The Portuguese Communist Party –

Lessons in Resisting Change

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Ordering Details

Abstract

This paper examines the development of the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP). It asks why the PCP remained a pariah and stayed rooted to orthodox Communism when many other West European Communist Parties (WECPs) reformed themselves or broke with Communism following its collapse in central and Eastern Europe (CEE) in 1989. The paper analyses the factors behind four major attempts to transform the PCP and the reasons for their failure. It shows how some WECPs were able to maintain rigid organisations based on democratic centralism and seeks to shed light on the secretive internal workings of one of the last European bastions of Stalinism. To do this it imports an analytical framework developed to explain the diverse adaptation of Communist parties in CEE. This shows how the PCP's leaders pursued restrictive elite advancement processes to constrain the emergence of reformists. Moreover, it provides a basis on which to analyse how the PCP's leaders pursued authoritarian organisational strategies to tightly control decision-making. These processes enabled the PCP to resist calls for programmatic moderation following external shocks including the events of 1989 and disastrous electoral defeats. Elite interviews and analysis of party documents are used to demonstrate that this framework has considerable merits in helping political scientists to develop a more theoretically informed and comparative understanding of WECPs.

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The Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) played a leading role in clandestine resistance against the Salazar and Caetano dictatorships (1932–74). It grew rapidly after the 1974 Carnation Revolution and played a central role until late 1975. Its cells infiltrated the armed forces, the media, emerging public assemblies, trade unions and state institutions (Hottinger 1975). Flush with financial backing from the Soviet Union and infiltration of the state it became one of the most influential West European Communist Parties (WECPs) (De Sousa 2001, p. 157). In 1975 its revolutionary tone and armed protesters caused headaches for governments throughout Western Europe and a failed left-wing coup brought Portugal to the brink of civil war (FCO 1975, Varela 2008, p. 6).

Thereafter, the PCP pursued a threefold strategy. First, it participated in elections while waiting for another chance to overthrow capitalism (Cunha 2008, p. 3). Second, it sought to protect gains from the revolutionary period including nationalisations and collectivisation in agriculture (Cunhal 1988, p. 121). This involved staunch opposition to European integration for promoting American capitalism (Dunphy 2004, p. 115). Third, the PCP pursued a hegemonic electoral strategy. It sought credibility by contesting elections in coalition with its own front parties, the Portuguese Democratic Movement (MDP) and later the Greens. Despite demanding coalitions with the social democratic Socialist Party (PS), this aim was rendered unrealistic by ferocious attacks on it, meddling in its internal affairs and a refusal to moderate or compromise (Cunha 1992, p. 300). The PCP's pariah status divided the Portuguese left and prompted the PS to form weak minority governments or to look to the centre-right for coalition partners (Gallagher 1988, p. 293, Lisi 2007, p. 51, also see Bosco 1998).

The PCP's policy seeking strategy was largely unsuccessful. In 1979 it won almost 19 per cent of the vote in parliamentary elections. However, it has

encountered a sustained crisis and numerous pressures to change since the 1980s including steady electoral and organisational decline (see Tables 1 and 2). Its support bases in industry and collective agriculture shrank and mainstream parties revised Portugal's Constitution to dismantle its influence through privatisations (Gaspar 1991, p. 3, Patricio 1990, p. 45). The PCP lost control over its front party MDP which added to its woes and it struggled to reconcile its orthodoxy with Perestroika.

Most southern European parties have undergone wide-ranging changes in the last two decades (Bosco and Morlino 2007, p. 351). Puzzlingly, the PCP's leaders refused to change, even though scholars have long expected it to moderate following electoral defeats (Mujal-Leon 1977, Patricio and Stoleroff 1994, Cunha 2008). Even after the death of its orthodox, and domineering former Secretary-General Álvaro Cunhal in 2005 (who led the party from 1941–92), PCP programmes show remarkable continuity with those following the Carnation Revolution (PCP 2008a, 2008b). While reduced in stature, it remains one of the strongest WECPs, one of the last bastions of Stalinism and its orthodoxy continues to divide the Portuguese left.

Table 1: Electoral results of the PCP in parliamentary elections

Year	1975	1976	1979	1980	1983	1985	1987
Votes (per cent)	12.5	14.6	19	16.9	18.07	15.49	12.18

Year	1991	1995	1999	2002	2005	2009	
Votes (per cent)	8.8	8.6	8.93	6.97	7.7	7.88	

(see Comissao Nacional de Eleicoes 2010, Magone 2006, Botella and Ramiro 2003, Cunha 2003, Staar 1989, 1988).

Despite a long tradition of scholarship on WECPs relatively little research exists on them in comparative perspective. Focus on 'thick description' and the intricacies of individual cases have left little room for attempts to develop generalisable theory or to explain their diverse development in comparative terms. This left it unclear why some parties were able to reform their programmes while others like the PCP failed to adapt. The literature has also paid insufficient attention to the role played by organisational factors in WECPs. This is surprising when political scientists have found them to be important in shaping mainstream parties' ability to respond to external shocks and electoral defeats by changing their programmes and electoral strategies (Harmel, Tan and Janda 1995, Harmel and Janda 1994). The failure to investigate organisational factors is all the more surprising

considering that WECPs traditionally operated under the highly controversial and rigid structures of democratic centralism set out by Lenin and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (see McInnes 1975, p. 96, Waller 1981, 1988).

To fill these gaps and to shed light on the PCP's failure to adapt, this research imports a theoretical framework developed in the study of former Communist parties in central and eastern Europe (CEE) in Anna Grzymała-Busse's study 'Redeeming the Communist Past' (2002). This provides detailed study of how organisational factors affected the ability of Communist parties to transform themselves. In particular it shows how elite advancement processes before 1989 and elites' organisational strategies in response to the 1989 revolutions shaped their parties' ability to adapt and to break with Communism.

Grzymała-Busse showed that some parties had promoted elites with greater levels of transferable skills and who had usable pasts that were beneficial to programmatic change. Parties that had advanced elites with experience of negotiating with outside groups and institutions in wider society or with professional backgrounds in public administration were better equipped for programmatic transformation. These elites had a range of ideological influences and were pragmatic in ideological terms. Having experienced the constraints of administration they had exchanged dogmatism for practical policies. Negotiation with outside groups had made them aware of the need to be responsive to voters' preferences by moderating and embracing social democratic policies.

Those parties that transformed themselves had given greater room for debate at elite level and exhibited greater levels of elite turnover before 1989. Moreover, they had advanced elites 'horizontally' from across the state apparatus and ancillary organisations. In contrast, parties that advanced elites 'narrowly' by installing tried and tested, ideologically orthodox and loyal apparatchiks in leadership positions failed to break with Communism. Having worked almost exclusively inside the party apparatus in roles focused on internal coordination, these leaders were ill-equipped to transform their parties. Moreover, they had faced little pressure to moderate, lacked ideas useful for carrying out reforms and often remained rooted to orthodox Communism.

Second, Grzymała-Busse found that elites that had professional backgrounds and who enjoyed earlier opportunities for policy innovation and carrying out programmatic reforms were likely to centralise their parties' organisations. These

elites had seen that orthodox activists would block or sabotage policy reforms and that centralisation was required to force changes through. Where leaders abolished democratic centralism and democratised, hard-line mid-level elites and members seized control and re-asserted orthodox Communism and democratic centralism. To Grzymała-Busse it was ironic that for parties to successfully take advantage of the window of opportunity presented by the collapse of Communism and democratic elections, they required an undemocratic internal ethos.

This research imports Grzymała-Busse's framework to analyse the PCP in order to establish a basis from which to explain WECPs' diverse adaptation from a comparative perspective. The framework raises several questions about WECPs that retained orthodox Marxism-Leninism and democratic centralism: Did democratic centralism help reformists to force through programmatic reforms or did it do more to allow orthodox leaders to resist pressure to reform? Did these parties fail to transform themselves because attempts to democratise unleashed an army of orthodox mid-level elites? Did elites try to replace democratic centralism with new highly centralised structures to force through policy reforms?

By analysing the PCP's development this research extends the framework to analyse a party that managed to maintain democratic centralism – a scenario Grzymała-Busse tells us little about because it broke down in the cases that she analysed. It shows how the PCP's elite advancement processes and its leaders' organisational strategies shaped its failure to adapt. The framework is adapted to be used in a long-term perspective to show how the PCP's leaders resisted reform following numerous external shocks including the collapse of Communism in 1989.

This paper has three main sections. The first shows that the PCP developed a rigid form of democratic centralism that positioned its leaders in good stead to retain control following exogenous shocks and the collapse of Communism. Second, it shows that restrictive elite advancement practices fostered an unresponsive leadership that was ill-equipped to break with Communism following events in CEE in 1989. A third section analyses how the leadership used its power under democratic centralism to crush four major episodes of dissidence rather than to initiate reform. This analysis of the PCP shows that Grzymała-Busse's framework provides a way to significantly advance our understanding of WECPs. It ends by showing how the PCP points to several ways that the framework needs to be modified to explain their diverse adaptation.

Table 2: Membership figures of the PCP

Year	1946	1973	1974	1975	1976	1978	1981
Members	4,800	3,000	14,593	30,000	100,000	142,000	164,713

Year	1983	1986	1989	1990	1996	1999	2005
Members	200,753	200,000	199,275	120,000	140,000	131,504	80,000

(Lisi 2009, Cunha 2003, Botella and Ramiro 2003, Pereira 1988, Staar 1989, 1985).

The PCP's Rigid Democratic Centralism

The PCP has formally committed to democratic centralism since the 1920s. After being banned in 1926, it faced brutal repression and a clandestine existence. This provided little opportunity for debates or congresses and required military discipline that insulated the PCP from Cold War controversies like the Prague Spring that divided some other WECPs (Cabral 1983, p. 181). Cunhal Stalinised the PCP in the 1940s by introducing the cult of personality and tightening discipline. With Cunhal imprisoned in 1949–61, the party became more pluralistic. However, following his dramatic escape deviant anarcho-syndicalists, Maoists and ultra-leftists were banished and democratic centralism was reasserted to curtail heterogeneity (Patricio and Stoleroff 1993, p. 82).

The PCP regularly portrays itself as the most democratic Portuguese party. Supposedly, a deep debate occurs at every level of its pyramid shaped organisational structures. This begins in local meetings that elect delegates to powerful national congresses (usually with over 1000 delegates). These subsequently elect a Central Committee (CC) to govern the party and to nominate executive institutions (a Secretariat, Political Commission and a Secretary-General) (Cunha 1992, p. 328). Centralism is intended to preserve effectiveness in face of a hostile environment (PCP 1974, p. 94). Therefore officials speak with 'one voice'; avoid washing dirty linen in public and congress decisions are binding. Those publicly deviating from the party line are disciplined and lower party organs are accountable to the level above them. Horizontal discussion between local organisations is prohibited to prevent the formation of factions (Raby 1989, p. 222, PCP 2008a).

In practice the PCP's organisation has been more centralistic than its statutes admit and this allowed the leadership or more specifically, Cunhal to control policy-making and elite advancement. Even now agendas for pre-Congress meetings are

determined by the leadership and debates are policed by party officials. Critics are routinely blocked from speaking. Files monitoring members' views and self-criticisms enable the leadership to root out bad apples while regional officials tightly control the selection of congress delegates by pressuring local party leaders not to select troublemakers.

The leadership's control is reinforced through the appointment of functionaries on the party payroll as congress delegates. This group have made up over half of delegates at most congresses since 1974 and those undermining the leadership risk the sack. Institutional procedures have also kept congresses weak. Conducting congress votes by a show of hands enabled the leadership to identify any rebels until this practice was recently outlawed by parliament. Furthermore, congresses have only been allowed to vote on a single programme and a single list for the CC and these are proposed by the leadership. The latter can not be amended by congress. With dissidents always being overwhelmingly outvoted, amendments to the leadership's programmes have only ever been superficial at congresses and they have never rejected the leadership's proposed list for the CC.

As Secretary-General, Cunhal sat on all the leadership institutions. He dominated CC meetings and overruled them at a whim (*Publico* 05.10.04, Cunha 1991, p. 6). Under Cunhal, the Secretariat (between five to seven members) handled the party's finances, ran communications and directed its organisation; the Political Commission (around 20 members) made policy documents while tightly controlling ancillary organisations and elected officials (Cunha 1992, p. 328). Parliamentarians were generally weak vis-à-vis the party leadership and paid most of their salary to the party which contributes a high proportion of its income (van Biezen 2000a, p. 400, 2000b, p. 333).

The PCP expanded rapidly following the Carnation Revolution as young radicals flocked to its revolutionary appeals (see Table 2). The introduction of undisciplined newcomers presented new pressures to reform. The PCP's leaders, however, were wary of the 'New Member Factor' that hollowed out other WECPs that expanded on the back of new protest movements (Waller 1989, p. 45). In response, they established mid-level regional committees to discipline and integrate the rank and file (Cunha 1992, p. 221). In 1979 they also crushed ideological pluralism amongst its student members by merging the pluralistic Union of Communist Students (UEC) with the orthodox Union of Communist Youth to form the Portuguese Communist Youth (JCP).

The flow of internal information has also been strictly controlled. Before 1989 the party paper *Avante!* lacked any critically minded discussion or room for rival analyses including Eurocommunism or environmentalism. Party archives were also closed, even to historians within the party. Moreover, the PCP's leaders falsified, destroyed or hid documents and pressured witnesses to keep silent to obstruct analysis of party history (Cunha 1992, p. 93).

Elite Advancement in the PCP

The PCP's leaders had the power to force through programmatic reforms. However, Cunhal's restrictive and insular elite advancement practices constrained reform. They fostered an elite generally lacking in experiences that could have helped them to envisage transformation or to question the party's orthodox ideology in the late-1980s. Moreover, the leadership deliberately constrained elite advancement to resist moderation. This was no easy feat considering the PCP's growth but was possible because of several factors. First, CC members were handpicked to be ideologically orthodox. In 1974, the CC was expanded but packed with experienced, orthodox clandestine elites with proven loyalty. Between them, the CC's 36 members shared 755 years of clandestine struggle and 308 years in prison (see Cunha 1992). In 1976, the CC expanded to 90 members, incorporating more veteran militants (Gaspar 1990, p. 48). When younger newcomers were promoted as the CC grew to 165 members by 1983, ideological orthodoxy remained a prerequisite for advancement. Moreover temporary or 'alternate' members for the CC were introduced to establish a period of time in which to test their orthodoxy.

Second, it became the norm for as many as 90 per cent of CC members to work as functionaries in the PCP's apparatus (Raby 1989, p. 221). CC members had proven obedience from slowly rising up the hierarchy and spent their lives working exclusively in the party machine at central office, running campaigns or coordinating local organisations. These elites had usually been given party jobs before they could attend university to prevent them from developing analytical skills or entering professional occupations. Most had little experience in carrying out prior reforms. Dissenting CC members risked losing their jobs and excommunication from their social networks. The leadership also ensured a 'Proletarian Majority' under which around 70 per cent of the CC had working class backgrounds to marginalise the influence of intellectuals who Cunhal argued were more susceptible to bourgeois influences and to appeal to the

party's working class supporters (Cunha 1992, p. 356). Funding from the Soviet Union, infiltration of the state apparatus, the wages of elected officials and corruption in local politics enabled the PCP to employ a large army of functionaries (De Sousa 2001, p. 163).

Third, officials working on the edge of the PCP's apparatus were rarely 'horizontally advanced' to the CC in case their thinking was contaminated by experiences in negotiating with outsiders. Only a handful of CC members had experience of elected office and few had been 'Unitarian' workers who infiltrated social and political organisations including trade unions or the health and education sectors. Even leaders of the Communist dominated trade union the General Confederation of Portuguese Workers (CTGP) were underrepresented in the elite (Gaspar 1990, p. 48). Cunhal wanted to control them rather than succumb to their influence. By the late-1980s, it became common for around 20–30 CC members to have trade union backgrounds but they remained greatly outnumbered by functionaries and prominent unionists were still excluded.

Fourth, the more powerful leadership bodies the Political Commission and Secretariat, were dominated by veteran orthodox clandestine militants (see Bosco 2000). Cunhal handpicked their members and none were removed from 1963–83. In practice the Secretariat ran the party. When this expanded in 1976, it included more of the old guard including Cunhal's aid Domingos Abrantes (Gaspar 1990, p. 48). Generational turnover in the Political Commission was delayed until the late-1980s. Even then, as younger elites who joined the party after 1960 including Carlos Carvalhas gradually began to replace those who joined in the 1940s, the PCP's funnel shaped advancement policies meant only the orthodox and obedient advanced (Bosco 2001, p. 357). Before 1989 few members of the Secretariat and Political Commission had experience of working in other organisations or in carrying out prior programmatic reforms.

In 1988, the pack was shuffled to ensure that only Cunhal and Abrantes sat on all the main leadership bodies, dealing a blow to aspiring successors. The ruthless removal of Cunhal's rivals left a 'desert' in the leadership (Cunha 1991, p. 161). Most decisions had gone through Cunhal, constraining opportunities for reform and preventing elites from gaining the stature needed to contest his authority. Cunhal had delayed a change of leadership for as long as possible. When he retired as Secretary-General aged 79 in 1992, he chose his successor Carlos Carvalhas. Following this

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Cunhal still managed the PCP as President of a new 'National Council' until 1996 and remained a CC member until his death in 2005 (aged 91) (Cunha 2008, p. 4).

Cunhal had several of the characteristics that Grzymała-Busse found were beneficial to reform in parties in CEE. He was recruited from outside the PCP's traditional support base, being middle class, a law student and an academic and had worked as Minister without Portfolio following the Carnation Revolution. Cunhal sought to broaden the party's revolutionary appeal to a wide spectrum of the electorate by toning down Marxist-Leninist rhetoric in election campaigns that emphasised 'national and democratic revolution' (Pereira 1988, p. 91). He also managed to take a cautious approach during most of the revolutionary period and opportunistically accepted an electoral coalition with the PS in the Lisbon Mayoral election in 1989 to hide the PCP's losses. However, Cunhal consciously tried to keep his ideas pure because he believed any deviation from Leninism would leave its historical mission unfulfilled (Mujal-Leon 1977, p. 22). This shows the risks in overstating the extent to which orthodox elites will draw on prior experiences that seem beneficial to reform. A majority of such elites in the PCP still ignored their experiences out of a high degree of ideological conviction and fear of being punished.

Cushing the Reformers

Reformers were in short supply in the PCP and it failed to break with the past as Grzymała-Busse found of parties with restrictive elite advancement practices. However, there have been four major episodes of dissidence aimed at instigating reform. Each reformist faction had strong links with groups and institutions outside the PCP. These engendered pressures for change and support Grzymała-Busse's idea that elites negotiating with outsiders are those best positioned to embrace programmatic transformation.

The Group of Six

The PCP's monolithic image was first dented when the 'Group of Six' (Veiga de Oliveira, Vital Moreira, Silva Graça, Vitor Louro, Sousa Marques and Dulce Martins) broke ranks in the late-1980s. The 'Six' had been parliamentarians, with the exception of Martins (a secretary in the Supreme Court), and several of them worked in the 1974–75 provisional governments. The experience of working in parliament was the decisive factor shaping their gradual moderation and dissidence. There they

found pressures to negotiate, compromise with other parties and to respond to media criticisms of party ideology. Furthermore, they moderated from working with outsiders in parliamentary committees including those that drafted and revised Portugal's Constitution. This convinced them of the need for less radical policies on state ownership; removing Marxist rhetoric from the constitution and ending the political role of the armed forces to the chagrin of the leadership.

Most members of 'the Six' (and their supporters) also drew on experiences from professional backgrounds, involvement in other social organisations and engagement with theoretical debates from university education. Most of them had little clandestine experience. While elite advancement was generally restrictive, Cunhal occasionally promoted outsiders to the parliamentary group if they could help the party gain influence. This allowed Vital Moreira to advance unusually rapidly from outside the party hierarchy. He had not been an orthodox Communist but a prestigious Marxist academic and lawyer with much needed expertise.

The PCP's parliamentarians were generally tightly controlled; however, the head of the parliamentary group, Carlos Brito decided to take a tolerant approach to handling 'the Six'. He accepted their refusal to entertain Soviet officials and let them abstain from parliamentary votes. Nonetheless, some of 'the Six' resigned in 1982, while others were soon dropped from the PCP's electoral list. Most of them were excluded from the leadership by the time of their dissidence. However, they remained highly regarded figures (Narciso 2007, p. 49).

The Group of Six and democratic centralism

In March 1987, 'the Six' handed Cunhal a document detailing their criticisms of party ideology. They anticipated that reforms would be blocked without Cunhal's support and asked to discuss the party's decline with him in an effort to persuade him to allow reforms. Simultaneously, they began publishing critical articles under pseudonyms to stimulate debate. The 'Six' promoted Eurocommunism, a market-based economy and commitment to parliamentary democracy. They also demanded cooperation with the PS; dropping Euroscepticism and criticised the Soviet model (Gaspar 1990, p. 59). However, they stopped short of advocating abandoning the goal of a 'Communist society' or embracing social democracy believing this would be easy for Cunhal to dismiss.

Despite their professional backgrounds and experience in making broader appeals in parliament and the Constitutional Court, 'the Six' did not envisage new centralised organisational structures or streamlining the party's structures. They argued that under Perestroika rapid democratisation should be used to evoke ideological renewal (Cunha 1991, p. 6). The 'Six' demanded reforms that would allow party congresses (not the CC) to choose the Secretary-General; an organisational committee to manage the party to reduce the power of the Secretariat, secret-balloting in elections for congress delegates and the CC; competitive elections for the CC and generational turnover in the leadership (Gaspar 1991). The 'Six' saw themselves as 'brain-stormers' starting a debate. They wanted Cunhal to sponsor democratisation to help reforms to succeed. However, they did not want him to use democratic centralism to force through programmatic reforms.

The 'Six' stood little chance of success when Cunhal refused to budge. He kept his discussions with them and their proposals secret from the CC thereby ignoring the party's principle of collective leadership (Cunha 1991, p. 6). In response, 'the Six' went public in newspaper articles criticising democratic centralism from 1987–89 (Raby 1989, p. 220). Cunhal subsequently delayed the upcoming Twelfth Congress to gain time to shore up support (Cunha 1991, p. 160). When the CC finally discussed their dissidence in 1988, it condemned them as counter-revolutionaries (Patricio and Stoleroff 1994, p. 100).

The 'Six' had prior experiences that Grzymała-Busse found were beneficial to party transformation in CEE and also received support from activists with broader experiences from trade unions, municipal politics and as intellectuals. Even still, they could not overcome the power relations inside the PCP and only a small minority of the elite supported their proposals. All 'the Six' could do was to publish their criticisms and they won only small concessions including a letters page that was established in the party paper *Avante!* (Cunha 1991, p. 160). The 'Six' boycotted the Twelfth Congress when it was finally held in December 1988 to prevent the leadership from gaining authority by crushing them. After the Congress several of them left the party when democratic centralism was used to reassert an orthodox line.

The Case of Zita Seabra

Few of the PCP's high-ranking elites embraced reform during the late-1980s. Zita Seabra, its rising star, leading female politician and potential leader bucks the trend

(Raby 1989, p. 220). Her dissidence in 1987–88 supports Grzymała-Busse's idea that those working with groups outside the party will face pressures to reform. Seabra's role in leading the student organisation UEC following the Carnation Revolution involved working with radical feminist groups. This helped her to question the party line in the Political Commission as she worked to reform the PCP's conservative approach on women's rights, leading the campaign for the legalisation of abortion in Portugal (Guardiola 1984).

However, Seabra adopted an uncompromising approach which meant that she generally resisted pressures to moderate from contact with outsiders. She rarely built bridges with outside groups and did not gradually accept the need for reforms like most reformers. UEC remained a disciplined, orthodox and militaristic organisation under Seabra's leadership; she saw herself as a Bolshevik and complained that the Communists held back from civil war (Cancio and Almeida 2007, *Avante!* 26.07.07). Seabra's rapid promotion was possible precisely because she was an uncompromising Stalinist who devoted her time to internal administrative tasks. Seabra's eventual dissidence was shaped more strongly by two factors that are not accounted for by Grzymała-Busse's framework. First, she was disillusioned by visits to CEE and second, her obedience to the Soviet Union prompted her to question Cunhal's failure to follow Perestroika.

Few of the PCP's highly orthodox elites changed their ideas in response to the crises of the late-1980s. Those that did this generally struggled to offer another left identity or a realistic process of ideological renewal. Their dissidence shocked colleagues who questioned their legitimacy as reformers. This resembles Grzymała-Busse's finding in CEE that elites without records in carrying out prior reforms found it harder to win support for their proposals for programmatic transformation. Moreover, having hidden their heads in the sand and failed to negotiate with outsiders or to gradually adapt their beliefs, orthodox elites including Seabra, often found that their ideas collapsed altogether. Most were devastated that Communism was finished and dropped out from politics. However, Seabra moved from one extreme to another and embraced right-wing politics.

Zita Seabra and democratic centralism

In 1988 Seabra criticised the leadership in CC meetings. Cunhal responded more forcefully than with the 'Six' by putting her on 'trial'. She was expelled from the

Political Commission and subsequently the CC (Cancio and Almeida 2007). In January 1990 she was expelled from the party for publishing newspaper articles that attacked its approach to Perestroika, democratic centralism and Marxism-Leninism (Patricio and Stoleroff 1994, p. 99). Cunhal ruthlessly made Seabra's ex-husband Carlos Brito announce her expulsion and she was threatened, intimidated and spied on (see Narciso 2007).

The Third Way

Inspired by 'the Six' and Seabra, another group of reformers the 'Third Way' developed around a handful of party officials and CC members in 1988 (Narciso 2007, p. 60). They were not as famous as the Six but proved more troubling for Cunhal, as they drew support from around 3000 activists. The Third Way organised loosely and did not have a leader to avoid being punished as a faction. Its members mostly came from a younger generation to the leadership that had joined the party during the Carnation Revolution. Most prominent Third Wayers had moderated through working outside the party in other professions or political organisations. Many had backgrounds in local government, professional bodies and most were involved in the PCP's intellectual sector including artists, journalists, academics, civil servants and teachers (Gaspar 1991, p. 18). Outside the party they had learnt to compromise to get results, seen the need for practical decision-making and encountered criticisms of Marxism-Leninism.

Prominent Communist trade unionists including Jóse Judas from the General Confederation of Portuguese Workers (CGTP) and António Teodoro head of the Federation of Teachers Unions joined the Third Way. Unlike the party leadership, Communist trade unionists could not ignore changes in industry, working patterns and Portuguese society (Patricio and Stoleroff 1993, p. 78). Negotiating with workers and trade union members also showed CGTP leaders the need for practical policies to train workers to meet the demands of more highly skilled production; that European integration was a force for modernising Portugal and that the PCP's dogmatic appeals were losing resonance (Cunha 1991, p. 12). Although trade unionists were underrepresented at elite level, there were enough of them in the CC for this to cause problems.

Almost all Third Wayers had multifaceted links to other social organisations. Many had been prominent student activists at Coimbra University during the late-

1960s where actions involved dialogue and compromise with a wide spectrum of political groups. Others were members of UEC in the late-1970s. In this period, rapid membership growth transformed UEC from being a small sectarian organisation into an inclusive venue for debate that was powerful in national student organisations and its leaders became more responsive to student's aspirations. Elites with backgrounds in UEC had experience in making compromises from forging broad alliances with other political groups to run university student unions. In contrast, they found the PCP's democratic centralism too constraining. Politicians from UEC also exchanged grandiose ideological goals for pragmatism as they encountered practical problems like buying cheap books for students or providing basic services.

Other Third Wayers living in exile under fascism also became critically minded as they encountered Eurocommunism in Italy or disappointing realities in the Eastern bloc. Several of the PCP's elected officials also joined the Third Way. While the PCP's national leadership tries to retain dominance over its parliamentarians they have repeatedly moderated in parliament and used it as a platform to criticise party policy. Elected officials including Barros Moura, Jose Magalhaes and more recently Luisa Mesquita have become critical of the party's ideological orthodoxy.

The Third Way and democratic centralism

The Third Way wanted a gradual process of reform and criticised the public outbursts of the Six. They initially sought reform by mobilising activists and distributing documents at party meetings but claimed they were not a faction and were only contributing to debate for the Twelfth Congress. It was hoped that a less confrontational approach would make them acceptable to the leadership and harder for it to discipline them (Gaspar 1991, p. 5). In 1988, the Third Way presented their manifesto, with 300 signatures to the CC calling for the far reaching democratisation of the PCP.

The Third Way demanded reforms to break with Stalinism and to update Marxism-Leninism in light of Perestroika, developments in other WECPs and social change in Portugal. The Third Way did not advocate abandoning Communism but focused on freeing up debate in aim of renewal. Central to their concerns were ideological pluralism, a more favourable approach to European integration and less sectarian relations with other left-wing parties (see Narciso 2007). Cunhal appeared to be receptive and overruled calls to punish the Third Way. He included two of them in

a 15-member committee to revise party statutes and programmes. However, the committee ignored the Third Wayers' proposed reforms.

Cunhal easily out-manoeuvred the Third Way. Being reluctant to promote an open schism they had few options when the leadership enforced the ban on horizontal lines of discussion. This prevented the reformers from developing links with like-minded activists and they fragmented into different groups (Cunha 1991, p. 4). Before the Twelfth Congress Cunhal and leading orthodox elites called Third Way members to meetings to demand an end to their dissidence and tried to buy them off with promotions (Narciso 2007, p. 52). Simultaneously, their calls for democratic debate in the CC were crushed and leading reformers were spied on (Narciso 2007, pp. 85–109).

The leadership's control over the selection of congress delegates meant that the Third Way only gained around 50 of 2090 congress delegates at the Twelfth Congress in 1988. In some regions activists were not invited to vote, as the leadership packed the congress with loyal functionaries (Raby 1989, p. 221). Leading Third Wayers made it to the congress. However, their speeches and accusations of rigged delegate elections were ignored by the leadership. Cunhal took measures to reinforce his power in response to the dissidence and a new 'Control Commission' run by old orthodox elites was established to police the party. It assumed powers to monitor dissidents, to recommend punishments and operated to prevent reformers from gaining elite positions. At the Twelfth Congress leading Third Wayers and those thought to be close to them were purged from the CC as 46 of its members were replaced by orthodox functionaries (Gaspar 1990, p. 60).

The Third Way broke the tradition of unanimous congress votes but could not challenge the leadership's power (Patricio and Stoleroff 1994, p. 102). Cunhal claimed that the 1988 party programme made significant changes in recognising that there was no universal model for socialism, a need for freedom of the press and the right to form political parties (Raby 1989, p. 222). However, the changes were largely cosmetic as Cunhal shrouded the party's most vulnerable positions in ambiguous rhetoric (Gaspar 1991). Revolutionary aims were seen as 'unfinished', leaving it unclear if they had been abandoned. Programmes did not mention whether governments alternate following elections, rule out armed uprising, or abandon Marxism-Leninism (Gaspar 1991).

The Third Way and reformers lost influence before the collapse of Communism in CEE. The leadership continued to ignore them at the Thirteenth-Extraordinary

Congress in 1990 which analysed events in CEE. It reasserted an orthodox line; revolutionary politics; demanded internal discipline and called for critics to resign (Patricio and Stoleroff 1994, p. 109). Third Wayers including José Judas were deselected as congress delegates and fewer intellectuals became delegates than at previous congresses.

The leadership explained events in CEE as the result of mistakes and deviations from Leninism that the PCP would have avoided (Cunha 1991, p. 160). It praised the social achievements of state socialism and maintained alliances with regimes in Libya, Cuba, China and North Korea (Gaspar 1991, p. 19). The Political Commission's support for the failed *coup d'état* in the Soviet Union in August 1991 brought things to a head (Patricio and Stoleroff 1993, p. 78). Prominent Third Way members held a public meeting supporting Perestroika and called for the CC to renounce the decision (Calder 1992, p. 168). The leadership responded by expelling several of them after consultation with the Control Commission. Support for the coup was followed by another electoral defeat in the 1991 election as the party fell from over 12 per cent in 1987 to below nine per cent.

The collapse of Communism did little to dent the party's Stalinist organisational workings, Euroscepticism, hostile approach to the PS or its Leninist view of revolution (Cunha 1992, p. 314). There was an exodus as the Third Way left. In 1992 many of them formed the Left-Platform. This soon split and some elites (mostly high-ranking former elected officials) joined the PS while others formed a new left party the Left Bloc (BE) (Cunha 2008, p. 4). This highlights the ideological divisions within the Third Way. Its members had not united around social democratisation as Grzymała-Busse found reformers experienced in negotiating with outside groups in CEE had done. Its programmatic aims remained vague. Most Third Wayers advocated broader socialist appeals, or more flexible forms of Communism. They also called for democratisation although leading figures had professional backgrounds and prior experiences in broadening appeals that Grzymała-Busse found bred centralisation in CEE.

The Renovadores

When Cunhal retired as Secretary-General in 1992 it looked like the struggle to reform the PCP was over. However, a fourth group of hesitant reformers the 'Renovadores' waited in the background (Gaspar 1991). They included several high-

ranking Political Commission members and (temporarily) Cunhal's successor Carlos Carvalhas. Most Renovadores quietly sympathised with the Third Way's strategy of gradual reform by working through party institutions. However, some had even built their own careers from persecuting them. The Renovadores gained influence as they silently won a slim majority in the Political Commission. They aimed to reform the party in response to its continued decline. Influence at the top gave them a better chance of success than previous dissidents and they developed a movement within the party from 1992–2000.

Grzymała-Busse's framework helps to explain the conundrum of how reformist Political Commission members emerged when Cunhal picked them to be orthodox and obedient. It shows that he had been unable to fully exclude elites with prior experiences that were beneficial to envisaging reform. Generational turnover in the Political Commission had been delayed for as long as possible. At the Twelfth Congress in 1988, Cunhal retired nine of its 14 members. Most of them were replaced with younger elites who were relative newcomers including Luis Sá and Carlos Carvalhas who had joined the CC after 1974 (Bosco 2000, p. 241). This process continued in the 1990s. Many new Political Commission members were highly orthodox. Nonetheless, as Gaspar (1991) noted, despite their apparent orthodoxy, these new faces were the PCP's best hope for reform.

Unlike their predecessors, these newcomers had little experience of clandestine struggle; were highly educated and had become pragmatic through working in professional occupations outside the party. It is surprising that such elites advanced so high. However, they had toed the orthodox-line despite having long harboured criticisms and these 'newcomers' had been tested by around twenty years of experience at elite level. With the orthodox-wing firmly in control, Cunhal had little to fear and they had skills that made them useful; Sá for example had proven ability on TV and expertise in local politics. Cunhal had overestimated their obedience and by the early 1990s the Renovadores questioned the failure to broaden appeal to attract middle class supporters (Bosco 2001, p. 365).

Institutional factors also provided pressures for moderation. A group of veteran orthodox elites including parliamentary leader Carlos Brito, and the high-ranking clandestine militant Edgar Correia also became leading Renovadores. Most of this group had slowly risen up the hierarchy, worked as functionaries from a young age, had experienced imprisonment under dictatorship and lacked professional experience

outside the party. However, being in the leadership exposed these orthodox elites to critical ideas at international Communist seminars and they had disappointing experiences of visiting the Soviet Union. Their responsibilities in the Political Commission also involved coordinating the PCP's ancillary organisations and negotiating with outside groups as well as elected officials in municipal politics who expressed criticisms of how dogmatism had contributed to the party's decline.

This process of moderation continued after the collapse of Communism. Political Commission members including Brito were tasked with forging a rare municipal alliance with the PS to control the Lisbon executive from 1989–2001. This showed them the benefits of cooperation and breaking with Marxism-Leninism. Similarly, elites responsible for health and social policy in the Political Commission moderated through working with trade unionists, professional organisations, civil servants and PS health ministers who sought the PCP's support in the mid-1990s. This convinced them that opportunities existed to gain influence in public sector reform through compromising with the PS and triggered conflict with orthodox colleagues.

Working in roles as parliamentarians and municipal officials also placed pressures on some Political Commission members to moderate and to work with outsiders. Cunhal's successor Carlos Carvalhas was also selected as a compromise. Carvalhas was orthodox but had friendships with less hard-line elites. His appointment as leader was seen as an opportunity to unite them around an orthodox direction but this did not go to plan. Being from the younger generation and a parliamentarian who encountered pressures to compromise with the PS, Carvalhas aligned with the Renovadores.

Renovadores also emerged in the CC. Most of this group had moderated through working with outsiders in Unitarian work, municipal office or in professional occupations. The highest ranking Renovadores also used their influence to increase generational turnover and to promote moderate functionaries with outside political experiences to the CC. The hard-line Control Commission failed to block all of them and overestimated the orthodoxy of several functionaries promoted to the Political Commission and CC which strengthened the Renovadores. By the mid-1990s they had solid support from around 30 (of 170) CC members and at times could muster a majority there.

During the late-1990s, the Renovadores built a factional movement by connecting mid-level elites and members to debate and campaign for reforms. Those involved were often in their fifties and generally younger than the leadership. Most of them worked outside the party bubble as professionals, trade unionists, Unitarian workers and around half of them were doctors. These groups had become pragmatic through encountering the practical constraints of administration and favoured exchanging dogmatic ideology for practical policy goals. Many were also from the party's intellectual sector organisations which provided some room for ideological debate and officials in municipal government confronting local electoral realities were also strongly represented. However, the most common characteristic between the Renovadores was the pluralistic environment they encountered in UEC during the 1970s.

The Renovadores and democratic centralism

Leading Renovadores tried to gradually introduce democratisation and ideological moderation. They did not seek social democracy and initially, shied away from advocating the abandonment of Marxism-Leninism or democratic centralism to avoid overplaying their hand. Unlike previous reformers they made small inroads to reform. They revised party statutes in 1992 to emphasise the 'creative development' of democratic centralism which gave more room for their factional activities. In 1998 the Renovadores's flagship policy 'The New Impulse' was approved by the CC. This asserted that officials should be elected not appointed (Cunha 2003, p. 119); it promoted cooperation with other political forces, freedom for the party's intellectual sector and debates with previous dissidents.

In the mid-1990s Carvalhas's congress speeches emphasised renovating Communism, distance from Stalinism, cooperation with the PS and creative input from members (Cunha 2003, pp. 115–117). Meanwhile, Renovadores advocated alternative ideological inspirations in CC meetings and used their influence to tone down references to Marxism-Leninism in policy documents and campaigns. As editor of *Avante!,* Brito published articles that debated reform in other WECPs. However, there were only modest changes to statutes and programmes. The Renovadores were unable to curtail the party's ritualistic PS-bashing or Euroscepticism.

The Renovadores struggled to work through existing party structures to instigate reform. Most of the elite still lacked the outside experiences that Grzymała-Busse

found promoted reform in CEE and stood in their way. A majority of those with such experiences failed to support them. Carvalhas was also unable to dominate the PCP's daily executive the Secretariat as Cunhal had done and was forced to share power with it under collective decision-making (*Publico* 26.11.04a). This informal empowerment of the Secretariat was the PCP's major organisational change in the 1990s. Turnover there remained low and its members had little political experience beyond internal administrative tasks. Only two Renovadores were in the Secretariat which was dominated by former clandestine, orthodox elites loyal to Cunhal. They included Cunhal's orthodox henchman Abrantes who was the only Secretariat member other than Carvalhas who sat also in the Political Commission. In practice Abrantes was the real Secretary-General while Carvalhas was only a public figurehead (*Publico* 26.11.04b).

The PCP's pyramid shaped institutional structure meant that the reformers had numerous obstacles in their way and could not transform the party unless they had control at the very top. Even with majorities in the Political Commission and occasionally in the CC the Renovadores failed to secure reform, being outflanked by their superiors in the Secretariat. They prevented cooperation with the minority PS government in 1995, instructed their parliamentarians to vote against PS budget proposals and fiercely criticised it for shifting rightwards. This left Carvalhas's strategy in tatters and prompted the Renovadores to redouble their efforts. However, in 1998, Brito was replaced as editor of *Avante!* which fell in line. The Secretariat also empowered the orthodox Control Commission with executive powers to punish dissidents and gave it more influence in compiling candidate lists for the CC.

Before the PCP's Sixteenth Congress in 2000 Cunhal led a rearguard action by orthodox elites. He publicly criticised Carvalhas's deviation from Marxism-Leninism, the possibility of allying with the PS and social democratisation under the 'New Impulse' (see Dunphy 2004, p. 119). Cunhal returned to personally instruct the Secretariat and seized control of key organisations in Lisbon and Setúbal. He used his influence to break the Renovadores' majority in the Political Commission where votes became deadlocked and they were weakened by Sá's untimely death in 1999 (Cunha 2003, p. 117). Carvalhas and his supporters failed to resist the takeover and could not compete with Cunhal's authority. They suddenly abandoned the Renovadores and destroyed their majority in the CC.

The Renovadores forged a larger movement than previous dissidents and posed a bigger challenge to Cunhal. However, following a year of internecine struggle, Carvalhas worked with the orthodox Secretariat to crush them at the Sixteenth Congress in 2000 (Cunha 2003, p. 119). He shifted the Political Commission's policy making powers to the Secretariat which deleted the reforms from the 'New Impulse' in draft congress programmes and Abrantes designed orthodox alternatives (*Publico* 26.11.04a). The Political Commission's input into the list for the CC was assumed by the Control Commission.

The Renovadores openly criticised party strategy and were condemned in *Avante!* for factionalism. They found that congress delegate elections were controlled by the Secretariat and they were given little space to express themselves making the congress a *fait accompli*. Carvalhas's congress speech called for a less abstract form of Marxism-Leninism than in CEE (Carvalhas 2000). However, this was not a sign of moderation as some interpreted it (Dunphy 2004, p. 119) but rhetoric borrowed from Cunhal's earlier attempts to disclaim the relevance of events in the Soviet bloc (Cunhal 1995). Cunhal was too ill to attend the congress but wrote a letter instructing it remain ideologically pure (Cunha 2003). The party line became more orthodox as Carvalhas reasserted Marxism-Leninism and castigated the Renovadores's public outbursts (Carvalhas 2000, PCP 2000a).

Most Renovadores including Political Commission members were dropped *en masse* from the CC. They were replaced with 44 new CC members, most being young highly orthodox functionaries from the Stalinist youth organisation the JCP (PCP 2000a). The CC was approved with the highest ever number of opposing votes but still only 121 of 1700 delegates voted against or abstained (Cunha 2003, p. 119). Decline at the 2001 local election fuelled further dissidence. Renovadores in Lisbon's intellectual sector called for an extraordinary-congress, but the leadership ignored them, sacked their leaders and installed orthodox replacements (Cunha 2003, p. 120). The PCP fell from nine per cent of the vote in 1999 to seven per cent at the 2002 parliamentary election prompting further dissidence and the expulsion of former Political Commission members (PCP 2002). Most Renovadores wanted to stay in the PCP but found themselves excluded from positions of responsibility and left.

The Renovadores had prior experience at broadening appeals from working in trade unions, in elected office, as professionals outside the party and in the Lisbon municipal alliance with the PS. However, they did not envisage shifting power to

themselves or new centralistic organisational structures and streamlining. They used their positions to encourage moderation from above but few believed a major ideological transformation should be forced through or envisaged a centralistic process of change. Instead they aimed to initiate democratisation and debate to spur ideological renewal. The Renovadores also had other attributes beneficial to this strategy. Experience of running clandestine operations, intricate knowledge of party procedures and contacts throughout the party helped them build a strong movement.

The Renovadores believed that the Secretariat would block any effort to centralise, severely distort elite advancement processes or to redirect power to the Political Commission and that the rank and file needed to be empowered to break its grip on the party. Without control over the Secretariat, they were unable to use discipline under democratic centralism to their advantage or centralise party structures. Ultimately, the Renovadores 'transferable skills' mattered little to the final outcome because they lacked influence at the very top, making their attempt at reform an uphill struggle.

In the 1990s, scholars saw signs that the PCP was breaking with Marxism-Leninism or gaining 'inclusion' in the party system through its municipal coalition with the PS in Lisbon (Bosco 2001, p. 351). However, the Renovadores failed to consolidate these changes. When they broke ranks they found it hard to justify their complicity in crushing previous dissidents and why they had stayed quiet for so long. The Renovadores had experiences that Grzymała-Busse found to be beneficial to reform in parties in CEE but did not unite around an alternative ideology. While most Renovadores accepted the need for compromises with the PS and European integration only a few of them sought to re-cast the party along social democratic lines. Most Renovadores refused to break with Communism, preferring to renovate it in a more a pluralistic form. The Renovadores fragmented as several hundred of them formed the Associaçao da Renovaçao Communista to campaign for the renovation of the PCP from outside its structures. Others joined radical left rivals the BE or the PS.

The PCP became increasingly orthodox following the Renovadores's defeat. Carvalhas was no longer needed to unite the party. He was weakened without the Renovadores's support, enabling hard-line elites to replace him and he had little option but to step down in 2004 (*Publico* 05.10.04, 20.08.05). Abrantes played kingmaker and his orthodox protégé Jerónimo De Sousa was accepted by the CC as Secretary-General having been the only candidate. Both Carvalhas and De Sousa

reasserted an orthodox line at congresses in 2004 and 2008 (PCP 2008a, De Sousa 2008, 2004, *Publico* 26.11.04b, Carvalhas, 2004). Cunhal died having ensured that party programmes changed little since 1965 (PCP 2009, Cunha 1992, p. 162). Revolutionary rhetoric, praise of Stalin and solidarity with North Korea continue to dominate appeals devoid of budgeted proposals (PCP 2008a, 2005, 2004a, *Avante!* 16.10.08).

De Sousa has made the party even more orthodox. It increasingly campaigns on his working class roots and identifies mounting dangers from trans-national capitalism and of capitalist imperialism by NATO (PCP 2008a, De Sousa 2006). Unencumbered by the Renovadores, the leadership employs technical Marxist-Leninist terminology in campaigns and in 2008 approved the policy of leaving the Euro. The PCP has rejected joining the Party of the European Left – not over ideological differences – but because it now rejects 'supra-national' institutions *per se* (PCP 2008a, 2008b, *Avante!* 27.10.05, Magone 2004, p. 1119). It has also broken its alliance with the PS and BE in Lisbon (Cunha 2008, p. 18). De Sousa argues that the PS have become too right-wing and the BE are bourgeois and favours street-protests above compromising to attain political power (*Marao* 01.12.08, De Sousa 2008, Freire and Costa Lobo 2008, p. 584). In contrast, Cunhal sometimes accepted unholy alliances or electoral campaigns with broader appeal if they could help the party to gain influence.

Democratic centralism remained intact in the PCP even after parliament passed laws in 2003 banning it from holding congress votes for appointing officials by show of hands and CC members from being in the Control Commission (*Publico* 20.10.04, PCP 2004b). Secret balloting did little to increase the number of dissenting congress votes (Cunha 2008, p. 9). Only eight of 1402 delegates voted against the list for the CC at the 2008 congress. Little seems likely to change until the leadership's control over the selection of congress delegates is broken or congresses vote on a plurality of candidates. Like Carvalhas, De Sousa lacks full control over the Secretariat as collective responsibility now minimises the risk of future Secretary-Generals implementing reforms (Cunha 2008, p. 16). Democratic centralism is more rigid than ever. Critics find less toleration than under Cunhal and there is less room for ideological pluralism in the elite.

When De Sousa became Secretary-General critical CC and Political Commission members were removed; leading 'Carvalhistas' fell on their swords and older elites retired (*Diario de Noticias* 24.11.04). In response, the leadership

increased the insular promotion of young highly orthodox functionaries from the JCP that began in 2000 (Carvalhas 2000). The number of CC members under 40 years old increased from 39 in 2000, 48 in 2004 and 56 in 2008; nearly all of them came from the JCP (PCP 2008b, 2004b, 2000b, 1996). Concomitantly, Unitarian workers and intellectuals become more underrepresented in the elite as orthodox elites curtailed the advancement of middle class intellectuals which they blamed for triggering Perestroika in the Soviet Union. Most CC members (113 of 176 in 2004) also remained party functionaries (Cunha 2008, p. 8).

The JCP became increasingly orthodox and sectarian during the 1980s and lost influence in student union politics. The apparatchiks promoted from it seem unlikely to be a source for reform from the perspective of Grzymała-Busse's framework. They lack political or professional experience outside the party. These elites are being promoted because they are 'yes men' rather than because they have impressive political reputations and have little stature in the leadership. Their language of struggle lacks resonance with their peers who increasingly join the more pluralistic BE and the PCP struggles to recruit young members (Cunha 2003, p. 20).

Sporadic calls for democratisation, reforms and inquiries into the party's troubles still occur but are ignored or shouted down by congress officials. The PCP staved off further electoral decline in recent parliamentary elections and marginally increased its share of the vote (see Table 2). De Sousa's leadership seemed to slightly boost the PCP's support (Magone 2005, p. 1164, Freire and Costa Lobo 2008, p. 584). It might be a while before the next shock. However, in 2009 it fell from being the third to fifth largest party in Portugal and was overtaken by left-wing rivals the BE. It is unclear where the next episode of dissidence will come from when only a handful of moderates, intellectuals and Unitarian workers remain in prominent positions (*Publico* 19.11.04).

Conclusion

The PCP's leaders resisted pressures to change from electoral defeats and the collapse of Communism in CEE. Its programmes and electoral strategy show remarkable continuity since 1974 and have even become more orthodox. Analysis using Grzymała-Busse's ideas reveals eight main lessons about her theoretical framework and WECPs. First, it shows that they could maintain rigid forms of democratic centralism.

This allowed the PCP's orthodox Secretary-General Cunhal and later the Secretariat to dominate the levers of power.

A second lesson is that while the cases Grzymała-Busse analysed had their old heads lopped off, this was not always the case for WECPs in which some leaders resisted calls for their resignation. Having retired in 1992, Cunhal controlled the party even a decade later and blocked reforms. The PCP's mid-level elites posed a barrier to reform. However, this was not because their mid-level roles promoted orthodoxy *per se* but because they were tightly controlled by the old guard in the leadership which posed a larger obstacle to ideological transformation.

Third, the PCP supports Grzymała-Busse's idea that prior experiences in negotiating with outsiders can shape elites' ability to adapt following exogenous shocks. Her framework helps to explain why so few reformers emerged in the PCP. Gradual and insular elite advancement practices insulated the PCP's orthodox programmes from expansion following the Carnation Revolution and multiple crises since the late-1980s. When elites hardened by clandestine struggle were replaced this was with obedient fulltime functionaries and zealots from its youth organisation. Phoney electoral alliances with front parties rather than meaningful negotiations with the PS also limited opportunities for negotiation with outsiders. The lack of reformist elites made it much harder to push Cunhal and old orthodox elites aside.

Fourth, analysis shows that Grzymała-Busse's framework can be used to study why some elites change, even when their parties do not. It supports her argument that elites with experiences of negotiating with outsiders (prior to and following their advancement to the elite) are better equipped to respond to pressures to reform than those without. The PCP's leaders recognised this and pursued advancement policies that not only rooted out heretics but underrepresented groups that might be predisposed to seeking reform or had greater potential for dissidence. Most leading reformers responded to pressures for reform including the collapse of Communism and electoral defeats because they had moderated gradually through connections with outside groups and institutions. Scholars have noted that horizontal discussion between branches would help the PCP to reform itself (Cunha 2008, p. 17). Analysis informed by Grzymała-Busse's framework shows that reformers would be advised to begin by relaxing elite advancement practices.

Cunhal's strategy of infiltrating all aspects of Portuguese society made those with influence in outside political organisations, professions or Unitarian valuable. It

was impractical to filter them out from the elite altogether. What is more, the party could not avoid having elites whose party roles directly involved negotiation with outside groups and institutions. Even visiting the eastern bloc gave opportunities for mediating with outsiders. Rigid elite advancement practices meant that the latter factors proved more influential on dissidents at the top of the party causing even highly orthodox functionaries to gradually moderate. In contrast, the former played a greater influence on the minority of CC members, mid-level elites and members who joined their factions. Grzymała-Busse's framework helps us to understand the dissidence of reformers outside the elite as well.

Fifth, analysis supports Grzymała-Busse's argument that the relationship between outside experience and reform only works on a 'probabilistic level'. That Cunhal consciously tried to maintain his ideological purity in light of the moderating effects of outside experiences had a profound impact on the PCP. Further, only a minority of those negotiating with outside groups became dissidents – in no small part – because of countervailing pressures from party culture and fear of being punished. Experience in negotiating with outsiders could be sufficient for elites to embrace reform but was not a necessary factor. Surprisingly, some orthodox elites with little prior background in negotiating with outside political forces or who ignored such experiences responded suddenly to the pressures to change. However, in accordance with Grzymała-Busse's argument that elites' 'transferable skills' mattered more than the desire for reform *per se*; they struggled to envisage a new ideological direction or took peculiar directions like Zita Seabra. Further research is needed to investigate whether it was a general trend for such elites to simply give up on left-wing politics or politics altogether.

A sixth lesson is that WECPs could fail to adapt even when some of their elites were highly equipped with experience in negotiating with outsiders and in carrying out prior reforms. Grzymała-Busse's framework is useful in telling us that parties with restrictive elite advancement policies will struggle to break with Communism. However, it does not tell us whether the presence of highly-equipped elites alone is enough to bring about reform; how many 'skilled' reformists are necessary for reform (e.g. whether they have to be a majority in the elite) or the factors that may block these 'organisational Supermen'.

The PCP shows that a powerful old guard could use democratic centralism highly effectively against them. The 'Six', Zita Seabra, the Third Way and the

Renovadores employed a range of strategies. All their attempts to use organisational change to stimulate programmatic transformation were crushed as Cunhal resisted change. He blocked their internal attempts to reform and disciplined them for factionalism when they resorted to public criticisms. During the late-1990s, the Renovadores's positions at the top of the party enabled them to make greater inroads to implementing reforms but they still encountered this no win situation.

This research shows the need for more comparative analysis of WECPs that maintained democratic centralism to see if similar developments occurred elsewhere. By looking to other parties such as the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) political scientists can start to uncover which types of institutional structures under democratic centralism were the most effective at blocking reform. Relatively little research exists on the KKE (other than Bosco 2001, Kalyvas and Marantzidis 2005). It is necessary to question whether it failed to adapt because democratic centralism blocked reformists like in the PCP or if this occurred because reformers democratised and unleashed resistance from orthodox activists like Grzymała-Busse found in CEE.

An eighth lesson from the PCP is that there have been significant opportunities for reformers to gain experience in carrying out reforms prior to (and following) the collapse of Communism in 1989 in even the most orthodox WECPs. In contrast, Grzymała-Busse found that the most hard-line parties in CEE had elites with minimal prior experience in implementing reforms. If this is a general trend then according to her arguments about the link between prior reform and centralisation then we have reason to expect that elites equipped to centralise should be more prevalent in WECPs (Keith 2010). Moreover, the PCP shows that orthodox leaders in some WECPs learnt from studying the moderating impact of flexible elite advancement practices in other WECPs.

However, this relationship between carrying out prior reforms and organisational centralisation is not borne out by the reformers in the PCP. They had encountered resistance to prior reforms but rejected centralising in favour of democratisation and a participative process to bring about ideological renewal. They shared this belief with those who lacked prior experience in implementing reforms and these experiences actually made them even more committed to democratisation. Moreover, negotiation with outsiders prompted them to seek reforms but they did not unite around social democratisation and most of them rejected this option.

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