Title: «Party politics in Portugal: municipalities and central government»[1].

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Abstract:

Since the Portuguese revolution of April 25th, 1974, and the beginning of the democratic regime (with the first elections for parliament held on April 25th, 1975), political parties dominate the electoral process, both on central government and on the municipalities. The analysis of the political elites, their party filiations and recruitment and their social backgrounds has occupied Portuguese social scientists for the last years. With this paper, the author proposes to establish the relationship between these two levels of government, national and local, and access the importance of political parties in each of them. Many mayors' political careers include vertical mobility, both upwards and downwards: from mayors to members of parliament to members of the European Parliament and ministers or even Prime-Minister and President of the Republic (in the case of two mayors of Lisbon), or from ministers and members of parliament to mayors. In all of these cases, their party and their position within the party has played a central role, even when some individuals have pursued other party choices in order to get re-elected, or even have presented independent candidacies (only possible since 1997).

Introduction:

Since the beginning of the democratic regime in Portugal, political parties dominate the electoral process, both on central government and on the municipalities. Lately, the analysis of the political elites, their party filiations and recruitment and their social backgrounds has occupied Portuguese social scientists (Pinto and Almeida, 2002, Almeida, Pinto and Bermeo, 2003, Freire and Lobo, 2002, Freire, Lobo and Magalhães, 2007, Freire, 2006a and 2006b). With this paper, the author proposes to establish the relationship between national and local government (and also supra-national, with an analysis of the Portuguese members of the European Parliament), and access the importance of political parties in each of them. Many mayors' political careers include vertical mobility, both upwards and downwards: from mayors to members of parliament to members of the European Parliament and ministers or even

President of the Republic and Prime-Minister (in the case of two mayors of Lisbon), or from ministers and members of parliament to mayors. In all of these cases, their party and their positions within the party have played a central role, even when some individuals have pursued other party choices in order to get re-elected, or even have presented independent candidacies.

All these factors are subject to analysis and comment, in order to compare local and central governments in Portugal, the role the parties in each of them and the phenomena of independent candidacies. In order to achieve our goal, we have posed the following research questions:

1. Are political parties equally prevalent across all levels of representative institutions in Portugal, as it happens across Europe, from national government to the smallest municipality?
2. Is there personal mobility between different levels of government in Portugal? What is the importance of a previous political career on a different level in order to get elected locally or centrally?
3. What is the impact political parties have within different levels of government in Portugal? Which are the roles, responsibilities, power and impact of party politics within local democracy, in a comparative perspective with central government?

These are important issues, not only because they haven't yet been approached by the Portuguese scientific community, but especially because in Portugal, for the last thirty years, political parties have monopolised political representation on the different levels of government. Yet, in the last decade, the competition among parties has changed in Portugal, with the introduction of new ones that have questioned the way the two major parties, which have ruled our country for the entire democratic period, function and exercise their power when in government. Also, with the 1997 constitutional change, which allowed independent candidacies in local government, a new phenomenon of elected mayors and councillors that run outside the party system is arising, since the 2001 election, and asserting a challenge to the usual rules of party politics in Portugal.

In order to answer these questions, we present a case study, centred in Portugal, and try to establish the relationship between different levels of government. We examine the relationships between the various layers of political parties; the impact of political party activity on sub-national representative institutions; party loyalty and discipline; and the special position of independent lists and citizen's groups in local government. It is generally accepted that in most European political and governmental systems parties are a basic element of representative democracy and the main, through not only, vehicle through which political representation is secured. Parties are

responsible for political recruitment, providing political experience in organising and campaigning, selecting candidates and contesting elections at all levels, and for delivering the party's policies in local government. However, in some countries a distinctly anti-party mood has developed at the sub-national level. Has this happened in Portugal? Are there any local parties in Portugal, independent of the mainstream ones? What is the impact of independent or citizen's groups' candidacies? If these new candidacies did have an impact, how were parties affected by them? Did they have to change their behaviour and adapt to this new reality?

Independent candidacies are extremely important to access the value and presence of political parties within the system. One of our main hypotheses is that the higher the place within the political hierarchy, the most important is the role of the parties and the less important is the presence of independent candidates. The other hypothesis is that the model of the party influences the behaviour and the weight of party politics within the parties: elite parties could accept more independent candidacies, as mass parties have them in lesser numbers. And finally, a previous career in local politics is important to being elected to central government: going up the hierarchy of power does matter, but going the other way around is also quite acceptable and is actually beginning to be desirable, as is a technical and professional background that is turning politicians into professionals of the political business and technocrats (Weber, 1959, Guérin and Kerrouche, 2006). The percentage of independents which are invited into governments, without a previous political career, is an important indicator of this phenomenon.

To test these hypotheses, there is the need to describe the Portuguese political system, its rules and regulations, and to analyse the Constitution. And then, we analyse the different levels of government, recruitment criteria and the presence of independents. Concerning local government, we present the data of the 2001 local election, comparing it with the lowest and highest levels of government: civil parishes, members of the Portuguese Parliament, Members of the European Parliament and Ministers. Since citizen's groups' candidacies are a very recent phenomenon in Portuguese municipalities, the number of elected councillors is quite small. Anyway, it is possible to reach some conclusions regarding the types of municipalities which have elected them, especially considering their regional importance, size and spatial location. We can also find some of the reasons for their creation, and for the types of interests they represent, namely whether or not they ran against the political parties, or even against the political system itself. Another possibility is a personalised candidacy (within a citizen's group).

Finally we follow political careers on several levels of the Portuguese government, from central to local and vice-versa and try to assert the importance of mobility between levels of government and the impact of a previous political career in order to get elected.

Historical background and legal framework:

Portugal has been living in Democracy for the last thirty one years. After the revolution of April 25th 1974, and a two year transition period, democratic institutions have begun to function with some regularity, towards a multi-party system. There have been four major parties in Portugal since 1974/1975: the Socialist Party (PS), the Social Democrat Party (PSD), the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) and the Popular Party (former CDS – Social Democrat Centre, now CDS-PP), on the right wing. The two major parties, the Socialist Party (PS – centre left) and the Social Democrat Party (PSD – centre right), usually alternate in the control of central government, sometimes in coalition to other parties.

The first democratic elections were held on the first anniversary of the revolution and they were destined to form a Constituent Assembly whose main goal was to write and approve a new Constitution. As for results, the Socialist Party won with 38 per cent of the votes, and the Communist Party, which assumed it held a revolutionary legitimacy to impose its model, had only a 12 per cent result. These first elections were held under an electoral law which established for the first time universal suffrage[3] and total gender equality[4], just as many other laws were written in those days to pave the way towards political, social and civic rights equality.

After one of the most troubling years of Portugal's history, with bank, industry and land occupations and nationalizations (Almeida, 2006a), and a few aborted revolutionary movements, finally, on April 25th 1976, elections were held to form a new Parliament and the first constitutional government. Two months later the first president was democratically elected and, on December of the same year, local elections were held to vote for mayors, members of municipal councils and parishes. Since then there have been eight more local elections, initially for three year terms, and, since 1985, for four year terms. After over half a century of mayors being appointed by the central government, from that date on local councillors were elected by the people, mediated by the political parties. Anyway, eligibility criteria were definitely modified: new factors

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[3] According to article 116th of the 1976 Portuguese Constitution, elections are direct, free, secret, regular and universal, based on the system of proportional representation.
[4] Decree number 621-A/74, November 15th 1974.

were introduced, such as the direct relation between the candidates' professional and social background and the social and demographic characteristics of the region, or the social work done, instead of the social capital possessed. And personal sympathy, another new and very important factor, opposed to fear and respect, which people generally felt for mayors before 1974. With the regime's transition, there was an almost complete replacement of the local political and economic elites: less than three per cent of the old mayors were elected afterwards and only for a very short period of time.

There has been a real enforcement of local democracy. After a very centralized regime, which deprived municipalities of its centuries' old tradition of autonomy, the goal of the new legislators was to create a safety net of several layers of government in order to protect the citizens from the return of another potentially authoritarian regime (Phillips, 1996: 23). The decision to decentralise and strengthen local government at the municipal level was quite easily accepted by all political forces at the time (Pereira, 1991: 134).

This is how the electoral process works: the first democratic Constitution, approved on April 1976, established a representative democracy, mediated by political parties, which definitely monopolise political representation on the different levels of government (except for the presidency). The President of the Republic has representative functions for the state and he/she is a warrantee of national independence and unity and of the regular functioning of democratic institutions. He/she is also the commander in chief of the armed forces and is elected under a two round majority run-off system, by direct, universal and secret suffrage on a personal candidacy, on proposal by a list of a minimum 7.500 signatures.

Both on parliament and municipalities there is a closed lists system of proportional representation: candidacies are presented by political parties, alone or in coalition and may contain citizens that are not members of political parties[5]. Since 1976, non-partisan citizen's groups could only run at the lowest level of local government: the civil parishes. It is only since the 1997 revision of the Constitution that non-partisan lists may present candidacies for municipalities. Therefore, the 2001 local election was the first one to elect mayors and councillors who were not included in party lists. But parties still monopolize the process in parliament: lists of independents and citizen's groups are not allowed to run.

On national elections, the winning party's leader (or the leader of a coalition) is usually invited by the President of the Republic to form a new government, with

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[5] Independent candidacies for parliament and municipalities have been allowed since 1976, but only within party lists, articles 151st and 239th of the Portuguese Constitution.

executive functions, composed of a Prime-Minister, Ministers, Secretaries of State and Under-Secretaries of State. The selection process of ministers is personalized: they are appointed by the President, upon proposal of the Prime-Minister and there are no specific party rules as to who is supposed to be chosen. Therefore, they may either be members of the party or independents and are usually chosen for their professional area of specialization.

It is within the parties that political representatives are chosen, both central and locally: each party has a convention that elects a leader and each one proposes a closed list of candidates to the parliament (both national and European) or the municipalities. This is a rather centralized and informal process: the intervention of the bases of each party is possible mostly in an indirect way through delegates at the party convention. Lists of candidates depend heavily on national party leadership, which definitely controls political careers and representative jobs.

Party selection of its representatives varies according to internal statutes, which also distinguishes party roles within the system. Since 2005 the Socialist Party has an advantage in Parliament, which allowed it to form a government with Prime-Minister José Sócrates, party leader since the September 2004 convention. Its 121 members of parliament were nominated as candidates in a centralized process, according to the party's statutes. Its internal rules specify that the secretary-general of the party is elected on the convention by direct vote of all members. Then, there is a national committee that defines the political orientation of the party and is responsible for choosing the lists of candidates. Thirty per cent of the names and ranks in the lists are chosen from top to bottom. Afterwards, in each district, local members of the party may choose the rest of the candidates, knowing that their candidates are placed on secondary positions, after the national party elites. These lists are subject to approval by the national committee.

On the Social Democrat Party, the whole process is more decentralized. There is also a convention that elects national bodies, but lists of candidates are chosen by local comities, and then voted by district comities. Afterwards the lists are sent to the national committee, which may change them or approve them. The Communist Party (on the left) and the Popular Party (on the right) have the most centralized selection processes of their members of parliament. The Portuguese Communist Party is the oldest left party in Portugal. It was funded in 1921 and it has survived clandestinely throughout the entire totalitarian regime. This party maintains its old structure and it maintains its ideology, even after the fall of the soviet regimes in Easter Europe, which made it lose a considerable amount of voters and members of parliament. The PCP

has a central committee elected by a convention. This committee chooses all the other political bodies, runs all political activities, orients all elected representatives and chooses candidate's lists. The Popular Party is similar to the Social Democrat Party in its statutes, but its reduced size makes it put a lot more weight on the selection and political importance of its members of parliament.

In 1999 a new party was created: the Left Block, which mobilized old communist voters and many other groups from across the political spectrum, such as the younger generations and the urban middle class, some of them a part of the Socialist Party electoral basis. This party ran for parliament for the first time in 1999 and obtained immediately a 2,44 per cent result. Its statutes were approved in 2000 and it has run for central and local elections since then. In 2005, the Left Block elected 8 members of parliament (6,35 per cent), 4 men and 4 women (which makes it the most equalitarian party, with a 50 per cent gender quota). They were all elected in Portugal's largest cities' electoral circles: Lisbon, Oporto and Setúbal. This reflects a rather urban character of this party. In local government, this party has only won elections in one municipality: it has elected a woman mayor, who had previously been elected by the Communist Party. There are Left Block councillors in several other municipalities and they are usually very active against the traditional parties. For example, in Lisbon, independent councillor José Sá Fernandes (elected in Left Block's lists) has made it a mission, for several years, to contest most decisions the local municipality makes. His main targets are environmental issues and corruption and he has been able to raise the level of debate and public awareness to very important themes.

Local government political organization:

Nowadays, continental Portugal is divided into 18 districts and there are two autonomous regions, on the Atlantic islands of the Madeira and the Azores. Each district is divided into municipalities. In 1976 municipalities were established as democratic local governments. The average size of the Portuguese municipalities is more than 32.000 people and 301 square kilometres. At present there are 308 municipalities (four were added since 1979 for demographic reasons), governed by an elected group of councillors, whose president (the mayor) is the head of the winning list. The territory of each municipality is made up of civil parishes which are institutionally represented in the organic structure of their respective municipal assembly (Pereira, 1991: 135-136).

The Constitution of 1976 defined the purpose of administrative decentralisation and contains many innovatory principles concerning local government. It is recognised the principle of local government autonomy[6]. As fundamental bases of decentralisation, the Constitution established four important principles relating to local government: the autonomy of local units of administration; the existence of local government as part of the democratic organisation of the state; the financial and patrimonial autonomy of local authorities; and local government's self-regulatory capacity. Municipalities are in fact local authorities integrated into the democratic organization of the state. They have financial autonomy through their own resources and assets, and democratic autonomy through assemblies composed of freely elected members (Pereira, 1991: 134).

The representative bodies of the municipalities are elected separately but simultaneously by resident citizens on a same election day, for a four year mandate: the municipal assembly is the deliberative body, composed of the elected representatives of the citizens and the presidents of the various parishes; the municipal executive is normally comprised of between five and eleven members (except for Lisbon, where there are 17, and Oporto, 13), one of them being the president, who is a powerful mayor (as in France). Each voter has one vote for each body. Lists may be presented by political parties (which may include independent candidates), by political parties' coalitions and (since 2001) by voters associations. The winner list elects the mayor and the number of councillors for each party is proportional to the electoral results. There is in fact a strong hierarchy in the Portuguese municipal councils and the first name on the lists always runs to be mayor. At the same time, the body of councillors is multi-partied and they all have to work together and run the municipality.

This system of local government has its origins in the fact that, in 1976, Portugal lived a period of party dissemination through society, after a 48 year absence during the authoritarian regime. In order to build their local structures, parties needed a social and political anchor in local communities. The compulsory list system and the proportional number of councillors was a way to give all parties access to local government, regardless of size and majorities, and to introduce them into the lives of citizens and their habits of political representation, as references of the multi-party democratic system. In sum, the introduction of parties in local government was a school for democratic learning, both for voters and for the parties' themselves[7]. Right

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[6] Portuguese Constitution of 1976, article 237th. See Almeida, 1991: 498.
[7] "It was considered, in 1976, that, with the young multi-party system, there was an advantage for democracy and for local government itself to introduce and consolidate political parties locally, as references of the democratic system", MP Artur Torres Pereira (PSD), Parliament's journal (*Diário da Assembleia da República*), July 30th 1997, pp. 3915-3925. Available at http://debates.parlamento.pt/?pid=r3.

from the beginning of the Portuguese transition to Democracy, citizens became very much politicised, and clearly defined their positions within the political organizations that were available[8]. And parties were the only way they had to express themselves.

Each councillor is given a field of action and has to provide a service. Usually the mayor gets the most important roles, especially the ones related to real estate and development. Full time members of the executive have a general obligation to reveal all their sources of income before the beginning and at the end of their terms. They must also declare pecuniary or individual interests. Mayors and councillors may perform their duties on a full-time or part-time basis, with a corresponding remuneration, which represents a real income. The law gives local elected representatives protection during their term of office as regards job security and career prospects in their original employment. In Portugal there is statutory provision for assistance in returning to professional life. Full-time members are entitled to a retirement pension and their time on the representative office counts twice for pension purposes.

The municipal executive in facts runs the municipalities on a daily bases and then presents proposals to the municipal assembly, which has ultimate responsibility for the approval of matters such as the annual plan, the budget, the annual report and accounts, the municipal master plan, local taxes, personnel framework, and others.

For a long time, a local government representative could also be, at the same time, a Member of Parliament. In fact, 5 per cent of all mayors since 1976 have accumulated those two elected offices, as well as 0,2 per cent of them were Members of the European Parliament. But, since 2001, this is no longer possible and elected MPs and local councillors now have to choose one of the jobs and resign the other[9].

The role of political parties on the different levels of government:

The Portuguese political system and the legal framework it works upon shows us that political parties dominate the electoral process, except for the presidential election, which is personalized. In order to understand how far parties do control every level of government, we shall evaluate party performance in each of them. Independent elected representatives are a good factor to test the initial hypothesis.

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[8] This is the contrary of what has happened with Eastern European countries' transition in the nineties, where political definition has not yet been achieved and political parties are having a hard time establishing themselves and conquering majorities (Karasimeonov, 2005).
[9] Statutes of Members of Parliament: Law n. 3/2001, February 23rd, 2001 has changed article 20th of Law 7/93.

Starting out with the President of the Republic: even though in Portugal, during the democratic period, all candidates have run as individuals, separated from political parties, the last three presidents, since 1986, had all previously been presidents of their respective parties. And, without any doubt, they all had the support of their parties and traditional coalition partners in order to get elected.

1. National Government

As far as government goes, the prime-ministers are always the leaders of their parties or the leaders of the largest party in a coalition. Ministers are a different matter. Marina Costa Lobo has studied independent members of government in order to assert the level of freedom or party autonomy a Portuguese prime-minister has in his staff's selection. Throughout the entire democratic period, there were always around 30 per cent independent members of government, mostly in key ministries. The Socialist Party has been the one with the largest number of independents in its governments. The author points out a few reasons for independent appointments: to diminish political tension among coalition partners; an electoral strategy which attempts to open up governments and parties to civil society; and a way for parties to overcome the problem of a weak social insertion (Lobo, 2003: 268). Therefore, these candidates are selected for personal reasons which are related to professional careers and recognition of values by the civil society. Specialization and professional skills have become major assets for ministerial selection. Universities, rather than former regime's prisons or exile (as it was during the revolutionary period), became the main breeding ground for political elites.

2. Parliament

Very much like governments, the Portuguese parliament reflects the same evolution in its political elites. The first elected members were mostly university graduates, but this group was under sixty per cent. Afterwards, more than eighty per cent are graduates and post-graduates. There are considerable differences among parties: for example, in 1975 over eighty per cent of the Communist Party's members of parliament had only high school. And right wing members of parliament were usually higher educated than the ones on the left wing. But nowadays the parties are very similar regarding educational profiles of its elected members. As for age, the early members of parliament were younger than nowadays. Their main professional careers are in Law, followed by managers and teachers. There were also quite a few farm and

industry workers during the first years of democracy, most of them within the Communist Party, but those ones were almost totally eliminated from parliament. This elitist profile is determined by the parties' selection process: for their candidates, leaders choose preferably male, middle-aged individuals, with large educational and professional resources. Equally as important as demand, there is the offer factor: these are the same individuals who are the most available to pursue a political career (Freire, 2001).

Concerning independent members of parliament, they do exist and they are a renewal factor for parties. The lists of members of parliament who, after being elected within a party list, have requested an independent status were used as a source for this research. The first legislature, in 1976, was the one with the largest number of members of parliament who have made this request. There were 48 of them who did so (18,25 per cent) and they represent a young democracy and a young party system. Clearly, parties did not yet have enough members to compose their lists, which made them accept people from the outside. In most cases, they have latter joined their party ranks. These independents were mainly in the Social Democrat Party's lists: 77,1 per cent. There were also 18,8 per cent with the Socialist Party and 4,2 per cent with the former CDS (now Popular Party). It was easier for the Communist Party to recruit its members, for it had a long history of clandestine existence, therefore it had no need to accept independent members into its ranks.

After this fist legislature, only 27 more members of parliament have requested this status since 1979 until 2005. Clearly there was a different approach to this subject: independent candidates have begun making private deals with parties and the ones that do request this official independent status are individuals that are usually upset with party orientation, or are about to change parties. Therefore, they do not represent a clear party strategy, but a party dissention.

Regarding the 2002 elections, only the two major parties, PS and PSD, could "afford the luxury" of independent candidates in eligible places. There were 19 independents who were elected members of parliament, representing 8,3 per cent of a 230 total. Eleven of them were in the Socialist Party list, and they represent 11,5 per cent of this party's 96 elected members or parliament; eight of them were in the Social Democrat's list, where they had a 7,6 percentage (on a 105 total). In 2005, the number of independent MPs dropped to 11, which lowered the percentage to 4,8.

3. Local Government

The 2001 election introduced independent lists and citizen's groups in municipalities. In order to verify how the party system really works locally, we can compare two different levels of hierarchy: elected councillors within the municipalities and their hierarchy in the lists of candidates and in the councils themselves (there is a higher percentage of independent councillors than there is of independent mayors), and we can compare municipalities and civil parishes (there are more independents in the parishes than in the municipalities). So here is the data on this election (see table I). There had been socialist governments since 1995 and the victory of the Social Democrat Party in these elections lead Socialist Prime-Minister António Guterres to resignation. National elections were held three months later and a new government was formed, led by Social Democrat Durão Barroso (latter the President of the European Commission, since 2004). Therefore, in this case, local elections were considered to mirror discontent with central government's options and actions.

These elections introduced a new factor in municipal suffrages: citizen groups could present candidate lists in the municipalities, a reverse trend from northern European countries, where local independent lists have a long tradition and are under attack from the parties. In 1997, during Guterres' Socialist Government, there was a revision of the Portuguese Constitution, under the proposal of the Socialist Party. The introduction of this particular item was also proposed by the Socialist Party, with the argument that the local government system had proved to be the right one for the early days of democracy, but it had become too rigid, because of the selection criteria within the party system, in which members of local councillors were chosen by central political party elites and not by local interests. After twenty years of party control of local politics, this situation was no longer considered to be of the best interest of citizens: the MP who presented this case argued that choosing candidates because of their party careers and performances was not the best criterion for local government. Instead, the new criteria should include political responsibility and independence. Therefore, the executive body of municipalities should become more flexible and not subject to party interests[10]. This new item was added to the Constitution without much further discussion and was considered by all parties as a natural evolution in a stable democracy[11]. Law 1/2001 introduced the requisites for the presentation of candidacies by voter's associations: there has to be a proposal by a number of local voters, which is proportional to the total number of voters in the municipality or the parish (about 6,7 per cent of the voters). The proponents may be no lesser than 250 and no more than 4.000

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[10] Parliament's journal (*Diário da Assembleia da República*), July 30th 1997, pp. 3915-3925. Available at http://debates.parlamento.pt/?pid=r3.
[11] The same did not happen to the proposal for allowing independent candidacies for parliament, which was rejected.

in the municipalities, and no lesser than 50 and no more than 2.000 in the civil parishes. Also, the proponents and the candidates must be voters in that same municipality or parish (which implies residence)[12]. In regards to financing, voter's associations have the same rights as political parties: they all receive a state subsidy, a part of which is fixed and another is proportional to results, as long as they get at least 2 per cent of the votes.

Civil parishes had this possibility since 1976 and the performance of citizen's groups in this lower level of local government on the 2001 election was 7,3 per cent (Martins, 2003: 18). As for municipalities, there were 30 citizen's group lists candidacies and only 5 of them won local elections, which is a 1,62 per cent result. It is confirmed a really low performance of citizen's groups in local elections; it is also possible to verify a larger presence in the parishes than in the municipalities and a probable lesser investment of parties in the lower levels of local government.

Concerning local councillors, 2.044 individuals were elected in Portugal in 2001, 173 of them as independents (8,46 per cent). There is a distinction to be made: of these 173, only 36 (1,76 per cent) were elected in non-partisan lists. The other 137 were elected as independents within party lists. On table II we can see that the two major parties in Portugal, PS and PSD are the ones that better accept independent candidates in their lists. One can verify that the type and the sociological characteristics of the party influence the behaviour and the weight of party politics within the parties: elite parties do accept more independent candidacies, as mass and smaller parties have them in lesser numbers.

Also, in the lists of candidates there is a hierarchy which is revealed in these results: of 137 independent councillors elected, there were only 16 (9 with the PSD and 7 with the PS) that were elected president, which means they were heads of party lists. There were two more, both heads of Social Democrat Party's lists, who were candidates in municipalities were the Socialist Party won. Therefore they were in the 3rd and 4th place in their respective councils' hierarchies. As a result, on 308 municipalities, only the two major parties invested in independents as party list heads and in only 5,8 per cent of the municipalities. The other 119 councillors (86,9 per cent) were placed in secondary positions in party lists and assumed the least important positions in the councils' hierarchies, usually the ones without functions or salary. Anyway, these elected officers have an important function: because they are not subject to party discipline, many times their job is to denounce irregularities, insert debate, in sum, to

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[12] The lists have to include name and identification, but they do not need statutes, Law 1/2001, August 14th 2001, articles 19th to 24th.

introduce an inspection role to party actions, by publicising and exposing all the council's actions to the media. Their function, by doing so, is to make all councillors accountable for their actions. This is an element to revitalize democracy and avoid (as much as possible) local vices and corruption (Phillips, 1996: 20), with a big help from the media and the judicial system.

These candidates were elected mostly in small municipalities: only one won in a city that is head of a district, and a rather unpopulated, rural one. In total, only 4 councillors were elected in municipalities which are heads of districts and 97,7 per cent of them were elected in municipalities that are quite small, rural and far away from Lisbon, the geographical and political centre of Portugal.

As for the 21 mayors that were elected as independents and leaders of citizen's groups, they represent 6,8 per cent of all mayors and they are distributed as seen on table III. They are all men and their municipalities are small, rural and far away from the centre. Eighteen of them had all been mayors before (and were also after) this election, one of them had already been a Member of Parliament and another one had been a Minister and a Secretary of State.

A general characteristic of citizen's groups in Portugal: they are usually created against the party system, their candidates are mostly party dissidents, due to discontent and also, in quite a few situations, due to expulsion from the party ranks. The same thing happens in the civil parishes, where 43 per cent of the individuals elected in citizens' groups list were or had been members of a party, and most of them kept a relationship with a party. They were mostly associated with the Socialist Party and the Social Democrat Party (Martins, 2003: 18, 127-128). Just as some independents join party lists in order to avoid the trouble and the risk of creating a new independent list, the leaders of citizen's groups create them when they know that they already have a support structure and a considerable percentage of sure voters. The same has occurred in the 2005 elections, when five candidates who had been mayors for many years and had been expelled from their parties, due to judicial cases associated with corruption, ran as independents and heads of citizen's group. Four of them actually won, even though one had escaped to Brazil in order not to get arrested. The one that did not win made a bad bet, by switching municipalities.

Political careers and mobility:

This question of mobility between levels of government is a growing factor in Portuguese politics. There is an increasing number of Members of Parliament who

have had experience in local councils. In fact, "local councillor and parliamentary experience are the two main factors of political professionalization of Portuguese MPs" and, from 1987 on, over fifty per cent of them have had that experience, which is similar to the European average (Freire, 2001: 115, 118). But the other way around is also a reality, because 12,3 per cent of all Portuguese mayors since 1976 have had experience as Members of the Portuguese Parliament, and 1,1 per cent have been Members of the European Parliament, both before, during and after their job as presidents of local councils. We can talk about a nationalization of local politics and a localization of national politicians.

There have been 1.170 elected mayors from 1976 to 2005. Their job had an average 8 years length. 1.026 Of them were not MPs (87,7 per cent), neither the Portuguese, nor the European. The other 144 Mayors were Members of Parliament, and these are the ones we shall describe: 36,9 per cent of them were MP before being a mayor, 29,5 per cent after, and 33,5 per cent during (until the 2001 law change). In fact, in the 1999 national election, there were 23 mayors in the lists of candidates for parliament, and they were placed there for their popularity and capacity to attract votes locally.

Since the Portuguese integration in the European Economic Community in 1986 (now European Union), there have been 87 individuals elected Members of the European Parliament. Twelve of them (13,8 per cent) were mayors during the democratic period: 5 of them were mayors before going to Brussels; another 5 were mayors after, and 2 of them were mayors in between two mandates in the European Parliament. One was mayor before 1974, and there was another one who was a president of an administrative commission during the revolutionary period of 1974-1976. On tables IV and V we can watch the chronological evolution of this factor: on the first two local elections, only about 11 per cent mayors were also members of parliament. During the eighties, their numbers rose, and on the 1993 election there was the highest percentage of mayors with a parliamentary career. With the 2001 law which forbade them to accumulate these two jobs, there were choices to be made and many mayors chose to remain in their local offices, resigning their posts in Parliament. Anyway, many politicians, both members of parliament and members of the government, still accumulate functions as members and presidents of several municipal assemblies.

Anyway we can assert that it is not only the upwards hierarchy path that is revealed in these numbers: more MPs go on to be elected mayor than the other way around. In the European Parliament, these two factors have the same weight.

Undoubtedly, early political experience counts in order to be elected in all levels of government and these people simply follow a path which is the most convenient at the time. Especially when there is a change in government and a few Members of Parliament, Ministers and Secretaries of State lose their jobs. Then, their party shall put them in the best possible list in order to get them elected, either upwards or downwards, usually waiting for the next election and the possibility of being called again for government. There is also mobility between these elected offices and political jobs in public companies. A career in politics also includes, in many cases, the presidency of the electric company (EDP) or national television (RTP), for instance, or a football club.

These results confirm the words that "the local government system is indeed one of the most successful achievements of Portugal's young democracy. (…) there is a clear attachment of the population to municipal services and activities and an increasing responsiveness of political representatives to public accountability. Evidence for the accepted relevance of local government is provided by the fact that national politicians also run as candidates in municipal elections" (Pereira, 1991: 140).

Conclusions:

In response to this paper's questions about the presence of political parties in each and all levels of government, and their impact and performance in elections, regarding the role of independents, there are some results, which may be resumed as follows:

Yes, in Portugal political parties have indeed monopolised political competition and representation on the different levels of government. Lists of candidates and political careers definitely depend on party leaders. And parties do obtain majorities in all elections: the results of independent lists are quite diminutive. But, as far as elected offices go, our main hypothesis, that the higher the place within the political hierarchy, the most important is the role of the parties and the less important is the presence of independent candidates, it is confirmed only in local government, where the presence of independents is higher in the civil parishes than in the municipalities: 7,3 versus 6,8 per cent. When we compare parliament with municipalities, our hypothesis challenged, for, in the same chronological period, there were proportionally more independent Members of Parliament than Mayors: 8,3 versus 6,8 per cent. And if we add appointed offices to this equation (members of the government, which are selected by appointment, not election), the difference is still higher: a 30 per cent average of

ministers is independent (see table VI). Therefore, the higher the place within the Portuguese political hierarchy, the more important is the role of the parties in candidate selection (as shown above). But parties, especially the two mainstream ones, do reveal a tendency to select a certain amount of independent candidates for MP and specialized professionals outside the party system for the government. The 2005 elections confirmed this trend: the percentage of independently elected mayors dropped to 2,6 (7 on citizen's lists and one as an independent on the Social Democrats' list, in Lisbon), but independent members of parliament also dropped to 4,8 per cent. Therefore, their places on the table remain the same.

Regardless of these results, the Portuguese party system is still very strong in the Portuguese central and local governments. The 2001 local election has challenged this reality, but in a very limited way. Parties are a basic element of representative democracy and the main vehicle through which political representation is secured. This is still a correct description of the Portuguese local political system, since other forms of political representation are still at a very early stage and have very low levels of performance at elections and impact in the political system as a whole. Regarding a possible anti-party mood that could have developed at the sub-national level, the facts do not indicate that this is in fact happening, because the reasons for independent candidacies seem to be much more personalized than real civic movements away from party interests.

Did those citizen's lists reveal a decline of party politics, combined with the increasing disenchantment and alienation with the established national parties? No, these cases are rare and do not mean a distance from the party system, but only an occasional distance for some of its members, without continuity in the following elections, because most of them returned to their early parties. And their motives for participation in citizen's groups are too personal to be considered disenchantment and alienation with the established national parties. Therefore, in general, Portuguese parties were not affected by the introduction of these new candidacies, and they did not have to adapt or change their behaviour.

Regarding the types of municipalities which have elected councillors from independent and citizen's groups' lists: these lists have succeeded only on small rural areas, of very low economic, social and political relevance on the national panorama. This leads us to the conclusion that the party system is hierarchy sensitive, both on the geographical and social levels.

Anyway, there is hope that these groups shall evolve into something more permanent and with a larger political visibility. Citizen's groups are political agents which may revitalize representative democracies and pave the way to a more participatory democracy. They should promote the political development of the people and improve the quality of democracy, as well as they contribute to increase voter's participation (Martins, 2003: 40, 83). We shall have to analyse a few more elections in order to access the evolution of this new phenomenon in Portuguese local politics. But also, Portuguese citizens shall have to take a different approach to local politics in order to introduce a real difference in the established party system.

As far as careers go, these political elites are becoming professional politicians and the transition between levels of government does not respect the usual upwards hierarchy. Also, professional skills are becoming increasingly important, especially with the growing complexities of local government, so the early revolutionaries no longer have a place in a political system that needs technocrats and specialists.

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Tables:

Table I: 2001 local elections' results.

Winning list	Municipalities	Percentage
Social Democrat Party (PSD)	135	43,8
Socialist Party (PS)	105	34,1
Communist Party (PCP)	28	9,1
Social Democrat Party and Popular Party Coalition	15	4,9
Independents with the Social Democrat Party	9	2,9
Independents with the Socialist Party	7	2,3
Popular Party (CDS-PP, right wing)	3	1,0
Citizen's Groups	3	1,0
Independents	2	0,6
Left Block (BE)	1	0,3
Total	308	100,0

Table II: Independent councillors in Portuguese municipalities (2001).

Party list	Number	Percentage
Socialist Party Lists	59	34,1

Social Democrat Party Lists	58	33,5
Communist Coalition Lists	14	8,1
Social Democrat Party and Popular Party Coalition Lists	3	1,7
Popular Party Lists	2	1,2
Independent Lists	10	5,8
Citizen's Groups	26	15,0
Socialist Party and Popular Party Coalition Lists	1	0,6
Total	**173**	**100,0**

Table III: Independent Mayors in Portugal (2001).

Party list	Number	Percentage
Socialist Party Lists	7	33,3
Social Democrat Party Lists	9	42,9
Independent Lists	2	9,5
Citizen's Groups	3	14,3
Total	**21**	**100,0**

Table IV: Mayors that were also Members of the Portuguese Parliament.

Election Date	Number of Mayors	Percentage of Mayors in the Municipalities
1976	33	10,9
1979	34	11,1
1982	43	14,1
1985	51	16,7
1989	60	19,7
1993	68	22,3
1997	59	19,3
2001	53	17,2
2005	41	13,3

Table V: Mayors that were also Members of the European Parliament.

Election Date	Number of Mayors	Percentage of Mayors in the Municipalities
1987	3	1,0
1989	4	1,3
1994	4	1,3
1999	2	0,6
2004	2	0,6

Table VI: Percentage of Independents on different levels of government (2001-2002).

National Government	30,0
Parliament	8,3
Municipalities	6,8
Civil Parishes	7,3