independents	17	33	50
3 January 1980 Sá Carneiro	Coalition PSD+CDS+PPM	15	39	54
9 January 1981 F. Balsemão	Coalition PSD+CDS+PPM	18	41	59
4 September 1981 F. Balsemão	Coalition PSD+CDS+PPM	15	46	61
9 June 1983 M. Soares	Coalition PS+PSD	17	40	57
6 November 1985 Cavaco Silva	Single party PSD	14	32	46
17 August 1987 Cavaco Silva	Single party PSD	16	36	52
31 October 1991 Cavaco Silva	Single party PSD	17	51	68
28 October 1995 A. Guterres	Single party PS	18	39	57
25 October 1999 A. Guterres	Single party PS	18	43	61
6 April 2002 J.M. Barroso	Coalition PSD+CDS/PP	18	34	52
17 July 2004 Santana Lopes	Coalition PSD+CDS/PP	20	38	58
12 March 2005 J. Sócrates	Single party PS	17	36	53

Notes: Number of ministers and junior ministers at the time of government's appointment. 'Ministers' includes the prime minister. 'Junior ministers' includes both *Secretários de Estado* and *Subsecretários de Estado*.

The selection of Portuguese ministers

As argued above, the transformations in executive power that have occurred over the last three decades have served first of all to extricate the military from the political system, and to subordinate them clearly to the civilian power. Presidential powers have also been circumscribed, at least at times of political stability. Hence, in Portugal's democracy party leaders who become prime ministers have increasingly enjoyed a great deal of autonomy in the selection of their ministers. At the same time, parliamentary groups have tended to occupy a subordinate position within the parties' internal power structures and it is normal for parties in power to suffer a 'governmentalization' of their leadership (Lobo 2005).

Beginning by analysing the socio-demographic background of the ministers who have served during the present democratic period, we are able to identify four essential traits. First, we can see there have been very few women ministers. Despite a woman having been prime minister in 1978, the presence of women in the executives from 1976 to 1999 corresponds to approximately 4 per cent of the total.[7] While remaining at a very low level, the proportion of female ministers has increased in the last four executives. As regards gender, it is worth noting that, unlike the parliament, where the parties of the left have been the major suppliers of women deputies, at ministerial level there is not a relevant difference between right and left. A second important aspect, alongside the virtual non-existence of ministers without university education, is the relative hegemony of ministers with a law degree, a trend that is more accentuated in governments of the right. Yet ministers with technical backgrounds (engineering, economics and management) are in the whole predominant, which is an indicator of a preference for selecting 'specialists' rather than 'generalists'. Thirdly, the geographic centralization of ministerial recruitment is clearly visible by the overwhelming majority of ministers who completed their studies at the University of Lisbon. Finally, with respect to occupational profile, ministers tend to emerge from three basic categories: university professors; public and private managers; and lawyers. The importance of universities as a hotbed of ministerial recruitment is strictly correlated with the increased protagonism of 'independents' and/or technocrats in the executives.

With respect to the political *cursus honorum*, there are two essential aspects that deserve to be highlighted (see Table 8.3). On the one hand, and contrasting with many other European democracies, the parliament does not have a strategic role in the ministerial selection process. Between 1976 and 2005 only 49 per cent of all first-time ministers had been elected to parliament, with a significant proportion of the ex-deputies having little effective experience as parliamentarians. With respect to the length of parliamentary service, it should be stressed that a large proportion of those who were deputies (38 per cent between 1976 and 1999) were elected only once, some of them having never actually served in parliament owing

Table 8.2 Social background of ministers in Portugal, 1976–2005 (%)

Governments	Degree			Lisbon Univ.	Main occupation			Female
	Law	Engineering	Economics		Professor	Manager	Lawyer	
1976–99* *Average*	35.6	29.3	20.6	70.2	32.1	24.5	19.5	4.3
Guterres II 1999–2002	26.9	19.2	26.9	64.0	31.0	17.2	10.3	11.5
Barroso 2002–2004	43.5	13.0	30.4	81.0	30.4	17.4	13.0	17.4
Lopes 2004–2005	65.0	10.0	20.0	84.2	20.0	20.0	35.0	15.0
Sócrates 2005–	29.4	23.5	29.4	82.3	52.9	11.8	5.9	11.1

* Source: Tavares de Almeida and Pinto 2003.

Table 8.3 Political background of ministers in Portugal, 1976–2005 (%)

Governments	Mayors	Junior ministers	Deputies	Party leadership	Political experience	
					Yes	No
1976–99** *Average*	0.0	46.0	51.5	49.1	76.7	23.3
Guterres II 1999–2002	13.8	55.2	79.3	65.5	86.2	13.8
Barroso 2002–04	17.4	43.5	65.2	65.2	82.6	17.4
Lopes 2004–05	15.0	20.0	55.0	55.0	75.0	25.0
Sócrates *** 2005–	7.6	41.2	52.9	52.9	64.7	35.3

Notes: 'Deputies' includes those who were elected MPs, regardless of having a seat or not in parliament. Figures for Socrates include only those appointed on 12 March 2005.

Source: Tavares de Almeida and Pinto 2003. Since some individuals were ministers more than once, and had a discontinuous ministerial career, we considered their political experience at first-time appointment.

to their promotion to the cabinet within a matter of weeks after their election (Tavares de Almeida and Pinto 2003). Simultaneously, the position of junior minister – where, in general, the technical talents and skills are more valued[8] – has been an important step in the rise to the rank of cabinet minister. On the other hand, during the same period (1976–2005) – and despite the prominence of party governments – around 44 per cent of all first-time ministers had never been members of national party bodies.

The importance of ministers without a political background (either as deputies or as party leaders), which represents almost one-quarter of all ministers between 1976 and 1999, reached its peak in the three governments overseen by President Eanes in 1978–79. In fact, approximately two-fifths (or 41.7 per cent) of the ministers who served in these governments had no political experience. What is more significant, however, is that the non-political ministers have continued to have a significant weight in party governments, regardless of its type (coalition versus single-party) or ideological orientation (centre right versus centre left). Thus, for instance, the single-party majority Socialist government appointed in 2005 included 35 per cent of ministers without party or representative experience, while in the previous centre-right coalition government the corresponding figure was 25 per cent.

Hence, when we look at the socio-demographic and political backgrounds of the ministers who have been in office during the current democratic regime there is a major element of divergence with the majority of European cabinets: the weaker parliamentary socialization along with the presence of a substantial number of ministers without any party-political experience (Blondel and Thiébault 1991; Tavares de Almeida and Pinto 2003). The salient role of these ministers without 'political experience' in Portuguese party governments, particularly after the brief experience of presidential cabinets, can be explained by three interrelated factors.

First, the trend to reinforce the 'technical' legitimacy of the executive results from the growing complexities of governance (e.g. the impact of Europeanization) and is intended to countervail the strong bias of ordinary citizens against the 'political class'. In fact, public opinion polls both on the prestige of professional groups and on the role played by the major political institutions show the persistence of a negative evaluation of full-time politicians and of the performance of parliament.

The second factor is the weak institutionalization and penetration in civil society of the political parties, a phenomenon that is illustrated by the increasing decline in electoral turnout and in party loyalties of voters, since the mid-1980s, as well as by the fact that many people with high professional and academic credentials went away from parties. Hence, the attempts made by parties to promote their 'openness towards civil society' through a variety of initiatives aiming to bring together independents who are experts in various policy areas. The PS was the first to initiate this process by launching in 1993 the so-called *Estados Gerais* (*Etats Generaux*), an all-encompassing platform gathering Socialists and independents, which played an active role in the establishment of the party's electoral programme in 1995 and, after the election, became an important springboard of opportunity for cabinet recruitment (Ferreira-Pereira 2005). This 'recipe' would be replicated, and the two major parties (PS and PSD) generated pools of 'fellow travellers', mainly formed by university professors and managers, who become '*minister-iáveis*' without a previous political career.

The third factor is, regardless of the personality of officeholders, the increasing leadership power and autonomy enjoyed by prime ministers, namely in the formation of their cabinets, a development that is closely connected with the growing personalization of electoral politics (McAllister 2007) and, more generally, with

the 'presidencialization' of governance in modern democracies (Poguntke and Webb 2005). The political memories published by former prime minister Cavaco Silva (Silva 2002), a recent case-study on Guterres's first cabinet (Ferreira-Pereira 2005) and interviews with former ministers provide evidence for this argument.

Termination of governments and de-selection of ministers

The formation of the first single-party majority government in 1987 marked a decisive turning point in the pattern of government stability. Between July 1976 and August 1987 there were ten governments – five coalitions, three non-partisans and two single-party minority – and none of them ended the four-year term between elections. As Table 8.4 shows, the lack of consistent parliamentary majorities, and intra- and inter-party dissensions, as well as the conflicts between party governments and the president, accounted for the low rate of cabinet survival and duration. After 1987, there was a reversal in terms of the predominant government type, from coalition to single-party majority, and furthermore three out of six governments ended their constitutional mandate – a predictable scenario also for the cabinet currently in office. This new pattern of stable governments from 1987 onwards did not result from any major change in the institutional rules (e.g. an electoral reform), being closely connected both with vote concentration in the two major parties (PS and PSD) and with ideological deradicalization of adversarial party politics. From 1995 to 2002 the Socialist Prime Minister Guterres led two successive single-party minority governments, and he interrupted his prime ministership not because of any threat of a non-confidence vote in parliament but by voluntary resignation following the PS defeat in local elections.

As in government formation, the will of the prime minister has been a decisive factor as regards cabinet reshuffles and the de-selection of individual ministers. Regardless of the pressures he might exert, the president cannot directly intervene in the hiring and firing of the ministers, and the parties that support the incumbent governments are often caught by surprise by the timing and contents of reshuffles.

While the leadership style of prime ministers may entail a solitary approach to the decision of reshuffle or de-selection, they often get the advice of an 'inner circle' of cabinet members. Seemingly, the composition of this 'inner circle' has varied according to the government type. In the last centre-right coalition

Table 8.4 Reasons for termination of governments in Portugal, 1976–2005

Elections (end of mandate)	4 (Cavaco II; Cavaco III; Guterres I)
Elections (before schedule)	1 (Pintasilgo)
Voluntary resignation of PM	3 (Mota Pinto; Guterres II; Barroso)
Dissension within government parties	3 (Balsemão I and II; Soares III)
Lack of parliamentary support	3 (Nobre da Costa; Soares I; Cavaco I)
Intervention of the President	2 (Soares II; Santana Lopes)
Death of PM	1 (Sá Carneiro)

governments it was formed by the leading figures of both parties who were simultaneously prominent ministers; in the single-party cabinets of PSD and of PS the 'inner circle' seems to be less exclusive, comprising party leaders or activists who are mere junior ministers.

Taking into account that in the cabinets of Portuguese democracy there is a significant proportion of first-time ministers without previous political experience, namely as representatives and party leaders, it is worthwhile to see if they were 'preserved' or 'doomed' whenever a reshuffle or de-selection took place. Looking at Table 8.5, data from 1976 to 2005 show that only six out of a total of 63 de-selected ministers were independent and/or specialists without a former political career – i.e. less than one-tenth. This suggests that the leadership power and autonomy of prime ministers, even in critical junctures, is not necessarily constrained by party pressures or demands. It should be added that in single-party governments the proportion of de-selected ministers who had no political experience was 7.0 per cent (3 out of 43), while in coalition governments the corresponding figure is 15.0 per cent (3 out of 20).

As regards the causes of ministerial de-selection, in some cases it is not difficult to establish the determinant one, but in many others there are multiple factors intervening. Also, the real motives are often dissimulated in public (e.g. negative performances or personality clashes are usually justified as policy disagreements by the fired ministers). Hence, data presented in Table 8.6 should be considered cautiously.

Table 8.5 De-selected ministers without political experience in Portugal, 1976–2005

Governments			*Ministers de-selected*		
Period	*Prime minister*	*Party*	*N*	*%*	*Total*
23/07/1976 – 23/01/1978	Soares	PS	0	0.0	4
23/01/1978 – 29/08/1978	Soares	PS/CDS	0	0.0	1
29/08/1978 – 22/11/1978	Mota Pinto	Nonpartisan	–	–	0
22/11/1978 – 07/07/1979	Nobre da Costa	Nonpartisan	–	–	0
07/07/1979 – 03/01/1980	Pintasilgo	Nonpartisan	–	–	0
03/01/1980 – 09/01/1981	Sá Carneiro	PSD/CDS/PPM	–	–	0
09/01/1981 – 04/09/1981	Balsemão	PSD/CDS/PPM	0	0.0	3
04/09/1981 – 09/06/1983	Balsemão	PSD/CDS/PPM	0	0.0	4
09/06/1983 – 06/11/1985	Soares	PS/PSD	1	16.7	6
06/11/1985 – 17/08/1987	Cavaco Silva	PSD	–	–	0
17/08/1987 – 31/10/1991	Cavaco Silva	PSD	0	0.0	9
31/10/1991 – 28/10/1995	Cavaco Silva	PSD	1	10.0	10
28/10/1995 – 25/10/1999	Guterres	PS	1	11.1	9
25/10/1999 – 06/04/2002	Guterres	PS	1	9.1	11
06/04/2002 – 17/07/2004	Barroso	PSD/CDS	2	40.0	5
17/07/2004 – 12/03/2005	Santana Lopes	PSD/CDS	0	0.0	1

Note: Includes those who were de-selected during the life of governments, and had no experience as party leaders, mayors, deputies or junior ministers. Figures for ministers de-selected are for those without political experience.

Table 8.6 Causes of ministerial de-selection in Portugal, 1976–2005

Causes	*N Ministers*	*(%)*
Performance	14	22.2
Policy disagreements	6	9.5
Intra-party conflicts	5	7.9
Personal error	5	7.9
Financial scandals	4	6.4
Death and health problems	4	6.4
Departmental error	3	4.8
Personality clashes	3	4.8
To party leadership	2	3.2
Other	6	9.5
No information	11	17.4
Total	63	100.0

The predominant cause of de-selection is a negative performance, which includes ministers who had to carry on unpopular and complex policy reforms, and/or were unable to handle their relationship with the media. Intra-party conflicts occurred mainly until the mid-1980s, when the subordination of the party in government towards the prime minister was not so accentuated. 'Financial scandals' – mostly connected with tax evasion and sometimes notoriously inflated by the media – forced the resignation of a few influential ministers.

Conclusion

The semi-presidential system of government adopted by the 1976 Constitution has been maintained, some important changes in the balance of power having nonetheless occurred. The 1982 constitutional revision limited the intervening role of the president, and subsequently the leadership of the prime minister was enhanced, actually leading to a prime ministerial government.

As in other European democracies, the prime minister is the leader of the wining party in the elections, but once nominated he tends to enjoy a greater autonomy from his party, specifically as regards the selection and de-selection of ministers. This tendency explains to some extent an important feature of Portuguese democratic cabinets: the unusual number of ministers who are 'independents' or do not have a political background as party leaders or as representatives, and are chosen because of their alleged expertise. Indeed, 'party governments' became the rule, but a party-cum-parliamentary route is not a standardized *cursus* for ministerial recruitment. The salient role played by non-political ministers is also shown by their rarely being stepped down on the occasion of cabinet reshuffles.

A significant proportion of those who ascend to executive offices are drawn from the universities or managerial positions, as specialists with high academic credentials and/or technical competences. This strong presence of non-political ministers is also related with the attempts made by parties to promote their 'openness towards civil society' in a political culture with strong feelings against the 'political class', as well as with the increasing complexity and technocratic

nature of policy-making. Although with less autonomous political power than party leaders, 'independents' became so important to 'quality' of cabinets that prime ministers think twice before sending them back to 'civil society'.

Notes

1 The major challenge was the founding of the Democratic Renewal Party (PRD), under the auspices of General Eanes, in 1985. This party was a short-lived one: having won almost 20 per cent of the votes cast in the legislative elections of 1985, it dramatically dropped to 5 per cent in 1987 and disappeared in the early 1990s.

2 Until 1982 it was the Council of the Revolution that verified the constitutional validity of the law, whereas thereafter it was the Constitutional Court.

3 In order to dismiss a government, the original text of the 1976 Constitution required the approval of two no-confidence votes, the second one to be held at least one month after the first one; the 1982 revision simplified this procedure, demanding just one no-confidence vote.

4 The no-confidence vote is exclusively aimed at the cabinet collectively. When it is rejected, its proponent (a group of deputies or a parliamentary party) cannot submit another one in the remaining sessions of the legislative period. In principle, the full term of a legislature is four years, comprising four legislative periods.

5 Notice also that all presidents have actively used their power to refer legislation to the Constitutional Court and have used their power of veto to influence policy-making.

6 There was a vice-prime minister in three coalition governments. The position was allocated to the leader of the second largest party in the coalition, who usually combined it with the portfolio of Defence or of Foreign Affairs.

7 Maria de Lourdes Pintassilgo was the first Portuguese woman to become both minister (17 July 1974, as Minister of Social Affairs) and prime minister (31 July 1979). The first woman to hold a ministerial position, as Undersecretary of State for Health, was appointed (21 August 1970) in the last cabinet of the authoritarian regime.

8 Symptomatically, only around 20 per cent of the junior ministers appointed between 1976 and 2005 had been previously elected deputies or members of a party (executive, deliberative or jurisdictional) committee at national level (Ruivo 2007).

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9 In tranquil waters

Swedish cabinet ministers in the postwar era

Hanna Bäck, Thomas Persson, Kåre Vernby and Helena Wockelberg

One of the most striking features of Swedish society during the postwar era is the Social Democrats' strong hold over the country's political life. This dominance – as often bemoaned as extolled – is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the Swedish cabinet: since the Second World War, the Social Democrats have ruled 52 out of 64 years. For many comparative politics scholars, this is, and has always been, the most salient stylized fact about Swedish politics. In this chapter we ask: what hides beneath the surface in this remarkably stable setting of nearly continuous Social Democratic control of the cabinet?

Constitutional framework

Sweden is a constitutional monarchy. However, the King lost his political powers when parliamentarism, in its modern form, was introduced in 1917, followed by democracy shortly thereafter (male suffrage in 1909 and then universal suffrage in 1921).[1] Yet, it was not until 1969 that the first revisions were made to harmonize the Constitution with existing practices of parliamentarism. The *Instrument of Government* of 1974 transferred the monarch's role in cabinet formation to the Speaker of the parliament, the unicameral (since 1971) Riksdag.[2] According to the new Constitution, bargaining over cabinet formation begins with the Speaker holding bilateral consultations with the leaders of all parties that are represented in the parliament. Based on these consultations, he or she then proposes a Prime Ministerial candidate. Four days after the candidate is nominated, at the latest, the parliament votes on the Speaker's proposal. If more than half of the parliament's members vote *against* the proposal, it is turned down. Thus, it suffices that the candidate is tolerated by the parliament; a constitutional feature that has been termed *negative*, as opposed to *positive*, parliamentarism (see Bergman 1995).

The Prime Ministerial candidate – if tolerated by parliament – is then free to staff the cabinet pretty much as he or she sees fit, after which the government is formally installed. There are, indeed, very few restrictions on who is 'selectable' as a minister. A cabinet minister must have been a Swedish citizen for at least ten years, and must give up any employment before entering government office. Except for this, ministers can be of almost any walk of life, and membership neither in parliament nor in the governing party is required. When appointed, ministers who are MPs are required to leave parliament temporarily.[3] Their seat is filled by