

**«The fall of the Berlin Wall 26 years later:
The state of the left in Portugal, 2015-2016»**

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Introduction

The global and economic crisis has had potentially disturbing consequences for democratic political systems, especially in Southern Europe, an area characterized by growing electoral volatility, significant party system change, the emergence of new political parties, the mobilisation of new social movements, increasing governmental instability and a decrease in satisfaction towards democracy (Bermeo and Bartels, 2014; Freire et al. 2015; Matthijs, 2014; Freire, Lisi and Viegas, 2015; Freire and Lisi, 2016c).

While these challenges have led to a deep crisis of social-democratic parties, the effect of economic turmoil on radical left parties (RLPs)³ is still unclear. First, this is because this international crisis and the European sovereign debt crisis have revealed the failure of neoliberal ideas and policies (the Washington consensus, hyper globalisation, the huge reduction of state functions, deregulation of financial and other markets, etc.), as well as the institutional problems with EU economic and monetary integration (Blyth, 2012; Rodrik, 2012). Second, it is because the Socialist / Social-democrat party family, specifically in the EU, has converged with many of these orientations and policies, contrary to RLPs that have always fought them. Third, the implementation of the austerity packages in the different countries, but especially in Greece and Portugal, has had devastating socioeconomic (rising unemployment and economic decline), financial (rising public debt ratio vis-à-vis the GDP) and political (governments more or less obliged to violate their electoral commitments, parties governing against their genetic code in terms of policy orientations) consequences. Fourth, this context has revealed the difficulty of changing the EU status quo through democratic means (Alonso, 2014), and

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³ See Luke March (2008 and 2011) for a definition of the radical left (see also March and Freire, 2012, 27).

thus has revealed the need for radical democratic change in Europe, a topic that has always been in the front line of RLPs' proposals. Fifth, although in Greece the radical left Syriza has benefited much from this set of conditions and in Spain *Podemos* seems to be benefiting as well, in many countries it is more the radical right than the radical left that has benefited from the crisis (Bermeo and Bartels, 2014). Still in other countries, like Portugal, neither the radical left nor the radical right seems to be benefiting much with the crisis at the electoral level (Freire, 2014 and 2016; Freire et al. 2015; Freire, Lisi and Viegas, 2015; Freire and Lisi, 2016c). However, and this is our sixth consideration, specifically concerning the Portuguese case: if the a new politics of alliances between the radical left and the centre-left can be put forward, as is the case with the XXI constitutional government in Portugal (a minority socialist government, by PS – Portuguese Socialist Party –, supported by parliamentary agreements with the radical left BE – Left Bloc –, PCP – Portuguese Communist Party –, and PEV – The Greens), then the balance of power can begin to change the neoliberal status quo. This may especially be the case if this new politics of alliances is adopted in other EU countries and, thus, the likelihood of changing the EU status quo is also increased.

From this context we derive our three research questions. First, what are the major impacts at the ideological and electoral level of the crisis upon the radical left in Portugal? Second, have RLPs benefited from the crisis, namely at the level of the (hegemony of the) narrative and/or at the electoral level? Finally, what are the reasons behind those changes and/or benefits (or the lack of them)? To answer them, this Part of the book is structured as follows. In the following section we examine how the crisis has influenced the ideological and programmatic adaptation of RLPs in Portugal. The third section analyses the changes (or lack thereof) in RLPs' strategies in terms of coalition politics. In the fourth section we describe the process of government formation after the October 4, 2015, national elections and the fundamental measures agreed between the left-wing parties to assure parliamentary support from the radical left (BE and PCP and PEV) to the centre-left PS government (the XXI constitutional government). The paper ends with some concluding remarks and discusses the main challenge that RLPs in Portugal have to face in the foreseeable future.

The Great Recession and Ideological Change among the Portuguese Radical Left

The emergence of the economic crisis has strengthened three main problems that have characterized the experience of the radical left in Portugal over the democratic period.

The first is the high level of fragmentation within the left spectrum, which contrasts the stability and simplicity of the supply on the right camp. The second is the lack of cooperation between left-wing parties until the end of 2015 (following the October 4, 2015, national elections and the more or less surprising cooperation among the left parties for the formation of the XXI Constitutional government), while the third is related to the great divide between PS and the radical left until the end of 2015.

Portuguese democratisation led to the marginalisation of PCP⁴ with regard to the main government parties (PS, PSD and CDS)⁵ and the formation of several extreme-left groups, which have almost always remained excluded from parliamentary representation (the former Maoist UDP was one exception, until 1987, although with only one seat in some legislatures). Therefore, PCP has played the role of an “anti-system” party, while PS has adopted moderate positions, especially with regard to socio-economic issues (Bosco, 2001). The distance between the communists and socialists was based mainly on their attitude towards democracy, the EU, and the legacy of the Carnation Revolution, in particular with respect to the nationalisation of big private companies, estates and banks. Despite the erosion of PCP’s electoral and parliamentary support (see below: Figure 4.1), the communists have been able to resist competition from the extra-parliamentary left and to be the main institutional alternative to the left of PS.

Notwithstanding some attempts to revise and moderate communists’ ideological orientations before and after the collapse of the Soviet Union, PCP is still one of the most orthodox communist parties in Western Europe, fitting the “extreme-left” (March, 2008) or “conservative communist” categories (see also Keith and Charalambous, 2016). The institutional predominance of PCP within the radical left was challenged in 1999 when BE was able to elect representatives into Parliament for the first time⁶. BE was the merging of two RLPs (PSR, UDP) and one political movement (*Política XXI*). Despite their strong anti-capitalist positions, BE differed from PCP with regard to two main issues: on the one hand, it aimed to reform democracy by enhancing participatory

⁴ Portuguese Communist Party / Democratic Unitarian Coalition (PCP/PEV), extreme left, ‘conservative communist’ or ‘orthodox communist’, depending on their designations. It is a member of the GUE/NGL in the EP.

⁵ Socialist Party, centre left, member of the Socialist and Democrat group in the European Parliament (EP). Social Democratic Party, centre right, member of the European Popular Party (EPP) in the European Parliament. Social and Democratic Centre-Popular Party, conservative, right, member of the European People’s Party (PPE) in the European Parliament.

⁶ In 2000 the FER (Revolutionary Left Front) joined the party and became the fourth ‘organized’ component within the party. BE is a member of the Confederal Group of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) in the EP.

channels but accepting the main liberal institutions; on the other, it showed a very critical view of the USSR and defended a new transnationalism based on globalisation movements. In 2007 party leadership sought to de-radicalize some economic policy proposals by re-launching as an “ecosocialist” party. The ecology issue was now tackled through a global perspective in domestic terms – energy policies related to public service, citizens’ rights and sustainable development – as well as in its international dimension, especially reducing unfair trade and promoting an increasing convergence between North and South.

The 2005 elections marked the beginning of a new period of socialist majorities (2005-2011), during which both RLPs oppose most of the reforms implemented by PS, especially with regard to welfare policies. Yet the distance between PCP and BE remained significant on the issue of EU integration. The communists continued to present an ideological Euroscepticism, with very clear nationalist tones and a very negative evaluation of the effects of European integration (Lobo, 2007). By contrast, BE aimed to reform Europe by strengthening supranational policies and proposing an alternative left-wing internationalist cooperation to change the process of European integration (March and Freire, 2012). This position was due mainly to the 'right-wing' faction within BE led by Miguel Portas, one of BE's founders and the first MEP of the party elected in the 2004 European elections.

Following the 2009 elections, PS formed a minority government after the failure to find a compromise with other parties. With the worsening of the economic and financial situation, the socialist government was forced by EU institutions to implement austerity measures through the adoption of several Stability and Growth Programmes (PEC — *Programa de Estabilidade e Crescimento*). Three PECs were adopted during 2009 and 2010, all approved with the support of PSD, whereas both radical left forces rejected them. The response of EU partners and institutions led to an increasing convergence among the radical left, harshening their criticism towards the process of European integration.

Following the defeat of PEC IV and the prime minister’s resignation (23 March 2011), the upward pressure on Portuguese debt interest rates became even greater, forcing the government to request external assistance. Despite the memorandum between the government and the Troika having been signed at the beginning of May 2011, in reality it was negotiated and agreed by PS, PSD and CDS-PP. The parties of the radical left not only opposed the agreement, they actually refused to meet the Troika.

The agreement has a strongly neo-liberal flavour: a wide-ranging programme of privatisations, ostensibly to pay the debt and to promote competition in monopolistic sectors; the extensive and profound deregulation of the labour market, allegedly to promote economic competitiveness by increasing labour flexibility and reducing labour costs; reducing the size of the state through pay freezes and a moderate and phased reduction in the number of public sector employees. However, the programme also called for the rationalisation of the state (reduction in the number of local authorities and balancing the deficits in public companies; reform of the pension system; renegotiation of public-private partnerships [PPP]) and for a reduction in the cost of red tape to companies (streamlining the justice system; reducing excess costs in utilities, etc.). Finally, it called for the recapitalisation of the banks, not only in order to comply with the new capital ratios demanded by the European Union (EU) in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis and its aftershocks, but also in order to make credit available again to businesses. For an overview, see Freire, 2016.

What are the consequences of the Great Recession, the bailout and the enforcement of the MoU for the ideological positioning of the Portuguese radical left? According to the electoral manifesto for the 2011 national and for 2014 European elections, as well as the new program and statutes approved in the XIX Congress and the Electoral Manifesto for 2015 (see the ideological orientations of the left parties, 2011-2015, in their respective party manifestos: BE, 2011-2015; PCP, 2011-2015; PS, 2011-2015), we would point out that five major elements underline a further radicalisation of the Portuguese extreme left (PCP). First, because all the previous 35-40 years of democracy, associated with the rule of PS, PSD and CDS-PP, are all characterized by the predominance of right-wing policies and also by being behind the current crisis. Second, because there is an increasing sense of nostalgia with the times of real socialism under USSR influence, even if serious problems of functioning are acknowledged. Third, because the PCP's Euroscepticism, with a strong nationalist tone (see Freire and Lisi, 2016b), has not only increased but the communists are now asking for "the dissolution of the European Economic and Monetary Union", which means the end of the Euro. Fourth, there is a defence of extensive re-nationalisation of strategic sectors of the economy (banks, utilities, etc.). Fifth, the Communists defend the renegotiation of public debt (in terms of volume, interest rates and maturities). It is also worth underlining that the party supports a diversification of financing of the country's public (and private) expenses, both at the domestic and international levels. Additionally, the fight for

equality and for fairer distribution of income between capital and labour, with a strong and progressive fiscal policy as well as with an anchoring on social rights, still lies at the core of PCP's ideological orientations.

Concerning BE («radical left»), the situation is the following. Except for some issues (e.g. contrary to PCP, BE does not show any nostalgia for the USSR era, and does not defend the collapse of the EU process of Economic and Monetary Integration; moreover, the party does not defend extensive re-nationalisation of strategic sectors of the economy), BE's policy orientation in the times of the Great Recession are not that different from those of PCP (see BE, 2011-2015). First, like PCP, the party also rejected the Troika bailout, and proposes a renegotiation of the Portuguese public debt (in terms of volume, interest rates and maturities) following an audit process. Moreover, as in the case of PCP, an alliance of peripheral EU countries, especially those most affected by the debt crisis, to fight the EU's neoliberal approach to it (“expansive austerity”), is very much emphasized. Additionally, like PCP, BE also argues for greater fairness in the distribution of income between capital and labour, anchored in a strong role of the state and public sectors in society and the economy, and in strengthening public investment and social rights.

The major ideological difference between BE and PCP, besides the two issues already mentioned, is in terms of attitude and policy orientation of BE vis-à-vis Europe. Thus, although the party presents a radical critique of EU integration, BE supports an alternative left-wing and progressive vision for Europe, not anchored to nationalism (like PCP). Namely, besides the alliances between peripheral EU countries to fight austerity policies, the party proposes an EU that is more focused on growth and employment, an increase in the EU budget, common management of European debt, the creation of Eurobonds and a European rating agency, the exclusion of public investment from the calculations of the public deficit, a tax on capital transactions, and a strategy to ban the off-shores within the EU in order to better fight tax evasion.

The evolution of the national economic conditions and of the Greek crisis during 2015 has led to an increasing convergence towards criticism of EU integration. The 2015 general elections have shown that the difference between PCP and BE with regard to European integration is more a matter of degree rather than substance. Both parties maintain that the EU has been detrimental to Portuguese development and the country's interests. According to PCP, the European Union is experiencing a deep social and economic crisis, which stemmed from the crisis of capitalism, leading to a growing

impoverishment of European countries to the benefit of big business (banks, multinational industries, financial markets). On the other hand, BE claims that the main failure of the European Union is the lack of convergence among European countries, while national egoisms and an unbridled competition have led to a general decrease in salaries and people's living conditions. Both PCP and BE rejected the further loss of national sovereignty and the need to recover important instruments of economic, financial and social policies. Both parties consider supranational decision-making processes in a negative way, not only because they foster the dominance of foreign capitals and the transfer of national resources outside the country, but also because supranational actors have progressively emptied the social and economic rights protected by the Portuguese constitution. It is worth noting that the EU's crisis management policy has strengthened the euro-scepticism of BE, fostering internal divergences, especially compared to the cohesion of the communists (Hooghe et al., 2010). However, PCP's harsher criticism with regard to the EU is visible in the defence of a planned exit from the European Union, while BE emphasizes the need for debt restructuring but without taking the hypothesis of an "exit" option seriously. All in all, the diagnosis of the crisis for both RLPs is very similar, although they slightly differ as far as the solution is concerned.

The Difficult Road to Cooperation: Strategic Responses of Portuguese RLPs

Until the end of 2015, after the October 4 national elections and the formation of the XXI constitutional government (27-11-2015), Portugal was one of the few West European countries where the RLPs had not been included in left-left governments (either as member of a coalition and/or as parliamentary support parties for centre-left governments) since the fall of the Berlin Wall (March, 2008, 2011; Bale and Dunphy 2011; March and Freire 2012). Before 1989 the Portuguese case was much in line with most West European countries, and the only exceptions with left-left (or rainbow) governments were Iceland, Finland and France. Besides the geopolitical reasons, similar to the ones in other countries, other factors contributed to explaining the lack of institutional integration of PCP (see March and Freire, 2012, Part II, for further details and sources): first, the legacy of the proto-hegemonic impulse during the democratic transition, which created a significant level of mistrust of PS vis-à-vis PCP; second, democratic centralism and the ability to control internal dissent; third, the ideological centrism of PS and its pivotal role in the party system, which allowed the party access to

government positions through distinct formulas (single-party, coalition or minority governments); third, some maximalist demands for inter-party government cooperation from PCP, which meant that PCP was open to cooperate but only if the communists could be the hegemonic force in the deal; fourth, PCP belong to the subgroup of the more orthodox communist parties in Western Europe, which means that it is also pretty well aligned with the USSR (contrary to the Eurocommunists); fifth, the relative electoral and organization strength of PCP, when compared with PS, was much higher than since 1987-1989 and that did not help an agreement because at that time PS was more afraid to ally with such a strong entity.

According to the typology of RLPs, the 'radical left' BE is expected to show more willingness to cooperate with the socialists. Yet, neither PCP nor BE have been able to establish any form of collaboration with PS nor to create new government solutions, neither before nor during the current crisis. Besides the ideological and policy divergences, the legacy of democratisation, incapacity to achieve a compromise at the elite level and strategic considerations are also important factors that account for the lack of understanding. Other salient factors are worthy of mention. There was no relevant pressure for cooperation between centre-left and the radical left from the unions front, like in other countries (Bale & Dunphy, 2011 and 2012; Dunphy & Bale, 2011), because Portugal has two major union confederations, one more closely allied with the radical left, the largest and stronger one (CGTP-IN), and another one that is a permanent centre-left (PS) and centre-right (PSD) coalition in the social arena (UGT). Neither did the almost complete lack of left – left coalitions at the local or regional levels (only Lisbon, 1989-2001 and 2007-present date; and Funchal, 2013-present date) help to boost this type of agreement at the national level. Finally, the lack of true willingness to compromise from the part of the three parties' leadership, until the end of 2015, was also a relevant chapter of the story of missing left – left agreements for government.

How has the economic crisis influenced the patterns of cooperation between left-wing parties? We start our analysis by looking at the overall ideological placement of parties in the left-right continuum before and after the crisis. According to MP surveys conducted in 2008 and 2012-2013, there is a clear move of right-wing parties (PSD and CDS-PP) further to the right, while left-wing parties (PS, BE and PCP) moved further to the left (Freire, Tsatsanis and Lima, 2016; Freire, Lisi and Lima, 2015). Thus, the system is now more polarized than ever, but this has occurred only at the elite level, not at the citizens' level. This means that after the crisis (2012-2013) policy incongruence between

the parliamentary elites and the voters is higher than before (2008). Additionally, on the left this mismatch between elites and voters is larger for RLPs than for PS, i.e. the latter is more in tune with its electorate than BE and/or PCP (Freire, Tsatsanis and Lima, 2016; Freire, Lisi and Lima 2015; for previous periods but with data pinpointing in the same direction, see March and Freire 2012, Part II). Additionally, a recent study found that although PS' MPs are now closer to radical left MPs, both in terms of left-right self-placement and fundamental policy preferences, the truth is that on average the legislative behaviour of PS in Parliament, 2011-2014 (as before, 2005-2011), is much closer to the right than to the legislative behaviour of RLPs (Freire, Lisi and Lima, 2015). The overall picture is the same when we consider substantial policy issues. Moreover, the campaign for the 2015 general elections showed that there are still significant divergences between PS and the radical left with regard to crucial policies such as debt renegotiation, re-nationalisation of strategic sectors and the reform of the EU. These findings were confirmed when we observed party behaviour at the institutional/parliamentary level (see De Giorgi et al., 2015).

In any case, the absence of left-left government solutions in Portugal created an enormous mismatch between the voters (clearly in favour of agreements) and the parties/the political elites (much more sceptical about it), similar to the one we found for ideological orientations. The results presented in Table 4.1 show that a majority of PCP and BE voters and a large plurality of PS voters are overwhelmingly in favour of left-left governments. Moreover, these results are similar to the ones found for 2009 (March and Freire 2012, Part II) and 2012 (Freire, Lisi and Lima, 2015). And the new Portuguese red-green party, *Partido Livre* (Free Party)⁷, was trying to fill precisely this gap by putting a great effort on agreements between all left-wing parties in Portugal (Livre, 2013; Livre – Tempo de Avançar, 2015; see also Freire and Lisi, 2016b).

⁷ This is a radical left party formed in 2014 by ex-BE MEP Rui Tavares, running for the first time at the 2014 European Elections and obtaining 2.2 percent of the vote. Like BE, it can be considered a left libertarian party and it is member of Green Party Family at the EU level.

Table 4.1 - Portuguese attitudes towards a left-wing government, 2014, by party sympathy — % of each group total

‘Imagine that tomorrow Legislative Elections would be held and that PS would win without absolute majority. Which one of the following options would you consider to be better for the country (choose only one option)? It would be better for the country that PS would...?’

	CDU/PCP	BE	PS	PSD	CDS-PP
Rule in minority	11.1	12.8	21.1	19.3	11.9
Coalesce with the radical left	69.1	66.7	41.8	7.5	7.2
Coalesce with the right	2.5	5.2	21.6	54.1	57.2
Coalesce with all the parties	17.3	15.4	15.4	19.3	23.8
N	81	39	227	161	42

Source: Survey of a representative sample of the adult Portuguese population living in the mainland, N = 1205, fielded between June and October 2014 (see Belchior, Silva and Queiroga, 2014).

Table 4.2 - Elections to the Portuguese National Parliament, 2015, 2011, and 2009

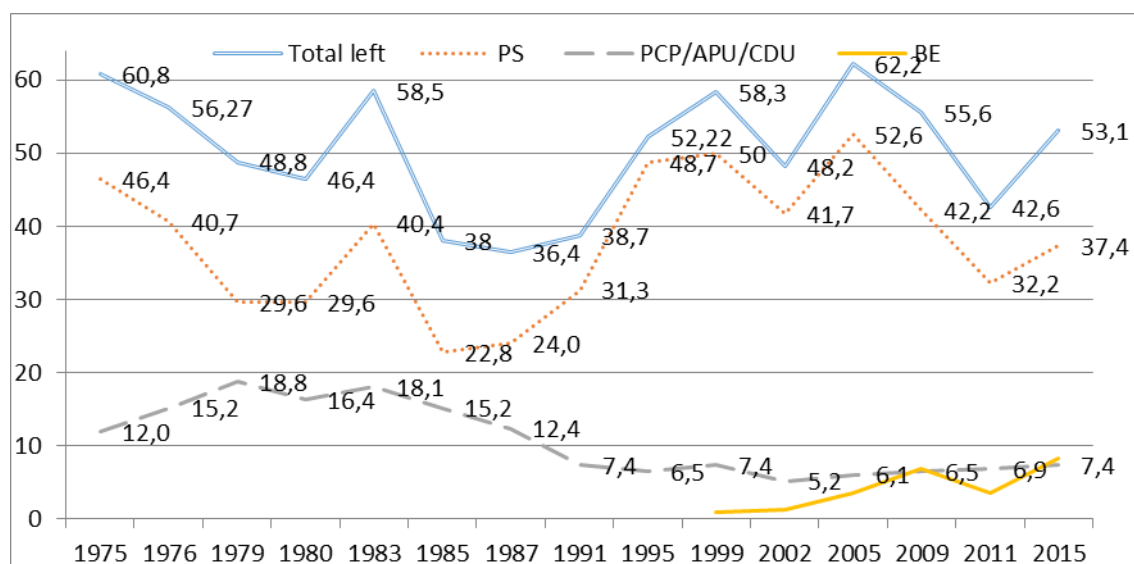
Parties	2015			2011			2009		
	N	%	Votes	N	%	Votes	N	%	Votes
PàF	107	46.5	38.56	-	-	50.4	-	-	39.5
PSD	89	39.0	32.0	108	46.9	38.7	81	35.2	29.1
PS	86	37.4	32.3	74	32.2	28.1	97	42.2	36.6
BE	19	8.3	10.2	8	3.5	5.2	16	6.9	9.8
CDS-PP	18	7.8	6.56	24	10.4	11.7	21	9.1	10.4
PCP/PEV	17	7.4	8.25	16	6.9	7.9	15	6.5	7.7
PAN	1	0.43	1.39	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	0	0.0	5.16	0	0.0	4.4	0	0.0	3.1
Invalid and blank votes			4.14	-	-	4.0	-	-	3.1
Total	230	100	100	-	-	100	230	100	100
Turnout			56.1			58.0	-	-	60.5

Sources: data elaborated by the authors from the official results published in www.cne.pt

Notes: 1st) In Portuguese elections invalid and blank votes are counted as a percentage of the total vote; 2nd) PàF – Pre-electoral coalition between PSD and CDS-PP (except in Madeira, where they ran separately: votes are summed anyway); 3rd) PàF total votes (38.56) were disaggregated using the proportion of the coalition’s seats (107) each party has (PSD: 0.83; CDS-PP: 0.17) as a multiplier. PàF, i.e. PSD and CDS-PP only ran together in 2015, but for the sake of comparing the electoral strength of the right across elections we also calculate it for 2011 and 2009. PàF reads as «Portugal à Frente» which means «Portugal ahead».

However, the situation in Portugal changed significantly with the results of the October 4, 2015, national elections (see Table 4.2), and especially with the subsequent formation of the XXI constitutional government. According to the results of these elections, the right-wing parties (PSD and CDS-PP), which ran in a pre-electoral coalition (PàF) and won the election with a plurality, had the following results: 38.56% of the vote and 46.5% of the seats (a bonus in the vote-seat transformation due to the pre-electoral coalition and the operation of the electoral system). PS was the second party in electoral and parliamentary strength: 32.3% of the votes and 37.4% of the seats. However, the totals for the left (BE, PCP-PEV, PS) summed up absolute majorities at both the electoral and the parliamentary levels: 50.75% of the votes and 53.1% seats.

Figure 4.1: National Parliamentary Performance of the Left Parties – Legislative Elections, 1975-2015

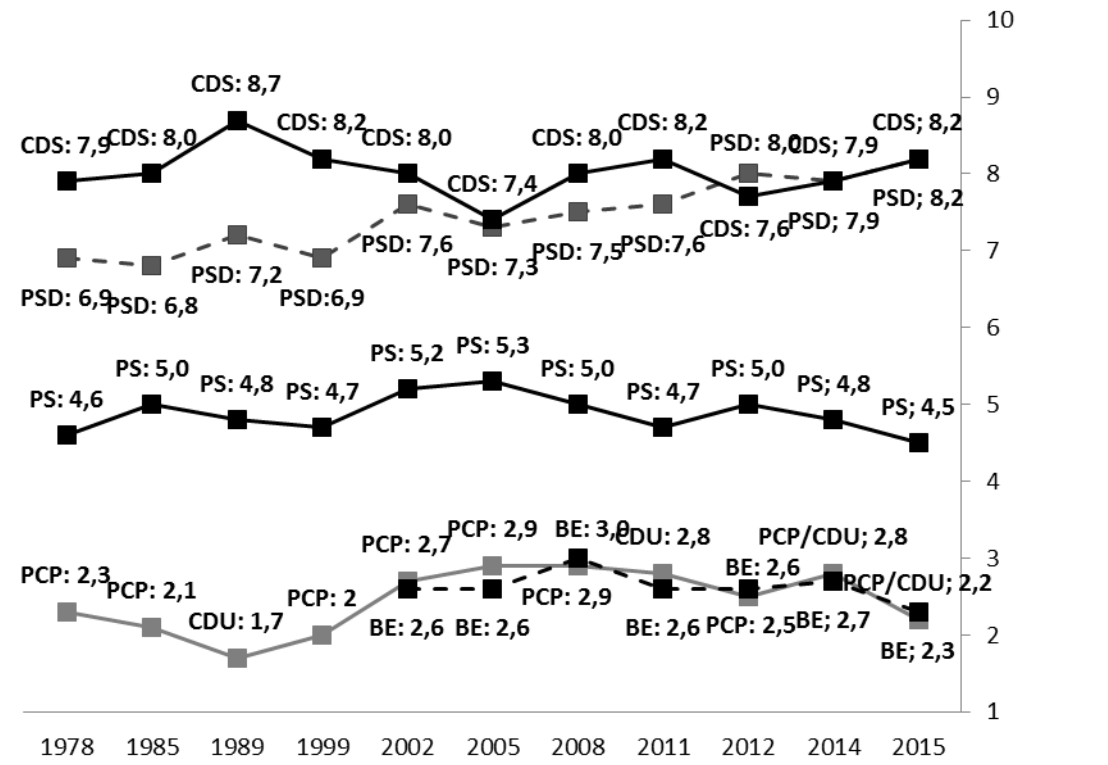


Sources: data elaborated by the authors (2015) and taken from March and Freire (2012, p. 204) – 1975-2011-, always bearing on the official results published by CNE (National Electoral Commission): see www.cne.pt

As we mentioned before, according to several mass surveys in the past there was already wide voter support for left-wing coalitions / parliamentary agreements, especially among left-wing voters (from BE, PCP-PEV and, to a lower extent, from PS), at least since 2009 (March and Freire, 2012, Part II); again revealed in mass surveys fielded at the end of 2012 (Freire, Lisi and Lima, 2015), mid-2014, and mid-2015 (Freire and Lisi, 2016b). What lacked before was party elite support for that kind of governmental

solution because, as the reader can see in Figure 4.1, in 1975, 1976, 1983, 1985, 1995, 1999, and again in 2009 there were left-left majorities in Parliament matched with a PS plurality of seats but no left-left agreement for government.

Figure 4.2 – Portuguese Political Parties’ Left-Right Position (from 1, left, to 10, right) according to voters’ perceptions of parties ideological locations (based on representative mass surveys), 1978-2015



Source: 1978–2008 data elaborated by the authors from Freire (2010) following different sources: Bacalhau, 1994; 2011 & 2015: *Portuguese National Election Study* (2011 and 2015); 2012: Freire, Viegas and Lisi (2012); 2009 & 2014: *European Election Study (EES) 2009 and 2014*.

Thus, the new PS minority government (i.e. the XXI constitutional government) supported by the radical left parties, BE and PCP & PEV (three separate agreements), is an absolute novelty in Portuguese politics: a kind of fall of the Berlin Wall in Portugal 26 years later. Namely, following the rejection of the right-wing minority coalition government, the XX constitutional government in Parliament which lasted 11 days, the Portuguese President was more or less 'obliged' to nominate the prime-minister and the party that, despite having come second in the October 4 elections, was to receive wider

support in Parliament: the XXI Portuguese government, nominated around fifty days after the elections. Thus, this is an event of major significance: as we said, it represents a kind fall of the Berlin Wall in Portugal, 26 years later vis-à-vis what happened in Berlin in 1989. The question is why only now? We believe that there are seven major factors that should be considered as explanatory.

Table 4.3: Left-Right (L-R) ideological distances between pairs of parties in Portugal, 1978-2015

	Mass surveys' date for measuring L-R parties location					
Distances between Parties	1978	1989	2002	2012	2014	2015
PS – CDS	-3,3	-3,9	-2,8	-2,7	-3,1	-3,7
PS – PSD	-2,3	-2,4	-2,4	-3	-3,1	-3,7
PCP – PS	-2,5	-3,1	-2,5	-2,5	-2	-2,3
BE – PS			-2,6	-2,4	-2,1	-2,2

Sources: data computed by the author based on the L-R parties' averages presented in Figure 4.2 above; please consult the sources there.

First, there was a significant move to the right made by the right-wing parties during the Troika years, especially between 2011-2012, which made agreements between the centre-left and the centre-right less likely (see Freire, Tsatsanis and Lima, 2016). More recent data, based on citizens' perceptions of Portuguese parties locations in the left-right scale (1, left, to 10, right; or eleventh point scales, 0-10, but converted in ten point scales, 1-10), between 1978 (data from Bacalhau, 1994) and 2015 (data from Lobo and Magalhães, 2015; Portuguese National Election Study/PNES 2015), among several other sources (see Figure 4.1), confirms that significant move of PSD to the right at least since 2012. In 2012, with a score of 8,0 PSD not only reached its position furthest to the right in the democratic period, it also surpassed CDS-PP (usually the most conservative party of the system) to the right-wing side, and remained overlapping with CDS-PP in both mid-2014 (data from the *European Election Study*, 2014) and by the end of 2015 (data from PNES, 2015: post electoral survey), with scores of 7,9 and 8,2, respectively. Thus, according to the Portuguese voters' perceptions of parties' left-right locations there was a clear move of PSD to the right, moving this party further apart from the median voter

(about the mean and median left-right locations of Portuguese voters – and party elites - across time, see Freire and Belchior, 2013; Freire, Lisi and Lima, 2015; and Freire, Tsatsanis and Lima, 2016). Additionally, both PS and the two RLPs moved further to the left in this period (see Figure 4.1). Thus, centre-left and centre-right in Portugal are now (2012-2015) further apart than ever, at least in left-right ideological terms. Moreover, using the same data we computed the left-right distances in average placement of pairs of parties: PS versus CDS & PSD; and PS versus BE & PCP (see Table 4.3). The data show that between 1978 and 2002 PS was closer to PSD than to each one of the two RLPs; the opposite is true since 2012, i.e. PS is now closer to each one of the two RLPs, in pure left-right terms, than to PSD. These moves and distances clearly illustrate the greater difficulties in reaching a 'grand coalition' (PS-PSD) in Portugal since the Troika years, and the less difficult situation in this respect in the left quadrant. Of course, pure left-right divides do not exhaust the relevant ideological gaps between the parties in Portugal: for example, on European issues, the gap is perhaps higher between PS and the RLPs than between PS and PSD. Moreover, some might ask: but is the left-right divide in Portugal also related with parties' and voters' substantive policy orientations? We know that this is indeed the case, although much more strongly for parties than for voters (Freire, 2004, 2006, 2015a; Benoit and Laver, 2006; Budge et al, 2002; Kligemann et al, 2006; Freire and Belchior, 2013); furthermore, we know that left-right self-placement is clearly and strongly related with Portuguese citizens' electoral behavior/voting choices.

Second, there was the harshness and the asymmetry of the austerity measures, and on top of all that, we had an austerity led by the right-wing parties (PSD and CDS-PP) that went far beyond the Troika requirements and the political mandate received from the voters in 2011 (much higher cuts in salaries, cuts in pensions, cuts in public employment, cuts in the welfare state, and much more extensive privatizations) (see Freire, Lisi, and Viegas, 2015). Indeed, the policy outputs do show that there was a very high level of asymmetry in the enforcement of austerity measures (see Freire, 2016): 'At the end result of this asymmetrical austerity, we have, according to data from the European Commission cited by Abreu et al. (2013: p. 74), the share of wages in GDP has fallen from 58.4 per cent in 2010 to 55.6 per cent in 2012, and it is forecast to fall to 54.1 percent in 2014. Recent data from the National Statistics Institute (INE) shows that between 2011 and 2013, while there was a reduction in inequality as a consequence of the slight reduction in the Gini index (the result of the squeeze on middle class salaries, particularly those of public sector employees and pensioners), the disparities between the

rich and the poor greatly increased, as did levels of poverty and of ‘severe material deprivation’. It also showed that Portugal was the EU country that made the most cuts to social programmes during the period being examined.⁸ Additionally, very recent EU data published in the Portuguese press at the beginning of 2016 showed the following: the share of Portuguese wages in the country’s GDP has fallen from 58.4 per cent in 2010 to 55.6 per cent in 2012, and to 51.9 percent in 2015; and in 2015 Portugal was the sixth worst country in the Eurozone in this respect; moreover, during the Troika’s intervention, Portugal reached the worst ratio of wages:GDP ever since the 1960s.⁹

Third, there were the strong incentives of the PS party leader to stay in power: António Costa, the leader of PS, knew very well that either he was to become prime-minister of a centre-left with the radical left government or, it was for PS to support a right-wing government (the plurality winners in 2015): another PS top official would be better suited than Costa for that role.

Fourth, the Portuguese President (in the Portuguese semi presidential system) cannot dissolve the Parliament in the six months before new presidential elections (January 2016) and in the six months of new parliament (i.e. until April 2016).

Fifth, this left-left governmental solution was a way to put the party elites’ willingness to support such a solution (limited until now) in tune with the voters’ preferences on the left vis-à-vis this type of solution (widespread since a while ago) (recall Table 4.1 above).

Sixth, the perception among PS leadership of a serious risk of electoral collapse due to alliances with the right-wing parties (like the Greek example of PASOK showed in the 2012 and 2015 elections in Greece) and/or due to excessive ideological centrism (as has been happening with several socialist /social democratic parties in Europe: for the example, the French PSF, the British *Labour*, the Hungarian MSZP or, more recently, the Spanish PSOE) might have also contributed to the choice of this type of alliance instead of supporting a right-wing (PSD and CDS-PP) government.

During the cold war, and especially after the proto-hegemonic drive of the communists during the democratic transition (‘Verão Quente’), a deep mistrust of the socialist leadership vis-à-vis agreements with PCP was raised. This element, however,

⁸ Ana Suspiro, ‘Portugal lidera cortes na despesa social na União Europeia’, *Jornal i*, 24 March 2014.

⁹ Sérgio Aníbal (2016), «Peso dos salários na economia volta a subir após estar ao nível mais baixo desde 1960», *Público*, 3 January 2016. <https://www.publico.pt/economia/noticia/peso-dos-salarios-na-economia-volta-a-subir-apos-estar-ao-nivel-mais-baixo-desde-1960-1718967>

might have had a generational component, that more or less 'traumatized' the historic PS leaders, i.e. those who had experienced the turbulent times of the democratic transition, and the tough fights between PS and PCP. However, a new and fairly leftist generation (Ana Catarina Mendes, Pedro Nuno Santos, João Galamba, Pedro Delgado Alves, Duarte Cordeiro, etc.) behind the current leader of the party, António Costa, did not experience those days, and the lack of that 'genetic trauma' might have helped the psychological conditions to arrive at such an agreement.¹⁰

The process of government formation and the flagship measures of the new centre-left and radical left political solution

The XXI Constitutional government in Portugal, a PS/centre-left minority government supported in Parliament by the radical left (BE, PCP and PEV) is a complete novelty in Portuguese politics for three major reasons. First, as we mentioned before, in terms of government profile and patterns of cooperation on the left: as can be seen in Tables 4.4 and 4.5, no constitutional government in the Portuguese democracy had had such a profile until late 2015, and that is one of the reasons why we referred to it in terms of the fall of the Berlin Wall 26 years later. If it proves stable and able to deliver, vis-à-vis the usually adverse EU (neoliberal EU integration) and global (neoliberal globalization) environment, this new political solution (37.4 of the seats for PS; 53.1 of the seats for this whole post-electoral left front) has the potential to open up a new chapter in Portuguese politics, a new era of greater inclusiveness (including also in the government decision-making process the radical left voters and the radical left political elites) and more responsibility (the radical left will be asked to deliver in often adverse socioeconomic and political circumstances, and severe EU constraints) (see Costa, 2015 and 2016).

¹⁰ This argument was put forward in a public debate I had with members of PS, in a session associated with their XXI national congress (3 to 5, June, 2016), by the Socialist MP Isabel Moreira, whom I would like to thank for the idea.

Table 4.4 - Portuguese cabinets, 1976-1985*

Prime Minister and governing period	Composition	Partisan support (per cent of MPs)	Duration** (months)	Reason for Termination
Soares I (1976-77)	PS	40.7	17	Rejected motion of confidence
Soares I 1978	PS, CDS	56.7	6	Dismissal by president
Nobre da Costa 1978	Non-partisan (President's initiative)	--	1	Rejection of Go. Programme
Mota Pinto 7(1978-79)	Non-partisan (ditto)	--	7	Rejection of prime minister
Pintassilgo 1979	Non-partisan (ditto)	--	5	Elections
Sá Carneiro (1980)	PSD, CDS, PPM	51.2	11	Elections after prime minister's death
Balsemão I (1981) ^(a)	PSD, CDS, PPM	53.6	8 (28)	Resignation of prime minister
Balsemão II (1981-82) ^(a)	PSD, CDS, PPM	53.6	20 (28)	Resignation of prime minister, Elections
Soares III 1983-85	PS, PSD	70.4	24	Resignation of prime minister, Elections
Cavaco Silva I 1985-87	PSD	35.2	18	Approval of motion of censure

Source: adapted (and updated) by the author from Freire (2005: p. 22). Notes: * Only the Constitutional period is considered; ** Normal parliamentary mandate: 48 months. (a) Balsemão I and II's governments have precisely the same partisan support, and no elections took place between them. In terms of cabinet durability, therefore, they are considered to be the same executive; this explains why it is here considered to have existed for 28 months.

Table 4.5: Portuguese cabinets, 1987-2016*

Prime Minister and governing period	Composition	Partisan support (per cent of MPs)	Duration** (months)	Reason for Termination
Cavaco Silva II (1987-91)	PSD	59.2	48	Elections
Cavaco Silva III (1991-95)	PSD	58.7	48	Elections
Guterrres I 1995-99	PS	48.7	48	Elections
Guterres II (1999-02)	PS	50.0	24	Resignation of prime minister
Barroso (2002- 04) ^(b)	PSD, CDS	51.8	27 (35)	Resignation of prime minister (appointed as president of the EU Commission)
Lopes (2004-05) ^(b)	PSD, CDS	51.8	8 (35)	President dismissed parliament and called for early elections
Sócrates (2005-09)	PS	52.6		Elections
Sócrates (2009-11)	PS	42.2	20	Prime minister resignation; president dismissed parliament and called for early elections
Passos Coelho (2011-15: full mandate)	PSD, CDS	57.3	51	Elections
António Costa (November 27, 2015 – present date)	Minority PS Government (with parliamentary support from radical left parties, BE, PCP and PEV)	37.4 (53.1)	-	-

Source: adapted (and updated) by the author from Freire, 2005, p. 22, and forthcoming.

Notes: * Only the Constitutional period is considered; ** Normal parliamentary mandate: 48 months. (b) Balsemão I and II's governments have precisely the same partisan support, and no elections took place between them. In terms of cabinet

durability, therefore, they are considered to be the same executive; this explains why it is here considered to have existed for 28 months. Same rule for Barroso's (2002-04) and Lopes' (2004-05) government (35 months).

The second major reason for the innovative character of the Portuguese XXI constitutional government is related to the process of government formation. Several elements are worth underlining here. On the one hand, although this a familiar element in many democracies (especially of a non-majoritarian type: see Freire, 2007 and 2012a, for definitions about the majoritarian vs. consensual models of democracy, and the major patterns and trends concerning this typology in the Portuguese case, 1975-2009), it was the first time ever in Portugal that the winning party (in this case the centre-right liberal PSD, member of EPP, European Peoples Party, at the EU level) did not lead the government, and, moreover, is not even in the new cabinet. Another element worthy of mention here is related to the role of the Portuguese President in government formation. Portugal has a semi-presidential regime (i.e. a political system where a popularly elected President coexists with a prime-minister that is politically responsible before Parliament), and the President has some significant constitutional powers (the power to nominate the prime-minister, taking into account the electoral results for the national legislative elections, suspensive veto powers, power to ask the Constitutional Court for judicial review of laws and decree-laws, power to nominate several top officials in the armed forces and the judiciary, power to dismiss the cabinet, power to dissolve the Parliament and call for early legislative elections, etc.: see Neto and Lobo, 2009). However, especially since the 1982 constitutional revision, the cabinet is not politically responsible vis-à-vis the President, it is only politically responsible vis-à-vis the chamber; and that is why the President can only dismiss the cabinet if 'normal democratic institutional functioning' is at stake. Where the President has powers with fewer political restrictions is in matters concerning the dissolution of Parliament and the capacity to call for early legislative elections: he/she can do it almost without restrictions but for two exceptions, i.e. the President cannot dissolve Parliament in the first six months of Parliament's term; the President cannot dissolve Parliament in the last six months of the President's term. Both conditions apply here, and that is why although the Portuguese President (former leader of the centre-right PSD, and supported by the two right wing parties, PSD and CDS-PP, in the 2006 and 2011 presidential elections) did not want to nominate PS and its leader, António Costa, supported by the radical left, in the end he was more or less 'obliged' to do so. The President expressed doubts about the post electoral 'left front' for two major reasons (because the radical left might call into question Portugal's international

alignments, in the EU and NATO, and because the plurality winner party was PSD & CDS-PP list, and not PS), and that is why he first nominated the incumbent right-wing prime-minister to form the XX constitutional government (see Silva, 2015a and 2015b). However, the XX constitutional government, a minority coalition of the right wing parties (PSD and CDS-PP, both members of EPP at the EU level), could not survive in Parliament because its Programme was rejected in 'the investiture' by both PS and the RLPs (see Cruz, 2015). Thus, in the end the President was forced to accept the post electoral 'left front' political solution (see Cruz, 2015, and Silva, 2015b). One further note is worth mentioning here. In fact, the President is right in at least one respect: both BE and especially PCP are Eurosceptic parties, and very critical of NATO (they both defend Portugal's withdrawal from the alliance); but what this new left-left agreement shows (and here the President seemed not to understand it) is that the smaller RLPs were now available to compromise on some priority issues (defending the welfare state, defending the rights of workers, halting privatization, recovering workers' income, etc.) and mute some other relevant differences between PS and the radical left (on Europe and NATO, for example). Moreover, these remaining differences formed one major reason for the type of cabinet solution found: a minority PS government with support from the radical left and not a proper left – left coalition (see Luís and Garcia, 2015).

The third major reason for the innovative character of the XXI constitutional government is in terms of the policy orientation of PS, and the fundamental leaning of the political system due to this type of political solution: a 'policy contamination' of PS by the radical left. Although the Portuguese democratic transition back in 1974-1976 originally caused the political system to lean towards the left, after constitutional normalization (April 1976 and after), the system was leaning to the right due to coalition politics (Freire, 2011a and 2012a; see also March and Freire, 2012, Part II); i.e. whenever the socialists won the national election with only a plurality (i. e. always since 1976 except in the 2005 national elections), they relied on right-wing support (either from PSD or from CDS-PP), formal (coalition) or less formal (parliamentary support), to survive politically in Parliament and to pass fundamental pieces of legislation (including, notably, the budget). This meant, according to my standpoint, a bias in the political system to the right in terms of locating policy orientations (Freire, 2005, 2007, 2011a, 2012a; March and Freire, 2012, Part II). For example, data from several surveys (expert surveys, mass surveys), in different periods (for example 2004, 2009, 2014), locating political parties in the left-right scale (and other dimensions of competition) persistently showed that the

Portuguese Socialist Party, PS, was (and still is) among the least leftist parties within the social democratic party family (full EU comparisons) (March and Freire, 2012; see also the Part II of the present book). Moreover, since 2005 and at least until 2009 PS moved precisely to the centre (5.5 in a 1-10 left-right scale, LRS), according to Portuguese voters' perceptions of parties locations in the LRS; and before 2005, PS was almost always located close to the centre (Freire, 2010). And it is this bias that is about to change with this new post-electoral 'left front', especially if it lasts and proves stable and successful.

The mandate of the right-wing coalition during the Troika years, 2011-2015, was marked by a very strong neoliberal orientation that went far beyond the requests of the bailout agreement, MoU – Memorandum of Understanding (see Freire, 2016). Namely, cuts in salaries of civil servants, cuts in pension, cuts in public employment, cuts in the welfare state, extensive privatizations went far beyond the 2011 MoU: around three or four times more. Moreover, many of those measures even violated the electoral commitments of the 2011 election winners (see Freire, 2016). And this very strong neoliberal policy orientation of the incumbent government was one of the reasons why the left was able to compromise: to reverse it (see the agreements in Cruz, 2015). Some of the flagship measures include the following (see Cruz, 2015; Luís and Garcia, 2015; Costa, 2016). First, raising the minimum salary, which was already enforced for 2016. Second, reverse the salary cuts in the public sector during 2016 while PS planned to do it within only two years (2016 and 2017): already under enforcement. Third, unfreeze the pensions immediately as of 2016 (something PS was planning to do: keep them frozen): already under enforcement. Fourth, collapse measures proposed by PS in its manifesto (PS, 2015) to simplify the dismissal of workers ('despedimento conclitatório'). Fifth, collapse measures proposed by PS in its manifesto (PS, 2015) to reduce employers' social transfers (these measures were only preserved for low income wage workers). Sixth, reverse the reductions in corporate tax proposed and enforced by the right but with the agreement of PS, 2013-2014. Seventh, recover the 35 hour working week for civil servants.¹¹ Eighth, recover the four public holidays suspended by the right during the

¹¹ This measure was finally approved in 2-6-2016 and, although it still lacks the approval of the President of the Republic, there is a very high probability that the President will indeed approve the new law, mainly since it was an electoral commitment for both PS and the RLPs, and the relations between the new government and the new President are in a kind of 'honeymoon period'. See <https://www.publico.pt/politica/noticia/esquerda-aprova-35-horas-na-funcao-publica-em-votacao-final-1733923>. It is supposed be implemented from July 1, 2016, on. Although the measure is very important to reestablish the *status quo* before the Troika, and that was a central part of the agreements between PS and

Troika years. Ninth, stop any further privatizations and reverse some of the ongoing ones (in TAP Air Portugal and Public Transport at the local level/major cities; in water privatization). In public transport, privatization was already reserved due to legal problems in the privatization process. Tenth, invest more in public services (social security, education, health) and recover its eroded quality; stop further externalization of these public functions to the private sector and / or to the third sector. Eleventh, severe limitations on the expulsion of people from their homes when they fail to pay their mortgages (for justified reasons: for example unemployment or financial difficulties) were introduced; a measure already enforced. Overall, this left-left alliance meant PS was 'forced' to move further to the left on the left-right spectrum, reversing the right wing bias in Portuguese politics (described above).

Some critics, particularly from the right but also in the mainstream (mainly conservative) press, make contradictory criticisms vis-à-vis the new left government. On the one hand, the government is accused of radicalism and of being in the hands of the RLPs, especially BE¹². However while it is true that, as can be determined from the flagship measures described above, the policy orientations are leftist, they can be easily framed within a merely social democratic progressive approach. Moreover, they are in many cases a simple return to the *status quo ante* the Troika years, 2011-2014, and their ban was supposed to be only temporary (according to the Portuguese Constitution, and above all decisions by the Constitutional Court). Thus, in many cases, in the end the bulk of the controversy is about the timing of at least some of the measures. On the other hand, the government and the RLPs are accused of having lied to the voters: they promised to end austerity but they are being very conservative in fiscal terms and, thus, in practice they have not ended austerity. This is in part true, not least because the impositions from the EU are rather strong and the government is committed to complying with EU requirements. However, this also reveals that the left-wing government is not really being radical. The PS government even had to rely on the right

the RLPs to fight 'asymmetric austerity', the truth is that the measure is very limited in scope especially because it excludes the civil servants with individual contracts which form a considerable part of the new generation of new civil servants (since the beginning of the years 2000). Thus, not only does the measure not apply to private workers, neither does it apply to many civil servants. Thus, if a more progressive approach in terms of working time is really desirable to, and considered feasible by, the post electoral left front, then further measures will be needed in the future.

¹² See, for example, the declarations of the leader of PSD in this vein, June 4, 2016: http://www.jornaldenegocios.pt/economia/politica/detalhe/passos_coelho_acusa_governo_de_ser_comandado_pelo_bloco_de_esquerda.html

(PSD) vote in Parliament (December 23, 2015) for a correction on the 2015 budget law to comply with the EU requirement to avoid another bank collapse (Banif) with taxpayers money, but obliged to privatize the bank shortly after the rescue.¹³ Summing up, even if the government and the RLPs that support it are somehow maintaining some level of austerity, and being fiscally conservative to strive to comply with the EU rules (much more than they had wanted to, largely to be able to stimulate economic growth). The truth is that the change in the pattern of austerity, from 'asymmetrical austerity' to a more balanced effort - distributed between capital and labour - is not at all irrelevant. On the contrary, it is of crucial importance because this is the way to restore some equilibrium between capital and labour that the right-wing parties tried to break during the Troika years.

Conclusions

RLPs in Portugal have played an important role in the political system, not only at the institutional level but also in terms of mobilisation. After several years of neoliberal measures and a four-year term of a right-wing government, anti-austerity discourse has gained strength among the electorate. Both the victory of the centre-right coalition in the 2015 general elections and the lack of a clear government solution to form a majority government call for a cautionary note with regard to the “success” of the RLPS. If we look at the 2015 results, it is worth noting that the overall score is very close to the one obtained in the 2009 general elections, that is, just after the beginning of the economic crisis. This suggests that at the level of political discourse, not so much has changed since then. The RLPs’ message is only relatively successful among the electorate, meaning that it is related more to dissatisfaction towards the incumbents than to the possibility of creating a new alternative solution and experimenting new government practices. One of the reasons for this may be the strong pressure coming from the EU and the example of the Greek situation, which has limited the options for proposing credible alternative orientations. From this viewpoint, not only has the electorate remained strongly favourable to the maintenance of the country in the euro-zone, but there are also clear signs that no radical changes are possible and the way is open only for moderate and

¹³ See «PSD abstém-se e viabiliza Orçamento Retificativo», RTP, 23-12-2015: http://www.rtp.pt/noticias/politica/psd-abstem-se-e-viabiliza-orcamento-retificativo_e883442

gradual reforms. In addition, the failure of RLPs to influence the political discourse may also be explained by the widespread “TINA” (“There Is No Alternative”) approach adopted by Portuguese mass media (Freire, 2015; Luís, 2015).

As far as the electoral relevance is concerned, the insights on Portuguese RLPs are twofold. On the one hand, the crisis seems to have benefited the overall performance of this party family, thus reverting the marginalisation of this ideological block experienced in the period before the crisis. On the other, RLPs in Portugal perform much better in second-order elections than in legislative contests (see Freire and Lisi, 2016). Another important lesson from the Portuguese case is that RLPs may follow distinct electoral trajectories. Overall, BE has registered more volatile electoral results, while PCP has been much more stable in its performance (see March and Freire, 2012; Freire and Lisi 2016).

All in all, it is worth noting that the crisis – and in particular the implementation of the MoU in 2011 – has had three main effects on the RLPs in Portugal. First, there has been an increase in the nationalist and patriotic tones of the RLPs' discourse and a growing criticism towards the EU, especially among the communists. Second, both RLPs in Portugal have been consistent in criticizing the 'cartelisation' of the party system and the similarities of the three governing parties, arguing that they represent the “national troika”. This has accentuated the divide between the radical left party family and the moderate parties. RLPs in Portugal do not differ in their explanations for the 2008 crisis and its aftermath, while the policy reforms they propose to deal with the crisis are clearly differentiated from those of other parties (PS, PSD and CDS-PP). The final aspect is the fragmentation of the radical left camp. The “great recession” also had the effect of instigating divisions within the radical left party family, increasing not only competition for office but also strategic and programmatic divergences. This change has its roots not only in circumstantial and national reasons but also in the international context. Indeed, the success of Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain was an important factor that prompted the emergence of new political actors and alternative models of mobilisation and organisation beyond those experienced by PCP and BE.

During the campaign to the 2015 legislative elections the latter seemed to have deepened the problems of the radical left in Portugal, which are mostly based on its fragmentation, lack of cooperation and its marginal position at the institutional level. PS and the radical left seemed unable to compromise to create a left-left alternative to the right-wing parties, even if some small signs in the campaign pointed in the opposite

direction (the declared unwillingness of the PS leader to coalesce with the right; the pragmatic proposals of BE to coalesce with PS – see the TV debate between Costa and the BE leader, Catarina Martins, on 14-9-2015; a similar openness of PCP to coalesce with PS, in 23-8-2015). From this viewpoint, it is a case of “new challenges, old responses”. Despite the weak centre-right majority and the lack of stable solutions emerging from the 2015 elections, there seems to be no relevant move either in terms of policy proposals and/or strategic orientations that could place left-wing parties (PS, PCP and BE) closer to each other in order to create an alternative to right-wing coalitions. However, somehow surprisingly, after the 2015 legislative elections and with a right holding only a plurality in the vote and in Parliament, we watched the fall of the Berlin Wall in Portugal 26 years after 1989. The XXI Constitutional government is a left-left government with PS, BE and PCP/CDU (in fact, a minority PS government with RLPs as support parties). The stability and robustness of such a solution is yet to be seen, particularly in a pretty adverse international setting (neoliberal globalization and Europeanization, the rules of the Euro, the pressure of international capital markets, etc.). In any case, this fall of the Berlin Wall 26 years after 1989 has a fundamental relevance for at least five reasons. First, as a matter of inclusiveness: the RLPs in Portugal represented around 8% to 18% and, until now, have been excluded from governmental decision making. Second, for the sake of the quality in political representation: this left-left governmental solution aligned party elites’ preferences with voters’ preferences on the left. Third, again for the sake of the quality in political representation: this solution increases the clarity of party-policy alternatives by setting the centre-left apart from the right. Fourth, this also means more responsibility for RLPs: they now must prove what they are able to deliver. Finally, this is a convergence of the Portuguese left with the left of West Europe since 1989. Two fundamental implications can be envisaged: first, will this major change in Portugal will have a contagious effect in other European countries, principally in the South (the second round of Spanish elections will take place in July 2016, for example)? If yes, can those changes (current and eventual) contribute to changing the neoliberal status quo in the EU? This is something that is yet to be seen.

At the domestic level, the XXI constitutional government has introduced at least three major innovations. First, in terms of government profile and patterns of cooperation on the left (centre-left minority government with support of the radical left): no constitutional government until late 2015 had had such a profile. If it proves stable and able to deliver, this new political solution has the potential to open up a new chapter

in Portuguese politics, a new era of greater inclusiveness and more responsibility. The second major innovation is related with the process of government formation: it was the first time ever in Portugal that the winning party did not end up forming the government, and, what is more, is not even in the new executive. Third, in terms of the policy orientations of PS, and the fundamental leaning of the political system due to this type of political solution: a 'policy contamination' of PS by the radical left. Overall, this post electoral 'left front' alliance meant PS was 'forced' to move further to the left in the left-right spectrum, reversing the right wing bias in Portuguese politics (see above). Ultimately, this new pattern in coalition politics may bring about a fundamental change in Portuguese politics, reversing the historical right wing bias, if it proves lasting.

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