

Polity IV Country Report 2007: Portugal					
Score:	2006	2007	Change	<p>The graph shows a blue line representing authority trends from 1946 to 2007. The y-axis ranges from -10 to 10. The line is flat at approximately -9 until 1976, where it jumps sharply to about 9.5. It remains at this level until 1989, then jumps slightly to 10 and stays there until 2007. A green dashed line marks the transition point in 1976, labeled with a 'c'.</p>	
Polity:	10	10	0		
Democ:	10	10	0		
Autoc:	0	0	0		
Durable:		31			
Tentative:		No			
SCODE	POR	CCODE	235	Date of Report	1 November 2008
Polity IV Component Variables					
XRREG	XRCOMP	XROPEN	XCONST	PARREG	PARCOMP
3	3	4	7	5	5
Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)					
End Date	24 April 1974		Begin Date	26 April 1976	
Polity Fragmentation: No					
Constitution	1976 (1982, 1989)				
Executive(s)	President Anibal Cavaco Silva (PSD); directly elected 22 January 2006, 50.5%				
Legislature	Unicameral: Assembly of the Republic (230 seats; proportionally elected; most recent elections, 20 February 2005) Socialist Party (PS): 121 Social Democratic Party (PSD): 75 Unitarian Democratic Coalition (CDU): 14 People's Party (PP): 12 Left Bloc (BE): 8				
Judiciary	Supreme Court of Justice				

Narrative Description:¹

Executive Recruitment: Competitive Elections (8)

Antonio Salazar had instituted a corporatist dictatorship in Portugal in 1928 following a 1926 military coup that ended a brief, but troubled, experiment with electoral politics. Salazar was replaced by Marcello Caetano in 1968 after the aging dictator fell ill. Caetano's insistence on retaining Portugal's colonial empire caused friction within the military that culminated in a 1974 left-wing military coup whose leadership was intent on ending colonialism and instituting a civilian-led parliamentary government. Direct election of a president began in 1976 and since that time the military has withdrawn from politics and the process of selecting presidential candidates has been competitive and elections have been transparent.

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Beginning in the 1980s, candidates from two major political parties (PS and PSD) have alternated in winning elections and taking presidential office. Rotation of chief executives is ensured by the constitutional provision allowing an individual to serve no more than two consecutive five-year terms as president.

Executive Constraints: *Executive Parity or Subordination (7)*

Portugal has a real separation of powers with checks and balances typical of most consolidated democracies. The president needs the legislature's approval in appointing the prime minister, and the assembly can call confidence votes against the government; the assembly is itself subject to dissolution. The legislature is vested with the powers to ensure that laws and the Constitution are implemented correctly. It also approves administrative laws, budget and economic plans, and international treaties that originate from the executive authority. The judiciary is recognized as independent from other branches of power.

Political Participation: *Institutionalized Open Electoral Competition (10)*

Both executive and legislative branches of government in Portugal are freely elected by secret ballot in multi-party elections that take place regularly in accordance with the Constitution. Major political parties are durable, inclusive in character and have mass-based national constituencies. The two dominant groups which alternately win the president's office and majorities in the legislature are the Social Democratic Party (PSD), a mildly conservative party that promotes private enterprise but supports social welfare, and the Portuguese Socialist Party (PS), a left-wing party that calls for greater social justice while respecting public liberties and the will of the majority. Both more conservative (like PP) and more radical (like PCP) parties are also represented in the legislature. None of the parties controls a stable majority and coalition-building has been an important part of the political process.