

Spain and Portugal

Rule by Party Leadership

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Except for the brief and distant period of union of Portugal with the Spanish Crown in 1581–1640, the peoples and rulers of the two countries of the Iberian peninsula have followed a long tradition of ignoring each other. After the loss of the greater part of their colonial empires, and during a large part of contemporary history, Spain and Portugal endured authoritarian regimes and remained cut off from the outside world. Even in their comparatively few commercial, cultural and media external relations, Spain was more in touch with other countries of continental Europe, and Portugal with Great Britain, than the two countries with each other.

Despite this mutual ignorance, the two neighbouring states followed rather parallel courses in the struggle between authoritarianism and democracy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. If we take a simple working definition of democracy as a political system with civil liberties and competitive elections by broad suffrage, in Spain we have to record a republic which lasted eleven months in 1873, a moderate monarchy between 1890 and 1923 and another five years of republic from 1931 to 1936. The rest of the time has been taken up by an oligarchic monarchy and two military dictatorships, that of General Miguel Primo de Rivera (1923–9) and that of General Francisco Franco (1939–75), the latter preceded by a bloody civil war. For its part, the Portuguese monarchy of the nineteenth century also swung between legitimist, moderate and liberal constitutionalist phases, but a democratic republic existed only between 1910 and 1926, and that, as in the Spain of the following decade, was highly unstable, ending in military insurrection. After a series of military governments, António de Oliveira Salazar installed a long-lived authoritarian and corporatist regime, which lasted from 1933 to 1974.

For many Spaniards in the second half of the twentieth century the first news from Portugal to catch their attention was precisely the overthrow of the dictatorship by the armed forces' insurrection of April 1974, which was styled a 'liberation by coup'. A year and a half later, in November 1975, the death of General Franco opened the road to democracy in Spain, albeit via the monarchy which legally succeeded him. The two countries thus followed different routes in the transition from their respective authoritarian regimes. In Portugal the sudden collapse of authoritarianism, in large measure provoked by the final colonial crisis, gave way to the formation of a provisional government made up of opposition parties which up to that time had barely been organised, then to a period of instability during which a new and extensive constitution was approved with a strong social reform content, and finally to a moderate stabilisation. In Spain, by contrast, reform of the dictatorship was begun by the monarchist government itself in negotiation with the authoritarian rulers, and only after the first competitive election was a constituent process initiated with alternative negotiations taking place between new reform rulers and the anti-dictatorship opposition.

The historic isolation of the two countries had left them on the margins of the Second World War, which allowed the two authoritarian regimes to survive and which also explains their later almost simultaneous entry into the United Nations Organisation in 1955. Nevertheless, Spain and Portugal managed to establish normal foreign relations only after they had consolidated their democratic systems, and although the anglophile Portuguese had been persuaded to join a free-trade agreement between various countries of the European periphery (the European Free Trade Association, EFTA), they did not jointly become members of the European Community until 1986.

There are some basic similarities and some striking differences between the institutional choices of the Portuguese and Spanish democracies. In both countries, uncertainty about the future during the first phase of the transition, together with the wish to establish a democratic system that would include minorities, as a reaction against the former exclusive authoritarianism, led to the adoption of electoral rules based on proportional representation. In both cases moderate multi-party systems exist, although, especially in Spain, with a strong tendency towards polarisation.

On the other hand, while in Portugal the influence of the Armed Forces Movement, which had overthrown the dictatorship, introduced the institution of a directly elected President, in Spain the monarchy inherited from Franco's rule could make itself compatible with democracy only through the establishment of a parliamentary system. Thus the first democratic generation in Portugal saw a high degree of conflict between the President, the Prime Minister and the Assembly, as well as a great deal of government instability, while in Spain there has been the greatest government stability in Europe.

Finally, while the relatively small size and homogeneity of Portugal permit a unitary state structure, centralised in Lisbon, the greater extent and diversity of Spain are the bases of substantial territorial decentralisation. Given the high degree of concentration of power into a single party in the Spanish central government, territorial governments with different political party orientations have become the

main element of political pluralism in the system, although not always in favour of consensual, stable agreements.

These institutional differences, however, did not prevent the governments of the two countries adjusting to moderate public policies dominated by the attractiveness of centrist political positions. An important common feature of the two systems, which offers a useful perspective for comparative analysis, is the lack of institutionalisation of the paths of negotiation and conflict resolution; for the most part these are undertaken in direct relations between the leadership of the major political parties.

ELECTIONS

Before going on to analyse political institutions, it is useful to provide a brief introduction to the context of voter preferences in which these institutions are set; this context in turn is partly an expression of the economic and cultural structures of society.

Political ideology

Many Spanish citizens are quite capable of locating their political preferences on a two-dimensional policy and ideology space formed by the symbolic left-right and the nationalist axes. The first axis, the left-right symbolic representation, basically reflects two sets of policy issues. One is socio-economic, ranging from a preference for governmental intervention (public spending and redistribution), on the one hand, to the market (tax reductions and free enterprise), on the other. However, a relatively high level of material well-being has accorded less ideological relevance to social class than in other historical periods, while inducing a consensus favourable to economic growth and the general prosperity of society. The second issue is moral and religious, with the two opposites favouring either pluralist tolerance or traditional family values. Some surveys show this issue assuming greater importance in the way the electorate identifies itself ideologically, especially among the young.

Citizens' preferences on these two sets of policy issues may not always coincide, but the limited choice offered by the political parties tends to reduce the available alternatives and confine them to one single dimension. Thus the main alternatives offered by the parties are located on a left-right axis whose poles represent, on the one hand, positions more favourable to government intervention and moral pluralism (close to the social-democratic tradition) and, on the other, positions more favourable to the market (albeit with notable elements of protectionism and government assistance) and to traditional Catholic values (near to the social-Christian tradition). Typically liberal combinations of economic market and moral pluralism are, by contrast, weaker. The distribution of Spanish citizens' preferences on the ideological and synthetic left-right dimension tends to be unimodal. The mean of individual preferences is situated slightly to the left of centre, as has been traditional in neigh-

bouring countries such as France and Italy, and in contrast to the majority of other European countries, where it is located rather more to the right.

Alongside the left-right ideological dimension, there is another relevant dimension, namely the national identification within which political issues such as decentralisation and multilingualism are reflected. Together with Belgium and Switzerland, Spain is one of the European countries in which this dimension explains a large part of citizens' preferences. In some communities, such as the Basque Country and to a lesser extent Catalonia, one can even observe greater ability on the part of citizens to place themselves on the national dimension than on the left-right dimension (by responding to whether they consider themselves to be more or less Spanish or rather Basque or Catalan or from another community). This two-dimensional aspect is reinforced by the existence of their own political parties within these communities.

More specifically, among the main issues in election campaigns in Spain have been social assistance, family aid, public pensions for the retired, reduction of taxes, as well as some moral-cum-religious questions, such as the teaching of religion in state-subsidised schools, divorce and abortion. Emphasis has also been given to inter-territorial rivalries, especially in the distribution of public resources, as well as to the relations of the central government with nationalist parties. In some elections other issues have taken saliency, such as law and order, terrorism, the record in government of the party in power, especially as regards economic growth, and the probity of the parties and candidates.

In the Portuguese case socio-economic and moral-religious issues are also highly relevant to the structure of citizens' political preferences. Some relative importance is also attached to foreign policy and there was a range of support given to the constitutional schema, although these two issues could basically be included on the left-right ideological dimension. The limited data available on the distribution of preferences among Portuguese citizens show less consensus than in the Spanish case. While the strongest trend is again centrist, and the mean appears to be located very near the centre, there are other lower modes or poles of attraction to left and right.

Stabilising electoral rules

Certain basic criteria of electoral representation were established in Spain even prior to the first election in 1977, and these were mostly consolidated later on. As has been mentioned, a generic criterion of proportional representation was adopted for the lower chamber. But the wish on the part of the reformists in power at the time to use their advantageous position in favour of the government candidacies of the Union of the Democratic Centre (UCD) led to the over-representation of rural areas and strong correctives to the principle of proportionality.

The first election in 1977 was subject to a decree law which, in the designers' intention, was conceived as able to produce an absolute majority of seats for a party with one-third of the popular vote. In fact, it favoured the two most voted for electoral lists, at the time the UCD centre-right and the centre-left Spanish Workers' Socialist

Party (PSOE). The 1978 constitution, drawn up by a wide consensus among the parliamentary parties, confirmed the criterion of proportional representation for the Congress and extended it to the regional parliaments. In 1985, when the PSOE had an absolute parliamentary majority, an organic law was approved which confirmed many of the elements of the decree law of 1977, with the corresponding advantage in favour of the PSOE and the new larger party on the centre-right, eventually called People's Party (PP).

In accordance with these regulations the Congress of Deputies is relatively small in size: 350 seats (although the constitution allows up to 400). The seats are allocated according to the d'Hondt formula, with a threshold of 3 per cent of the votes (which is effective only in large districts). The element of the system which has the biggest political consequences is the magnitude of the electoral districts, which is determined by allocating a minimum of two seats to each province, with an additional number according to the population; the average is seven deputies per province, with wide variation, plus 2 single-member districts in Africa. In fact, among the total of 52 electoral districts a dual system operates: on the one hand there are 34 districts with fewer than 7 seats, which function as in a plurality system and which elect over 40 per cent of all deputies; on the other, there are just 18 districts with 7 or more seats, which elect the remaining 60 per cent of deputies, which permits a degree of multipartism. This duality nearly coincides with rural districts and predominantly urban districts, whose numbers of seats are respectively over-represented and under-represented in comparison with their populations. As a result, one can have such extreme cases, for example, as the district of Barcelona having four times as many electors per deputy as the district of Soria. Thus a party well established in the rural districts could gain a greater number of deputies than another more urban-based party which might receive more popular votes.

Fear of introducing instability into the democratic system acted as a disincentive to repeating certain elements of the electoral model of the republic of the 1930s, such as open lists. For this reason, personal relations between the voters and their representatives are very weak, and in fact Spain and Portugal are among the very few European countries with proportional representation in which the lists of candidates are closed.

These rules reward the two biggest parties and penalise, above all, the small and medium-sized Spain-wide parties. On the other hand, since the rules operate fairly neutrally as regards the big regional parties, they allow the electorate to express itself at the nationalist dimension and also promote the issue of decentralisation on the political agenda. In the 9 democratic elections in the period 1977–2004, the electoral systems has produced 4 single-party absolute majorities in Parliament, always based upon a minority of popular votes. The electoral deviation from proportionality averaged 13 per cent, the highest among all countries with proportional representation and very close to the deviation produced by the plurality system in Great Britain. The number of effective parties, which is below average for Europe, has decreased over time; in the 2004 election there were 3 effective parties in terms of votes, but this figure was reduced to 2.5 in terms of seats.

In most districts only two parties achieve representation; these were the centrist UCD and the Socialist PSOE in the 1977 and 1979 elections, and the PSOE and

the People's Party AP/PP since 1982. The advantage share of these parties (their proportion of seats compared with their proportion of the votes cast) was 136 per cent for the UCD (1977–9), 116 per cent for the PP (1982–2000) and between 104 per cent and 126 per cent for the PSOE (in each of the two periods mentioned). By contrast, the shares of the Communist Party of Spain (PCE) and its successor the United Left (IU), and other minority Spain-wide parties, such as the former Democratic and Social Centre (CDS), have been around 50 per cent. The proportionality profile shows that a party can only achieve over-representation in seats if it obtains at least 20 per cent of the vote.

In addition to their mechanical effects upon proportionality and the number of parties, the electoral rules have important psychological effects, particularly favouring the strategic vote – commonly known in Spain as the 'useful vote' – on behalf of the big parties. According to a number of surveys, over 70 per cent of the voters who said they were 'near' to the PSOE and the PP – that is, to one of the two major parties – said that they had actually voted for them, whereas fewer than 40 per cent of those who considered themselves 'near' to the PCE/IU and CDS actually voted for their favourite party. It would seem, therefore, that voters learned to anticipate the consequences of the electoral rules and adapt their behaviour accordingly. This perceptiveness also expresses itself in different behaviour in the two kinds of district indicated previously; the adherents of the smaller parties tend to vote more sincerely – that is, in accordance with their preferences – in twice as big a proportion in the large electoral districts as in the small ones.

Besides those already mentioned there are other entry barriers to electoral competition, especially funding for the parties from the state budget, and access to the mass media, which are distributed according to the proportion of seats allocated by the rules and not on the basis of the proportion of votes bestowed by the electors. All these elements act as self-reinforcing mechanisms of the restrictive aspects of the electoral system. They have favoured high and increasing levels of polarisation of electoral competition between the two larger Spain-wide parties at the expense of political pluralism.

The initial reform of the authoritarian regime led to the creation of a second chamber, called the Senate, which was initially intended largely as a place of rest for elderly members of the Franco regime. The current Senate is elected with rules that tend to reduce the political supply even more than the Congress. A fixed number of senators are elected in each province, independently of population size (4 in the peninsular provinces, 3 in each of the three big islands, 1 in each of the 7 small islands, 2 in Ceuta and 2 in Melilla), giving a total of 208, to which are added 50 senators representing the Autonomous Communities (normally elected by their parliaments); that is, 258 altogether. The over-representation of rural areas is reflected in this case in the fact that the number of electors per senator is forty-five times greater in Barcelona than in Soria. It would thus be possible to obtain a majority of senators with only one-sixth of the popular vote.

The Senate ballot gives each elector a limited vote, that is, less than the number of seats up for election in the constituency. However, the voter is not obliged to elect a fixed number of candidates but can choose between one and three in the districts with four seats, between one and two in the districts with three seats, and one

in those with one or two seats, so that this procedure might be called a limited approval vote.

This rule would incline each party to present the same number of candidates as the maximum number of votes at the disposal of each elector (for example three in the districts with four senators). If the big parties were to present as many candidates as seats up for election, they could run the risk of their followers dispersing their votes among these candidates, so that each might win fewer votes than the party. Likewise, if the small parties were to present only one or two candidates, they would be encouraging their followers to cast some of their votes for other parties' candidates. Because of these risk-averse party strategies, very few individual candidates have managed to get elected by calling upon their followers to vote for them alone.

As a result of the rules and the strategies they induce, local two-party systems are formed in the Senate elections. Usually the two parties share the seats out, three for one party and one for the other, or two each if the result is nearly a draw. Altogether, greater deviation from proportionality results than in the case of the Congress, and also different possibilities of winning parliamentary coalitions than in the lower chamber.

The rules for the election of the Autonomous Community parliaments vary, since they have been established autonomously, but they are very homogeneous. The electoral districts are usually the provinces, with smaller areas in some single-province Autonomous Communities (Asturias and Murcia) and the islands in the Balearic and Canary archipelagos. In five Autonomous Communities the average size of the districts is less than seven seats. Here, too, one can see a disparity in representation in favour of the rural areas, with an extreme case in the Basque Country, where the number of inhabitants per seat is four times greater in the province of Biscay than in Alava. In every case the d'Hondt formula is used, lists are closed and there are thresholds (3 per cent in nine cases, 5 per cent in seven – although in some the limit is applied to each province – and 20 per cent in each of the Canary Islands).

In political terms the main difference between the Autonomous Communities is that between the four which were set up between 1980 and 1982, which hold their elections separately and which can dissolve their parliaments and call new elections (the Basque Country, Catalonia, Galicia and Andalusia), and the other thirteen communities which since 1983 held their elections on a fixed date and at the same time as the municipal elections, although most of them have reformed their statutes in order to be able to call anticipated elections. In the first four communities it is much easier for the regional parties to develop specific strategies, while in the second group the Spain-wide parties have more opportunity to apply a global strategy. Specifically, during the period 1980–2007 the winner was different from the party in central government in 82 per cent of the 22 regional elections held separately, but only in 38 per cent of the 65 regional elections held simultaneously.

Municipal elections are held in single local districts, using the d'Hondt formula, with a threshold of 5 per cent, and closed lists (except in municipalities with under 250 inhabitants, where the limited approval vote is used, with a maximum of four individual votes for five seats). These rules foster a sincere vote among the citizens to a greater extent than in the parliamentary elections and have allowed greater pluralism on the town councils than in the other institutions referred to above.

Table 6.1 Elections to the Spanish Congress of Deputies, 1977–2008

Year	Turnout %	Communist PCE/IU	Socialist PSOE	Catalans CiU	ERC	Basque PNV	Centre UCD	CDS	People AP/PP	Other
1977	79	9	29	3	–	2	35	–	8	14
1979	68	11	31	3	–	2	35	–	6	12
1982	80	4	48	4	–	2	3	7	26	6
1986	70	5	44	5	–	2	–	9	26	9
1989	70	9	40	5	–	1	–	8	25	12
1993	77	10	39	5	–	1	–	–	35	10
1996	78	11	35	5	–	1	–	–	38	10
2000	70	6	35	4	–	2	–	–	45	8
2004	77	5	43	3	3	2	–	–	38	6
2008	75	4	44	3	1	1	–	–	40	7

Note:

Communist: PCE/IU: Communist Party of Spain/United Left (Partido Comunista de España/Izquierda Unida).

Socialist: PSOE: Spanish Workers' Socialist Party (Partido Socialista Obrero Español).

Basque: PNV: Basque Nationalist Party (Partido Nacionalista Vasco).

Catalans: CiU: Convergence and Union (Convergència i Unió); Republican Left of Catalonia (Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya).

Centre: UCD: Union of Democratic Centre (Unión de Centro Democrático); CDS: Democratic and Social Centre (Centro Democrático y Social).

People: AP: Popular Alliance (Alianza Popular); PP: Popular Party (Partido Popular).

In Portugal, too, the electoral rules have remained basically unchanged from the first election in 1975 to the constitution of 1976, the electoral law of 1979 and the later revisions of the constitution. In fact the constitution expressly excludes the possibility of revising the criterion of proportional representation.

Only the single-chamber Assembly, elected for a period of four years, has seen its size reduced, from 263 seats in 1975 and 250 in 1979 to 230 since 1991. As in Spain, the seats are allocated according to the d'Hondt formula, but without a threshold and with a distribution of districts which advantages the more populous and urban areas.

These rules have given the two biggest parties, the centre-left Socialist Party (PS) and the centre-right Social Democratic Party (previously the People's Democratic Party, PPD/PSD), over-representation in terms of number of seats in comparison with proportion of votes cast, while being fairly neutral towards the two smaller parties, the leftist Communist Party of Portugal (PCP, which usually presents itself in coalition with other leftist groups) and the right-wing People's Party (previously Democratic and Social Centre, CDS/PP). Only the smallest parties have regularly suffered, and they have hardly achieved representation.

As a consequence of the electoral rules and of the learning experience of the Portuguese voters themselves, successive and frequent elections have seen a growing concentration of votes on just a few candidates. In other words, the effective number of parties, measured in votes, has been reduced from 4.2 in 1975 to 3.4 in 2005; in the latter year there was a difference in relation to the effective number of parties

Table 6.2 Elections to the Portuguese Assembly, 1975–2005

Year	Turnout %	Communist BE	PCP	Socialist PS	Renewal PRD	Social Democratic PPD/PSD	People CDS/PP	Other
1975	92	–	17	38	–	26	8	11
1976	83	–	15	35	–	24	16	10
1979	87	–	19	27	–	–	42	12
1980	84	–	17	28	–	–	48	7
1983	78	–	18	36	–	27	13	6
1985	75	–	15	21	18	30	10	6
1987	73	–	12	21	5	50	5	7
1991	70	–	9	29	–	51	4	7
1995	67	–	9	44	–	34	9	4
1999	62	–	9	44	–	32	9	6
2002	61	3	7	38	–	40	9	3
2005	64	6	8	45	–	29	7	5

Note:

Communist: BE: Leftwing Bloc (Bloco de Esquerda); PCP: Portuguese Communist Party (Partido Comunista Português), usually running in electoral coalitions with minor parties, such as Portuguese Democratic Movement (MDP) and Unitary Democratic Coalition (CDU) (with the Greens).

Socialist: PS: Socialist Party (Partido Socialista).

Social Democrat: PSD: Social Democratic Party (Partido Social Democrata).

People: CDS: Democratic and Social Centre (Centro Democrático Social); PP: People's Party (Partido Popular).

measured in seats of 1.0 (that is to say, a relative reduction in the number of parties of 30 per cent). In general the electoral deviation has been around 9 per cent.

By contrast, electing the President of the Republic directly introduced an element of higher institutional pluralism. The President is elected every five years by absolute majority in two rounds. Both the distinct electoral procedure, which allows multi-party activity in the Assembly while inducing bipolarisation in the presidential polls, and the fact that the temporal mandates of the two institutions do not coincide mean that the parliamentary and governing majority has been different from the coalition of parties which has supported the winning presidential candidate most of the time. There has been single-party control of both the presidency and the parliamentary government only during the periods of Socialist dominance in 1999–2002 and 2005–6, four years in total over more than thirty years.

Spanish and Portuguese voters, respectively, elect 54 and 24 deputies to the European Parliament. Given the relatively small number of seats up for election, in 1987 Spain established a single electoral district for this kind of election, at the same time reproducing the criteria of the d'Hondt formula and closed lists. The single constituency encourages the formation of 'federal' candidacies between regional parties. It also results in greater proportionality than the Congress and Senate elections. Nevertheless, the low visibility and complex mediations associated with representation in the European Parliament have incited expressive and protest votes, especially against the party in domestic government.

Finally, both Spanish and Portuguese citizens can manifest their preferences through referendums on matters of special importance, although the results are not

binding. The referendum mechanism was used in Spain during the transition to initiate political reform in 1976, to approve the constitution in 1978, to approve the first four regional Statutes of Autonomy, already mentioned, in 1979–81, and to give support to the project of European constitution in 2006. In the post-constituent framework, the consultative process has to be called on the initiative of the President of the government and authorised by a majority of the Congress, as happened in the referendum which confirmed Spain's membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 1986. In Portugal, two 1998 referendums to introduce legislative reforms on abortion and regionalisation failed, but the first issue was successfully reintroduced in 2007.

POLITICAL PARTIES

Political parties in Spain have a very low membership and a highly centralised organisation, which concentrates a lot of decision power in the hands of the party leadership. Two factors, above all, explain this situation. In the first place, the political transition and the drawing up of the democratic constitution were marked by negotiation between the political elites, which gave rise to a high degree of personalisation of the political options. This high decision power of the leaders in the political process helped them to strongly control the parties' internal decisions, including the centralised nomination of electoral candidates. Second, as we have seen, the institutional rules erect strong entry barriers to electoral competition and at the same time inhibit intra-party competition for the electors' votes by establishing closed lists of candidates. As a result, membership of political parties is very low, less than 5 per cent of all voters.

All the Spanish parties possess important characteristics in common which distinguish them from the big European mass parties. First of all, holders and seekers of public office make up a large proportion of the membership. Second, the elected office holders who work in the various state representative institutions usually have to submit to tight discipline from party headquarters.

The public financing of the parties reinforces these tendencies. On the one hand it reduces the subjective value attached by the leadership to the members' contributions (which in fact account for less than 5 per cent of the parties' resources). On the other hand the prohibition of private financing, the weak judicial control of party finances and the lack of publicity about many aspects of the parties' internal affairs have given rise to irregularities which have been the focus of numerous corruption scandals. Among these one may single out large debts in respect of bank loans obtained on pre-election expectations of later public financing; the tendency to inflate spending, especially during election campaigns; the informal agreements between parties and business which have provided hidden funds in exchange for concessions, contracts and licences granted by the public administrations under party government control; and the setting up of fictitious companies as party instruments for collecting contributions.

These Spanish traits of social isolation and organisational rigidity are replicated, although not to such a high degree, in Portugal's political parties. The sudden

disappearance of the authoritarian regime in 1974 and the consequent institutional void gave enormous opportunities to the party leaderships, which they used to create new institutional rules in their own favour – such as the closed electoral lists – and to establish an overwhelming party presence in public offices, state enterprises, social institutions, including the trade union movement, and the media. The Portuguese parties are basically financed out of public funds, although in this case the sums depend on the number of votes obtained. The fact is that they have increased their membership since 1975 to nearly 10 per cent of the voters. Internally they too are restrained by a highly centralised discipline, which reaches its highest level in the case of the Communists.

Two parties with regional multipartism

The Spanish party system has evolved, over more than thirty years of democratic elections, from moderate multipartism to high polarisation between the two larger Spain-wide parties, which is supplemented only by a number of regional parties. In the first stage of democracy, after the elections of 1977 and 1979, the multi-party system which was created was coherent enough to arouse expectations that it might be consolidated. It was made up of two big parties, the centre-right UCD and the centre-left PSOE, both competing for the centre-ground. There were two other parties on the flanks, the right-wing AP and the left-wing PCE (with less than 10 per cent of the votes each), which acted as supporters of the big two parties while at the same time pulling them towards the extremes and maintaining some distance between them. Each of the two blocs, the UCD and AP on the right and the PCE and PSOE on the left, won an almost identical number of votes, while various regional parties were also represented. Under this system the centre-right UCD could form a minority government, under the presidency first of Adolfo Suárez and then of Leopoldo Calvo-Sotelo, seeking parliamentary support alternately from the conservative AP, the Catalan nationalists of the CiU and other regional groups, and even from the socialist PSOE on questions of the constitution and regional autonomy.

This situation came to an end after an attempted coup d'état in 1981 and the subsequent 1982 election, which provoked the destruction of the UCD – which went from being the party of government to complete dissolution in just a few months. There followed, first, a long period of governments by the socialist PSOE, led by Felipe González, after its victories in four elections in 1982, 1986, 1989 and 1993 (on the first three occasions with an absolute majority of seats in Parliament). Eventually, there was alternation in favour of the PP, which won the elections of 1996 and 2000, after a long process to absorb and concentrate the votes of the centre-right and the right on one single candidate. The recovery of the right included the withdrawal of its leader during the transition, Manuel Fraga (still remembered by many voters as one of Franco's ministers), his replacement by the younger José M. Aznar, 'refounding' of the party, various pre-election coalitions with small centrist and regionalist parties, affiliation to the Christian Democratic International (lately relabelled, at the Spaniards' initiative, Centre Democratic International), and a new

array of priority campaign issues with special emphasis on the previous governments' 'corruption' and 'dirty war' against terrorism. More recently, a new alternation of parties in government was produced, in favour of the Socialist Party, led by José-Luis Rodríguez-Zapatero, in 2004, renewed in 2008.

The party configuration has thus moved from one organised very symmetrically around two larger parties, the centre-left PSOE and the centre-right UCD, and two smaller more extreme parties at the corresponding flanks, the left PCE and the right AP, to an asymmetrical configuration with a single party on the right of the spectrum. This has produced the unexpected consequence that the centre-right position has been partly occupied by regional nationalist parties. In particular, the Catalan nationalists of the CiU have played a crucial pivotal position in Parliament, first supporting a minority government of the socialist PSOE in 1993–95, and then supporting (together with the Canary Island nationalists and the Basque nationalists for a while) an alternative minority government of the conservative PP in 1996–2000. A smaller Catalan radical party, Left Republican of Catalonia (ERC), together with the post-communist United Left (IU), also supported a minority government of the Socialists in 2004–7.

Actually, the proliferation of regional parties is the main factor in deciding that a multi-party rather than a bi-party system exists. In point of fact the Spain-wide party system interrelates with different arrangements in the Autonomous Communities. In eleven of the communities there are just imperfect bi-party systems, since the two major parties, the PSOE and the PP, together always account for over 80 per cent of the vote, although there are always small or regional parties which gain some representation, at least in the autonomous parliaments.

But in another four communities there are moderate multi-party systems including prominent regional parties. In Catalonia, in particular, the two main groups are the Socialists' Party of Catalonia (PSC, federated to the PSOE) and the centre-right nationalist coalition CiU, flanked on one side by the radical Catalan ERC and the left-wing Initiative-Greens (federated to the IU) and on the other side by the conservative PP. This two-dimensional characteristic of the Catalan ideological space can be seen above all in the practice of shifting votes in favour of the nationalist CiU in regional elections and in favour of the Spanish government party, whether the PSOE or the PP, in Spain-wide elections. In the other three communities alluded to above there is a system of basically three parties: PSOE, PP and a regional party, which is rightist in Aragon, leftist in Galicia and centrist in the Canary Islands.

It is only in the Autonomous Communities of the Basque Country and Navarre, where the national dimension is the most relevant one, no less in general than in regional elections, that one can observe a greater degree of multipartism, fractionalisation and bi-polarisation. The two parties with the biggest vote generally collect only some 50 per cent of the vote. On the nationalist dimension there are ideological contiguities between the Socialist Party of the Basque Country (federated to the PSOE) and the conservative PP, on the one hand, and the Nationalists of the PNV and the Basque Nationalists (EA) on the other. To this scenario must be added an anti-system party, the radical nationalist Unity (Batasuna), which is considered to support the terrorist organisation ETA (Basque Motherland and Liberty). The strategies employed to form coalitions show a latent two-dimensional relationship.

Table 6.3 Left–right placement of parties in Spain

Communists IU	Socialist PSOE	Catalans ERC, CIU	Basque PNV	People PP	
Left	Centre-left	Centre		Centre-right	Right

Party names:

IU: United Left (Izquierda Unida).

PSOE: Spanish Workers' Socialist Party (Partido Socialista Obrero Español).

ERC: Republican Left of Catalonia (Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya).

CIU: Convergence and Union (Convergència i Unió).

PNV: Basque Nationalist Party (Partido Nacionalista Vasco).

PP: People's Party (Partido Popular).

A moderate multi-party system

In the initial phase of Portuguese democracy, too, a four-party system appeared to be establishing itself, but subsequently there has been an increasing concentration of votes. In 1975 and 1976 the centre-left PS obtained the greatest number of votes, followed by the centre-right PPD. This later changed its name to Social Democratic Party (PSD), although at the time it was a member of the Liberal International and eventually became a partner of the centre-right European People's Party. These two parties, the centre-left PS and the centre-right PPD/PSD, were flanked by two smaller but influential parties, the left-wing PCP and the right-wing Democratic and Social Centre (CDS), later called People's Party (PP). In this situation each party seemed to occupy the ideological space attributed to it in the voters' range of preferences, leaving the two largest parties to engage in a degree of competition for the centre-ground.

Higher polarisation was introduced for the elections in 1979 and 1980 when the PPD and the CDS, as well as the small monarchist party, PPM, joined in a single candidacy as the Democratic Alliance (AD), headed by Francisco Sa Carneiro and, after his death in an apparent accident, by Francisco Pinto Balsemão. The AD coalition was the most voted-for list in the two elections and, thanks to the electoral rules, was rewarded with two absolute parliamentary majorities. In the later elections of 1987 and 1991 the PSD, led by Aníbal Cavaco Silva, obtained over 50 per cent of the vote and was easily able to form single-party governments with a parliamentary majority. Later on, José-Manuel Durão Barroso from the PSD also became Prime Minister with the support of the PP.

This unifying strategy of the centre-right contrasted with the divisions and confrontation on the left side of the spectrum. The Communist Party, in collaboration with the Armed Forces Movement, had been the driving force in the plan for the revolutionary transformation of the country, which was in part reflected in the 1976 constitution. Subsequently the PCP has never been a party of government, nor has it accepted the later amendments of the constitution. In addition, a new Democratic Renewal Party (PRD), led by former President General Ramalho Eanes,

who was opposed to the constitutional reduction of presidential powers, entered the competition in the mid-1980s.

Finding it impossible to enter into a coalition with other left parties in parliament, the PS, led by Mario Soares, undertook an erratic policy of pacts. In 1978 the PS formed a government with the right-wing CDS (in a coalition with no connection on the left–right dimension, since it left out the centre-right PSD) at the same time as it confronted President Eanes; yet in 1980 the PS broke with the CDS and allied itself with the Communists in supporting the presidential re-election of Eanes; but in 1983 the PS again confronted Eanes and this time formed a government with the centre-right PSD, the so-called 'central bloc' coalition; Mario Soares could only compete for the presidency of the republic by distancing himself even from the PS. The Socialists didn't recover until the PRD disappeared and the Communists and the extreme left weakened and split. Under the new leadership of António Guterres, the Socialist Party won the elections of 1995 and 1999 and, led by José Sócrates, again in 2005. The Socialists controlled both the government and the presidency for a few years, in 1999–2002 and in 2005–6, the only periods of unified government in democratic Portugal.

Thus the institutional conflict and frequency of elections which characterised the first period of Portuguese democracy, when there were several alternations of parties and government coalitions, seem to have served as a learning experience for the voters and some party leaders, eventually consolidating the system of representation, to some extent, by concentrating votes on the two central parties. Although the party system was initially polarised by the existence of an anti-system party, the unifying and centripetal strategy of the liberal-conservative PSD and the socialist PS helped to consolidate political equilibrium around the moderate centre. Party fragmentation is relatively low in Portugal (70 per cent in votes and 60 per cent in seats, less than the European average), with 3.4 effective parties in votes and 2.4 in seats in 2005.

Table 6.4 Left–right placement of parties in Portugal

Communists BE, PCP	Socialist PS		Social Democrat PSD	People CDS/PP
Left	Centre-left	Centre	Centre-right	Right

Party names:

BE: Left Bloc (Bloco de Esquerda).

PCP: Portuguese Communist Party (Partido Comunista Português).

PS: Socialist Party (Partido Socialista).

PSD: Social Democratic Party (Partido Social Democrata).

CDS/PP: Democratic and Social Centre/People's Party (Centro Democrático Social/Partido Popular).

PARLIAMENT

In Spain the two-chamber structure of the parliament, the General Courts, which are made up of the Congress of Deputies and the Senate, dates from the political

reform of the Franco regime, carried out in 1976–7, by which the incumbent rulers tried to secure positions for themselves in the second chamber and ensure varied representation. The two-chamber system was consolidated in the 1978 constitution, but it is strongly weighted in favour of the Congress.

Although there is a widespread consensus about the inefficiency of the Senate in the present institutional structure, there has not been enough agreement between the political parties to turn it into a federal chamber, as in other federal or decentralised European states. Some senators, as mentioned, are nominated by the Autonomous Communities, but the upper chamber plays no formal role in the relationship between central state institutions and the regional governments. Only on a few occasions have there been general debates in the Senate Commission of Autonomous Communities with the participation of the President of the central governments and the Presidents of the regions (except the Basque Country). In practice, negotiations between the central and autonomous governments proceed along extra-parliamentary paths, above all through the heads of the governing parties. In the legislative field the Senate reproduces the work of the Congress. The two chambers can introduce and modify Bills, but if there is disagreement between the Congress and the Senate the former has the last word, so that in fact the Senate has scarcely ever exercised legislative initiative.

In the post-constitution periods in government of both the centrist UCD, the socialist PSOE and the conservative PP decisions taken in the parliament have largely been determined by the agenda of the government and, in practice, that of the leadership of the governing party. The parliamentary rules further restrict the role of parliament, penalising any group indiscipline on the part of individual deputies and also any fragmentation of parliamentary groups, while at the same time favouring government stability. In fact the frequency of single-party absolute parliamentary majorities has impaired the pluralism which had been envisaged in setting up the constitution and strengthened the restrictive aspects of the parliamentary rules. This relationship can be seen in detail in the way that parliamentary groups function, in the work of the commissions and boards, and in the reduced role of individual representatives.

To form a parliamentary group in the Congress of Deputies requires fifteen deputies elected on the same platform, or a smaller number if they have been elected on a Spain-wide candidacy list and have gained at least 5 per cent of the votes cast, or have been elected on a regional list which has obtained at least 15 per cent of the votes and five deputies in the area concerned. The remaining deputies who are not included in these groups, although they may have competed with them in various lists, make up the 'Mixed Parliamentary Group', which is usually large, heterogeneous and inoperative. Parties which have established an electoral coalition can form only a single parliamentary group. Consequently, only four parties have ever been able consistently to form their own parliamentary group, namely the socialist PSOE, the conservative PP, the Catalan CiU and the Basque PNV. There have been about five parliamentary groups in each legislature, while in the Mixed Group there have been deputies from four to eight different electoral lists, most of them regional. The leaders of the main lists and parties are also the leaders of the principal parliamentary groups in the Congress.

As regards the Senate, ten senators are required to form a group. This is a figure which only the same four parties already mentioned – the PSOE, the PP, the CiU and the PNV – have achieved since 1986. No Autonomous Community can promote the formation of a regional group composed of senators returned by its own electorate. Only regional sub-groups of parliamentary groups are permitted, and only if they are formed by at least three senators of the same Autonomous Community, a figure which has been reached only by the PSOE and the PP. This has allowed these Spain-wide parties to appear as regional counterparts of the regional parties.

The principal parliamentary organisations are the boards (*mesas*), the commissions and the Committee of Spokesmen (*Junta de portavoces*). Each of the Congress and Senate boards is composed of a president, elected by absolute majority in the first round or by plurality in a second round, several vice-presidents (four in the Congress and two in the Senate) and four secretaries; in these elections every member of parliament has a vote limited to one candidate for vice-president and one candidate for secretary. Through these procedures a parliamentary plurality can elect a majority of the boards. The commissions, which are made up of around one-tenth of the total number of members of parliament, carry out the greater part of legislative discussion and control the work of the house. They are composed of representatives of the various parliamentary groups and are nominated by the heads of the groups, so that the possible winning coalitions are the same as in the full chamber. The Committee of Spokesmen sets up the agenda and calendar of parliamentary work and is formed by one representative from each of the parliamentary groups, which have a vote weighted according to the number of deputies in them.

Given this rigid organisational structure, the activities of individual members of parliament are very limited. Only the parliamentary groups are authorised to introduce Bills, while any amendment proposed by an individual member has to be endorsed by the spokesman of his or her group. There is strong voting discipline at the heart of each group, maintained through instructions and controls. Furthermore, there is little continuity among the individual members of any single commission, which prevents them from acquiring specialist expertise in any field and keeps them dependent on the decisions of the group leaders. The great majority of members have neither assistants nor advisers (except in technical and juridical matters). Altogether, the real parliamentary business of discussion, negotiation and the drawing up of alternatives is monopolised by the chairmen and women and spokespeople of the groups. For most members their presence in parliament is above all an opportunity to be recruited for other posts, and the main qualification for attaining such promotion is usually adherence to the discipline of the party. The leaderships of the major parties thus control the deputies and through them dominate the parliament.

Comparatively speaking, the Spanish parliament has produced a relatively small number of laws. Most legislative initiatives, especially the laws which receive final approval, are the work of the government, which intervenes markedly in the agenda and calendar of the parliament. As regards the subjects of the legislation, most laws have been about regulating the government's own institutions, and public finances. Among the remainder there are more general regulations than public policies or regulation of private interests. The laws are usually approved by oversized legislative

coalitions – larger, that is, than is numerically necessary in order to win. At first, this was due to the broad negotiations and consensual agreements which characterised the drawing up of the constitution and the institutionalisation of democracy. In the second phase, the large majorities have been occasioned by the scant relevance of many of the laws approved, which incites the parties to behave and vote more for electoral reasons, and to take up generic positions on the ideological spectrum, than for any reason to do with the foreseeable limited effects of the legislation.

The Spanish political system is a parliamentary monarchy, but the rules of executive appointment and control concede only a limited role to the parliament. The President of the Government is nominated by the Crown, after having been elected by an absolute majority of the deputies in the first round or by a plurality in the second round, which means that an early dissolution of the chambers can be avoided if no candidate gets majority support.

The parliamentary constituents of 1977–8, worried by the danger of democratic instability, chose to limit the possibility of censure to only 'constructive' censure motions. This followed the model of the Federal Republic of Germany established in the post-war period in reaction to the governmental instability of the Weimar Republic, which has been compared to the Second Spanish Republic in studies of the breakdown of democratic regimes in the 1930s. In accordance with this system, the President of the Government can be deposed only by a motion which includes an alternative candidate, is sponsored by 10 per cent of the deputies (a figure which has been available only to the leading opposition party) and has obtained the approval of an absolute majority of the members of the two chambers. The presidential candidate is not obliged to present the members of the government to the parliament, nor can the latter move motions of censure against particular ministers.

As a result of these rules, it is possible for governments in a parliamentary minority to survive if the adversaries of the party with most votes are sufficiently divided on both left and right. In this way a high level of governmental stability has been achieved; if we exclude the constituent legislature which began in 1977, the seven subsequent legislatures have lasted on average more than forty-three months (against a legal maximum of forty-eight), the highest average in Europe. In practice the censure motions which have been moved (by the PSOE in 1980 and by the PP in 1987) have been mere denunciations of the government and party propaganda exercises in front of the electorate.

The powers of the Portuguese Assembly are even more limited than those of the Spanish Cortes, since, besides the dominance of the executive and the tendency for decisions to be made by the parties, the Assembly has to share its placing or withdrawal of confidence in the Prime Minister with the President of the Republic. Nevertheless, parliamentary powers have been increased since the revisions of the constitution in the 1980s and 1990s, involving diminution of the President's powers, reinforcement of the role of parliamentary committees, majority control over the agenda and widening of the Assembly's budgetary procedures.

Individual Portuguese members of parliament are also subject to strong party discipline and can act only through their groups, whose existence is actually envisaged in the constitution. No deputy may change group. Nevertheless the various parties which have formed the same electoral coalition can set up different groupings

(*agrupamientos*), which have similar powers to those of the groups, except in moving government censure motions. The parliamentary agenda is established by the Leaders' Conference, which in practice means that parliamentary life is dominated by the party leaderships. There are frequent extra-parliamentary negotiations between the leaderships, and these have been decisive in promoting and approving such decisive laws as those on agrarian reform, national defence, the Constitutional Court and the amendments of the constitution, especially for allowing the re-privatisation of companies and banks.

The Portuguese Assembly elects by two-thirds qualified majority nine judges of the Constitutional Court, seven members of the Superior Council of the Judiciary, the Ombudsman, and the President of the Economic and Social Council. As regards the government, given its twofold dependence on both the Assembly and the President, there is no proper parliamentary election of a Prime Minister; however, in practice the person designated submits himself to a vote of confidence in the chamber. In 1977 the Socialist Mario Soares failed to obtain such a vote to form a government, and resigned. On the other hand, 25 per cent of the members of the Assembly can present a censure motion against the Prime Minister, which has to be approved by simple absolute majority, without having to put forward an alternative candidate. The first censure motion was presented by the Communists against the 'presidential' Prime Minister Mota Pinto in 1978; it was followed by the motions of the Socialists against Sa Carneiro in 1980, of the Conservatives against Soares in 1983 and of the Socialists against Cavaco Silva in 1989 – all of them more for propaganda than effective purposes, since the governments of all the censured Prime Ministers had majority backing in the chamber. Exceptionally, in 1987 a motion presented by the 'Eanist' PRD and supported by the Socialists and the Communists managed to overthrow the Prime Minister, Cavaco Silva, who at that time was in a minority position, but he obtained an absolute majority in the subsequent elections.

GOVERNMENT

The Portuguese dual executive

Under the Portuguese constitution of 1976 the President of the Republic possessed strong powers, which were later reduced. In the first place, he presided over the Council of the Revolution, a military organisation which claimed to be the guarantor of the revolutionary process and with which he shared the political direction of the state. The Council of the Revolution, besides advising the President and having the power of veto in military matters, acted as a constitutional court. For his part the President of the Republic nominated and could remove the Prime Minister and the government, could dissolve the Assembly, exercise a legislative veto which could be overridden only by a parliamentary qualified majority of two-thirds, and postpone the approval of legislation.

This power structure, characteristic of the 'semi-presidential' model more or less inspired by the French Fifth Republic, was modified by a series of constitutional

revisions carried out by the Assembly, without reference to – and in the face of opposition from – the President. In the first place, the Council of the Revolution was abolished and replaced by a Council of State composed of the President of the Assembly, the Prime Minister, the President of the Constitutional Court and representatives of other institutions, with the task of advising the President of the Republic. The President's legislative veto became inoperative if it was opposed by a parliamentary simple majority, whilst he lost his power to delay legislation. The President also ceased to have the right to nominate ministers and was submitted to strong limitations regarding his intervention in the designation and removal of the Prime Minister and the dissolution of the Assembly. The President of the Republic remained head of the armed forces and guarantor of national unity, whilst with his authority to refer laws and government decisions to the Constitutional Court, he rather became a referee between institutions.

For its part the government was converted into the organisation in charge of the general direction of the country's policies, as well as being the highest organ of public administration. At times when a single party has had an absolute majority the government has held considerable legislative power, able in practice to dominate the Assembly through the governing party.

The structure of the government revolves around the Council of Ministers and is complemented by the secretaries and under-secretaries of state. As in the French model of relations with the bureaucracy (which has also been adopted in Spain), the private personal assistants of the ministers, who in practice are recruited from the ranks of the governing party, stand between them and the directors-general and other high officials.

As mentioned already, the executive dualism of the Portuguese system was initially regarded by scholars as a 'semi-presidential regime'. It fitted the model in the way the President is directly elected and keeps some powers in defence and foreign policy, but the President's powers have been significantly limited regarding both legislative influence and appointment of the government. The diminution of the President's powers and the shift in the balance of power between the parties have provoked different interpretations of and labels for the institutional structure, including 'semi-parliamentary' system and even 'prime ministerial presidentialism', but the Portuguese institutional system can be classified along with most parliamentary regimes in Europe.

The legal scope of government intervention in society has changed considerably since the beginning of the democratic period. While the 1976 constitution prescribed a transition to socialism through the collectivisation of the principal means of production and pronounced the nationalisation process irreversible, the further revisions took away constitutional obstacles to the development of a market economy which, in fact, had never ceased to exist. More significant is the survival of the former authoritarian corporatism, which have been partly reconverted into a democratic neo-corporatism. Together with the government, the main actors in the consensus are, on the one hand, the industrial, agricultural and commercial employers' federations which have been grouped together in the National Council of Portuguese Entrepreneurs (CNEP). In competition with the CNEP are the industrial associations which combined in the National Council of Entrepreneurs' Associations (CNAE)

with the intention of speaking to the government directly without getting involved in social negotiations. The main agricultural and industrial trade unions, on the other hand, which have grown up from the strongly Communist-influenced *Inter-sindical* of the early years of the transition, go by the name of the General Confederation of Portuguese Workers (CGTP). Alongside the CGTP is the General Union of Workers (UGT), supported by Socialists and Conservatives, and mainly concentrated in the service sector.

The principal neo-corporate institution for negotiating economic policy is the Permanent Council of Social Negotiation, set up in 1984. It brings together, under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister, six trade union representatives (three from the UGT and three from the CGTP, the latter having refused to occupy seats for several years because they regarded membership as incompatible with the class struggle), six from the employers' confederations, and six ministers with economic and social portfolios. However, there have also been direct agreements between the industrial associations and the UGT on matters affecting incomes policy and vocational training.

Table 6.5 Governments of Portugal, 1976–2005

No.	Year	Prime Minister	Party composition
1	1976	M. Soares	Socialist
	1978	M. Soares	Socialist, People
	1978	A. Nobre da Costa	'Presidential'
	1978	C. Mota Pinto	'Presidential'
	1979	M. L. Pintassilgo	'Presidential'
2	1980	F. Sa Carneiro	Social Democrat, People, Monarchist
3	1981	F. Pinto Balsemão	Social Democrat, People, Monarchist
4	1983	M. Soares	Socialist, Social Democrat
5	1985	A. Cavaco Silva	Social Democrat
6	1987	A. Cavaco Silva	Social Democrat
7	1991	A. Cavaco Silva	Social Democrat
8	1995	A. Guterres	Socialist
9	1999	A. Guterres	Socialist
10	2002	J. M. Durao Barroso	Social Democrat
	2004	P. Santana Lopes	Social Democrat
11	2005	J. Sócrates	Socialist

Note: The first party indicates the Prime Minister's affiliation.

Table 6.6 Presidents of Portugal, 1976–2006

No.	Year	President	Party support
1	1976	R. Eanes	Socialist, Social Democrat, People
2	1980	R. Eanes	Communist, Socialist
3	1986	M. Soares	Socialist
4	1991	M. Soares	Socialist, Social Democrat
5	1996	J. Sampaio	Socialist, Communist
6	2001	J. Sampaio	Socialist, Communist
7	2006	A. Cavaco Silva	Social Democrat

With a view to the coming European single market, the government implemented drastic economic reforms, privatising state-owned industries and promoting free enterprise. This economic plan was opposed by the trade unions, which held a general strike in 1988 and subsequent strikes and protests (very much in line with the attitude of the Spanish trade unions in the same period). While the agrarian and fiscal reforms were carried through, other measures approved by the government and the Assembly, such as those making it easier to dismiss workers, were later annulled by the Constitutional Court.

The Spanish government

Among the most important powers assigned by the Spanish constitution to the Crown are: representing the country abroad, leadership of the armed forces and the right of pardon. However, activities of the government are in fact directed by its President, who (with the approval of the Crown, which is merely a matter of protocol) can nominate ministers, call elections, dissolve the parliament, call consultative referendums, declare war or peace and sign international treaties.

Spain is the only country in continental Europe where only single-party governments have been formed, always with minority-voting support. At four of nine elections, a single party achieved a majority of seats in Congress thanks to over-representation produced by the electoral system (and in 1989 with the help of the expulsion of a few Basque independent deputies from parliament). In all other instances, minority governments have been formed under the protection of the restrictive parliamentary rules mentioned above. All the governments, including those supported by an absolute majority of parliamentary seats, have been based on a minority share of the popular vote – the average electoral support being 40 per cent.

From 1982 on, each President of the Government, whether Socialist Felipe González until 1996, Popular José M. Aznar until 2004 or Socialist José L. Rodríguez-Zapatero since then, added to his position as head of a single-party executive the roles of maximum leader of his party and President of the corresponding parliamentary group. The President leads the Council of Ministers, which meets with pre-established regularity. The government's delegated commissions, inter-ministerial commissions and under-secretaries' commissions work in parallel, adopting many agreements and decisions which are put before the council for ratification.

The government also directs the public administration, the traditional structure of which was inspired by the French model of a centralised bureaucracy relatively independent of the interest groups in society. Nevertheless, this model has undergone some modifications in the democratic period: political control of the higher levels of administration has increased, especially through ministers nominating people to politically responsible posts – such as directors-general and deputy directors-general – to carry out assignments which in other countries would be the responsibility of senior civil servants; some administrative corps have been heavily decentralised with the creation and consolidation of the Autonomous Communities; and some administrative agencies have been put more directly in touch with the social groups most affected by their powers and responsibilities.

The size of the public bureaucracy has grown rapidly since the second half of the 1970s, reaching proportions comparable with the EU average. The growth of the bureaucracy since the introduction of democracy can be attributed to two factors. First, particular interest groups and citizens in general have both had greater opportunity to express their demands for public intervention. Such demands are especially great in a society such as Spain's, which had traditionally embraced a 'subject' culture, disposed towards protectionism and state assistance. Second, the efficiency of the bureaucracy has increased, thanks to better education among civil servants and improved technical and organisational capacity. Thus, there has been a reduction in the number of juridical regulations and in the corps and scales of civil servants, and the salary and incentives systems have been clarified, all of which has increased productivity. But the well-known paradox has manifested itself whereby greater efficiency has allowed certain sectors of the administration wider margins to expand by themselves absorbing the public benefits of their activities. Also, since the traditionally low turnover of civil servants in their postings has scarcely been modified, any attempt to channel personnel appointments to different activities or services has tended to lead to an increase in staff.

Quantitatively, public spending has risen from 20 per cent of GDP in 1960 and 25 per cent in 1975 to 46 per cent in 2007 (compared with an EU average of 50 per cent), while the number of civil servants, which was around 10 per cent of the active population in 1980, is approaching 15 per cent (as against an average 17.5 per cent in the EU).

The Spanish constitutional norms, which, as we have seen, were drawn up by consensus between the various political tendencies, lay down varied criteria for government intervention. On the one hand, they make formal allowance for planning and for a high degree of regulation of economic activity; on the other, they establish a free-enterprise system within the framework of a market economy – stating specifically, for instance, that taxes shall not be confiscatory and that public spending will be guided by criteria of efficiency and economy.

There are certain institutional mechanisms for negotiation between the government and groups in society, especially as regards the direction and execution of economic policy, although in practice they have had a very limited effect. To understand the basic features of relations between the government and social groups in economic and social matters, it has to be borne in mind that while the Spanish Confederation of Entrepreneurs' Organisations (CEOE) groups together over 90 per cent of employers, albeit in a very decentralised structure, the trade unions – mainly the UGT and the Workers' Commissions (CCOO) – have an official membership of fewer than 15 per cent of wage earners (barely half of whom are up to date with their subscriptions).

The trade unions have based their negotiating power on the existence of committees elected by all the company's workers irrespective of their trade union affiliation, and on the legally binding nature of the agreements between social organisations and government for all firms and employees, whatever their links or independence. This 'inclusive' model of trade union negotiation is distinct from other traditions (for example the British), in which only their members are bound by the deals agreed by the unions. While the British 'exclusive' model gives the unions a

strong incentive to increase their membership, in Spain the automatic binding of all workers to the terms of an agreement is a disincentive to active participation and union membership, which to workers seems an unnecessary expense. While their bases of organised support are increasingly concentrated among civil servants, the low level of membership causes the unions to give priority to action by their organising leaderships, which gives rise to a vicious circle.

Social negotiation, then, is poorly institutionalised. Although a certain amount of literature on neo-corporatism, based on experience in Central and Northern Europe, was imported during the 1980s, it was not until 1992 that Spain set up an Economic and Social Council, composed of a Chairman, twenty employers' representatives, twenty trade union representatives, and twenty experts representing other groups (farmers, consumers, fishermen, co-operatives), and which has a purely consultative status.

Up to that time, at least, three stages can be distinguished in relations between the government and social organisations. In the first period, 1977–84, in the midst of economic crisis and mostly with minority centre-right governments in power, the key was consensus and agreement. The first agreements on economic and social matters, known as the 'Moncloa pacts', were signed in late 1977, after the first political election. These pacts, aimed at stabilising the economy and institutionalising labour relations, were conceived of as a contribution to consolidating democracy and were signed, in fact, by the government and the parliamentary political parties, since entrepreneurs and trade unions were still in the first stages of getting themselves organised. Later on, most of the agreements between employers and trade unions, although they concentrated on fixing rates of wage increases, also had a markedly political character. The trade unions, on the one hand, undertook to moderate claims and strikes, while the government, on the other, legislated on workers' rights and provided public funding for the unions. In line with this generic orientation, the CEOE and the UGT signed the Inter-confederal Basic Agreement in 1979, the Inter-confederal Framework Agreement (AMI) in 1980, the AMI-2 and the Employment National Agreement (ANE) in 1981, the Inter-confederal Agreement (AI) in 1983, and the Economic and Social Agreement in 1984. For its part, the CCOO trade union joined the ANE, known as the 'pact of fear', only because it was signed shortly after the attempted coup d'état of 1981, and the AI, a few weeks after the formation of the first PSOE government.

The second stage began in 1985, initially in a period of economic growth and then, after 1991, in recession, and under governments of the centre-left. The keys of this stage were conflict and the absence of agreement, to a point where the unions have called several general strikes since 1988 against government economic policy.

Finally, social negotiations and agreements between workers' unions, employers' organisations and the government were resumed in 1996, immediately after the arrival of the People's Party in government. The explanation of this paradox – social conflict with centre-left governments and social pacts with centre-right governments – can be found in some aspects of the political game which have been outlined in previous sections. The PSOE governments, in particular, found themselves facing a major contradiction between the need for social negotiation, on the one hand, and the requirements of electoral popularity and medium- and long-term economic

Table 6.7 Governments of Spain, 1977–2008

No.	Year	President of Government	Party composition
1	1977	A. Suárez	Centre
2	1979	A. Suárez	Centre
	1981	L. Calvo-Sotelo	Centre
3	1982	F. González	Socialist
4	1986	F. González	Socialist
5	1989	F. González	Socialist
6	1993	F. González	Socialist
7	1996	J. M. Aznar	People
8	2000	J. M. Aznar	People
9	2004	J. L. Rodríguez-Zapatero	Socialist
10	2008	J. L. Rodríguez-Zapatero	Socialist

rationality, on the other. The remarkable social independence of the Socialist Party leadership and its fusion with the government leadership, plus command of an absolute parliamentary majority, allowed the PSOE to give the electoral game priority; that is, the PSOE tried to maintain the positions which made it attractive to a significant band of centrist voters, recruited from wide sections of the middle class, and showed a preference for economic policies aimed at growth, in defiance of protests from the less competitive sections of society and the trade unions' demands for redistribution. In comparison with other European socialist parties, the PSOE had the advantage that, due to its previous absence from power, it did not have to contradict any of its own previous policies.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Decentralisation

The biggest institutional innovation of the 1978 Spanish constitution was the decentralisation of public powers. In the context, outlined above, of bipolar electoral competition and high concentration of central power in single-party governments, local and regional governments have become the main instances of political pluralism in Spanish democracy.

Since 1979 this has included the democratisation of over 8,000 town councils (a larger figure than in other European countries, in relation to population), 50 provincial councils (some of which were later abolished when they became single-province Autonomous Communities) and the councils of the islands, as well as the creation of 17 Autonomous Communities between 1980 and 1983. This decentralisation is the principal element of pluralism and the devolution of power in the Spanish institutional structure, while at the same time being a notable stage for competition and negotiation between the political parties governing the various institutions.

In contrast, in Portugal only two rather remote islands in the Atlantic Ocean, the Azores and Madeira, were organised as autonomous regions with legislative assemblies and governments. Other provisions for establishing regional decentralisation were later abandoned and Portugal remained constitutionally defined as a unitary state. However, with Portugal's entry into the European Union pressures for regionalisation have increased.

In Spain, mayors are elected indirectly by an absolute majority of councillors supporting the person heading one of the lists of election candidates, and if no single candidate obtains such a majority the name at the head of the list which has attracted the most popular votes is designated. (Only the mayors of small municipalities with open councils, and the mayors of districts smaller than municipalities, are directly elected by plurality.) While a single party has won an absolute majority of councillors in more than one-third of the elections held for the biggest town councils, in many other cases the rules have allowed winning coalitions to be formed which have elected a different candidate from the one who attracted most votes.

Initially, two paths were laid down for forming the Autonomous Communities in Spain. On the one hand, there were the so-called 'historical' communities (those which had held plebiscites on autonomy in the 1930s), which held referendums to approve their statutes of autonomy, which secured greater powers from the very beginning, and which hold separate autonomous elections. These communities are the Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia, to which was added Andalusia via a referendum promoted by its town councils. The other thirteen Autonomous Communities hold their elections jointly and at the same time as the municipal elections.

Every Autonomous Community has a parliamentary system. Its President is elected by the autonomous parliament through a two (or more) round procedure, with an absolute and relative majority, respectively, very similar to that for the election of the President of the central government by the Congress of Deputies. In most communities, the party system is more pluralistic than in the Spanish parliament, frequently producing multi-party coalition governments.

The constitution established two lists of areas (rather than legislative and executive powers properly speaking) which delimit the minimum activities of the central and autonomous institutions, respectively. Among the latter are urban policy, public works, transport, agriculture, the environment and culture. Although the first group of Autonomous Communities – the Basque Country, Catalonia, Galicia and Andalusia – initially received greater powers (specifically including linguistic and cultural responsibilities in the case of the first three), some of the second group of communities, such as Valencia, the Canary Islands and Navarre, soon obtained powers over similar areas, including education and health care. There has also been a transfer of powers in other areas from the central government to the Autonomous Communities, outstanding among which is security in the Basque Country, including the creation of an autonomous police force with responsibility for combating terrorism. As a result of 'autonomous pacts' between the two major political parties, the PSOE and the PP, in 1992 and 1997 additional powers were transferred to all the Autonomous Communities so that they were almost on a par with the first group. Successive fiscal agreements for the periods 1984–6, 1986–91 (prolonged

further), 1997–2001 and 2002–6 have given increasing financial resources to the Autonomous Communities. The Catalan government initially asked for the collection of 15 per cent of income taxes, but 33 per cent was finally transferred to all regional governments, together with 35 per cent of value-added tax and full special taxes. Initially, most powers and responsibilities were shared or concurrent between the central government and the Autonomous Communities. But, as there has been a tendency for the central government to reserve basic legislation to itself, even in fields attributed to the Autonomous Communities, leaving to the latter the development and execution of the legislation, the autonomous governments have kept up constant pressure for the central government to transfer further powers. Since 2004, most Communities began to elaborate new Statutes of Autonomy to enlarge their capacity for self-government, following the initiative of the Basque Country and Catalonia. The project approved by the Basque parliament was rejected by a two-party majority in the Spanish parliament. But during the period 2006–7 new statutes have actually been approved for Catalonia, Aragon, the Balearic Islands, Valencia and Andalusia.

When decentralisation began in 1979 the distribution of public spending was 90 per cent by central government and 10 per cent by the town councils. In 2007 it was less than 50 per cent by central government (most of it for retirement pensions and debt interests), about one-third by the Autonomous Communities and one-sixth by town councils. The present level of regional decentralisation of public expenditure in Spain is comparable to that in Germany and Switzerland (but also to locally decentralised Denmark and Sweden). It should be borne in mind that this decentralisation has been accompanied by a notable growth in overall public spending, the resources available to the Autonomous Communities representing more than 15 per cent of GDP. However, the level of decentralisation of taxes is significantly lower in Spain, since the central government still collects 75 per cent of tax revenue. Only the Basque Country and Navarre have their own funding formulas, which give them more resources per inhabitant. The distribution of civil servants was slightly more than proportional in favour of the Autonomous Communities and town councils, since these institutions provide many labour-intensive public services.

Financial and administrative decentralisation go together with political decentralisation, that is, the degree of disparity between the governing party at the centre and those governing in the regions. On average in the period 1980–2007, a majority of 9 of the 17 regional presidents belonged to parties which were not in central government at the time, as shown in Table 6.8. In the Basque Country, the Nationalist party has held the presidency without interruption since 1980. In Catalonia, President Jordi Pujol, of Convergence and Union, with 23 years in office, held one of the longest tenures at either regional or state level in the European democracies, from 1980 to 2003; only when he retired a new left coalition government was formed for the first time.

In contrast to the model of co-operative federalism, in which the governing parties of the federation and in the territories negotiate all the important decisions, in Spain the Autonomous Communities have developed steady competition for further decentralisation of powers. Intergovernmental relations have largely been replaced

Table 6.8 Political decentralisation in Spain

Period	Central government	Regional presidents			% regional presidents' party not in central government
		Socialist	People	Nationalist	
1980–2	Centre	1	1	2	
1983–7	Socialist	12	3	2	29
1987–91	Socialist	8	5	2	53
1991–5	Socialist	9	5	5	47
1995–6	Socialist	4	10	3	76
1996–9	People	6	8	3	53
1999–2003	People	6	7	4	59
2004–7	Socialist	7	7	3	59

Note: The right-hand column indicates the percentage of regional presidents whose party is different from the central government's party.

Source: Author's calculations, with 123 presidents elected immediately after every regional parliamentary elections (four further motions of censure and one change by turn are not counted).

by direct relations between the parties, in a framework of low institutionalisation. Typically the nationalist parties which govern in some Autonomous Communities employ a double-edged weapon – more or less veiled threats of secession or independence accompanying negotiation and cooperation – and are met, in turn, with restrictions, concessions and reprisals by the central government.

There are very few institutional bodies to negotiate and arbitrate between the central government and the Autonomous Communities. Unlike truly federal states, as we have seen, the Senate in Spain is not organised in such a way as to enable it to contribute decisively in this role. In law the Autonomous Communities have the power to initiate legislation before the Spanish parliament but in practice they never exercise it. The central government has a delegate in each Autonomous Community, but he is usually busier trying to safeguard central powers than coordinating the activities of the various administrations. The main instruments of cooperation between the central government and the Autonomous Communities are the Fiscal and Financial Policy Council and the sectoral conferences which some ministers hold periodically with the corresponding autonomous councillors in the same areas of responsibility.

There have been a significant number of conflicts over powers between the central government and the Autonomous Communities which have been referred to the Constitutional Court, most of them involving the Basque Country or Catalonia. Nevertheless, there has been a downward trend, suggesting that there was more controversy over laws on institutional matters in the first period, when the Autonomous Community was being set up, and that later on the legislators benefited from the learning experience and tended to settle their disputes by direct negotiations.

As with the rivalries and disputes, the greater part of such negotiations and agreements as there have been between the centre and the periphery have been the work of the leaderships of the parties governing in each sphere. Thus in 1982 the main negotiations over decentralisation took place between the UCD and the PSOE, which drew up an agreement on the 'harmonisation of the autonomy process' intended

to work to the detriment of the nationalist parties (which was largely annulled by the Constitutional Court); in the 1990s the PSOE and the PP agreed on greater uniformity of the Autonomous Communities' powers; and there have been bilateral agreements between either the PSOE or the PP, on the one hand, governing the country at large, and the nationalist CiU, ERC, PNV and Canary Coalition, on the other, governing in their respective Autonomous Communities, resulting in concessions to the autonomous governments, including the approval of new Statutes of Autonomy and transfers of resources, in exchange for nationalist support to minority central governments in parliament. Likewise, the central government negotiated on municipal finances with the Federation of Municipalities and Provinces, led by the mayors of the biggest cities, belonging to various parties.

The hottest focus of conflict lies in the Basque Country, where the interplay between the central government party, whether Socialist or Popular, the Basque government presided over by the Nationalists, and the pro-independence terrorist group ETA and its political branch has not reached a political equilibrium. The attacks by ETA caused more than 800 deaths in a period of thirty years, but it has dramatically decreased its lethal activity since 2003. This was partly a consequence of the broad popular rejection of violent practices as developed by international Islamist terrorist groups – especially with the bombs attack in a Madrid train station on 11 March 2004, which caused almost 200 deaths.

The Basque Country was the only community in which the 1978 referendum on the Spanish constitution did not obtain majority popular support. But the Basques were the first to obtain their Statute of Autonomy and to hold elections for the corresponding autonomous parliament, having appeared since as the model of self-government to which most of the other regional governments aspire. The Basque parliament approved a new project of statute in 2004, which envisaged a confederal relation with the Spanish state 'in the absence of violence', which was rejected by the Spanish parliament. Thus, the Basque Nationalists have found themselves increasingly close to favouring independence, as well as in open confrontation with the Spanish government.

Justice

Spanish administration of justice is among the slowest in Europe. When sentences are pronounced years after the facts have been submitted for consideration – as often happens – it is very difficult to remedy the injury, establish adequate compensation or impose an effective or exemplary sentence. As a result, the justice system finds it hard to fulfil its role of guaranteeing impartially the rights of citizens in their relationships and disputes; instead it contributes to social inefficiency. In many lawsuits between individuals, between members of the public and institutions, and even between institutions themselves, there are often incentives for some of the parties to adopt fraudulent or abusive attitudes, since there is little likelihood of receiving a punishment proportionate to the harm inflicted and, above all, judgement is so far off that it is likely to involve a sanction significantly less than the unilateral benefit deriving from such conduct.

In Spain the independent body responsible for the administration of justice is the General Council of Judicial Power (CGPJ), an institution based on the French and Italian models. The council nominates the presidents of the Supreme Court and its lower courts, as well as the high courts of the Autonomous Communities, and is charged with the training and discipline of judges. In this context the Ministry of Justice has very little power of decision, except in providing finance for the service. Nevertheless the institutional procedure for designating the main organ of judicial governance does not guarantee its real political independence. Under a 1980 regulation, twelve of the twenty members of the CGPJ were to be elected by the judges and magistrates themselves, and the other eight by parliament (half by the Congress and half by the Senate). But, given that this meant that the justice administration was almost bound to give rise to a conservative majority, in 1985 a new regulation promoted by the PSOE parliamentary majority established that the twenty members of the council would be elected by the parliament (again, half by each chamber). According to its promoters, this new regulation sought to achieve 'political coherence' between the judicial power and the governing parliamentary majority, although – as the Constitutional Court subsequently reasoned – the partisan logic of distributing posts in proportion to the parliamentary force of each party has tended to frustrate the constitutional objective of pluralism.

One of the institutions which exists in both the Spanish and the Portuguese democracies, and which follows the example of the Federal Republic of Germany and other recent democracies, is the Constitutional Court. This is charged with hearing appeals on *habeas corpus*, rights and liberties, laws which contravene the constitution, and conflicts between state institutions – especially, in the case of Spain, between the central government and the Autonomous Communities and, in the case of Portugal, between the President and the Assembly. The Spanish Constitutional Court is composed of eight members elected by the parliament, two by the government and two by the CGPJ, a procedure which has also produced partisan majorities in favour of either UCD or PSOE or PP governments in different periods. Analogously, the Portuguese Constitutional Court is formed of ten members elected by the Assembly and three co-opted members.

The European Union

Like all the political relations analysed so far, those between the Spanish and Portuguese states and the institutions of the European Union suffer from a lack of appropriate institutionalisation. The two Iberian countries joined the European Community in 1986, since when their governments have maintained permanent representatives in Brussels and participated in the European Council, the Council of Ministers, the Commission, the European Parliament and the other EU bodies.

Nevertheless, most relations between each of the two states and the EU are articulated through their governments. In Spain, although coordinating organisations exist, such as that of the Secretary of State for the EU, part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Inter-ministerial Commission on Economic Affairs relating to the EU, almost all decisions touching the European Union are taken by

the Council of Ministers or by its Delegated Commission on Economic Affairs. A joint commission of the Congress and Senate, charged with bringing public policies and state legislation into line with EU provisions, has achieved little importance.

Since 1990, regional governments of Spain participate in the governmental conference for European Affairs, later enlarged to sectoral conferences. After the parliamentary agreement of the Catalan Nationalists to give support to the People's Party government in 1996, an observer from the regional governments was appointed to the Spanish permanent representation in the Council of Ministers of the EU and in working groups. Nevertheless, several communities such as the Basque Country, Catalonia, Galicia, the Canary Islands, Valencia and Murcia have permanent delegations in Brussels, with the task of advising their economic agents. The autonomous governments are also represented in the EU Committee of Regions, and several of them have subscribed to inter-regional agreements with regional governments in other European countries.

TWO-PARTY DEMOCRACIES

The principal institutional features of the Spanish and Portuguese democracies stem from the choices made during the transition from authoritarian regimes in the mid-1970s. Among these were the parliamentary monarchy in Spain and the semi-presidential republic in Portugal, as well as electoral systems based in both cases on criteria of proportional representation.

The transition and the constituent period in Spain were dominated by the fear of civil confrontation, which induced the adoption of various precautions to avoid the pluralism of society generating an excessive degree of electoral fragmentation and political conflict. Outstanding among these precautions were:

- 1 the 'corrective' measures included in the electoral rules, which tended to produce a marked deviation of actual representation from proportionality in votes and a great reduction in the number of parliamentary parties;
- 2 electoral candidates presented in the form of closed lists;
- 3 public financing of the parties;
- 4 rigidity of parliamentary rules;
- 5 the 'constructive' censure motion.

All were intended to confirm the political parties as the main actors in the decision-making process and to favour governmental stability. But the long periods with one party commanding an absolute majority in Parliament, far from contributing to institutionalising pluralism, instead concentrated power and increased the 'monist' aspects and interpretations of Spanish constitutional arrangements. As mentioned, Spain is the only country in continental Europe where no multi-party coalition governments have ever been formed. No government has been based on majority support by popular vote. Parliament is subordinated to the government, and the latter in turn to its President and to the leadership of the majority party; the Senate or upper chamber plays a junior role to the Congress and has not functioned as a federal

chamber for negotiations between the central and autonomous governments; the judicial system has found it difficult to establish itself as an independent force; and, in general, political relations, whether in dispute or negotiation, have been monopolised by the party leaderships. 'Monist' features, that is, the actual concentration of power, have prevailed over the pluralist elements in the institutional arrangements of Spanish democracy. Long periods of single-party dominance have not helped institutional procedures for decision-making to function better or provide an apprenticeship for a new style of political relations which would be both representative of social variety and sufficiently effective.

The main institutional factor of pluralism, and the principal novelty of the 1978 Spanish constitution, was the introduction of widespread decentralisation, especially the creation of the so-called 'State of the Autonomies'. In the rather restrictive context above outlined, features such as the emergence of regional parties, high frequency of regional executives not controlled by the party in central government, and negotiations between them are major elements of political pluralism. However, they develop in a very weakly institutionalised framework and produce permanent competition rather than inter-institutional cooperation. The 'State of the Autonomies' has not been an institutional equilibrium, that is, a stable solution, but rather a framework for competition among regional Autonomous Communities demanding increasing self-government and inducing steady decentralisation of the state.

In Portugal, too, one can see the parties playing a strong leading role, often acquiring or discharging responsibilities which, under the constitution, ought to be the concern of independent institutions. Political and governmental stability in Portugal was not attained until more than ten years after the change of regime, with a period of serious conflict between 1975 and 1987 largely provoked by the existence of an anti-system Communist Party, and by inter-institutional conflicts between independent Presidents and parliamentary governments. Further revisions of the constitution submitted the military to civil control, moderated its original socialist and revolutionary tenor, and reduced the powers of the President of the Republic (as well as accommodating a European treaty, and introducing autonomy for the Azores and Madeira, new forms of participation and ratification of the International Criminal Court). (Constitutional revisions were approved in 1982, 1989, 1992, 1997, 2001 and 2004.) These reforms were agreed and supported by the major political parties, which facilitated the consolidation of a moderate multi-party system, with the consequent stabilisation of the democratic regime. This path of evolution, however, served also to reinforce the decisive role of the party leaders, who were the authors of the constitutional reforms and the new equilibrium of electoral representation.

In both countries, then, we have a situation in which democracy has been consolidated, in the sense that there are no major internal or external enemies to endanger the system of political freedoms and elected governments established after long periods of authoritarianism. Only the Basque pro-independence group ETA, which practised sustained terrorist activities, has appeared as a significant anti-system movement in Spain. Nevertheless, it seems clear that the two countries of the Iberian peninsula share a certain weakness in their democratic institutions, in the sense that their institutional capacity to regulate and coordinate the various interests and groups

of society depends strongly upon the cohesion and stability of the political parties in government at the time. Despite important differences in their institutional structures, Spain and Portugal thus reflect common features of their contemporary history and of their still recent adoption of democratic regimes.

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