"The impact of endorsements in intra-party elections: evidence from open primaries in a new Portuguese party"

João Cancela, António Luís Dias, and Marco Lisi

Abstract**:** What affects the prospects of candidates in open intra-party elections? This research note examines the determinants of candidate performance in the first open party primaries conducted by LIVRE, a newly emerged Portuguese party, in 2015. This innovative process of candidate selection allowed individuals from outside the party not only to vote but also to run for office. Through the construction of an original dataset and the use of social network analysis, this study shows that centrality in the network of endorsements has a significant impact on the probability to be selected in party lists. Our findings shed more light on the determinants of success in candidate selection and open new insights on the dynamics behind party primaries.

Bios: João Cancela (corresponding author): PhD candidate, Department of Political Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities and IPRI, Nova University of Lisbon, Av. de Berna 26-C, 1069-061 Lisboa, Portugal. E-mail: joaocancela@gmail.com

António Luís Dias: PhD candidate, Department of Political Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities and IPRI, Nova University of Lisbon, Av. de Berna 26-C, 1069-061 Lisboa, Portugal. Email: antoniolvdias@fcsh.unl.pt

Marco Lisi: Assistant Professor, Department of Political Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities and IPRI, Nova University of Lisbon, Av. de Berna 26-C, 1069-061 Lisboa, Portugal. Email: marcolisi@fcsh.unl.pt

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1. Introduction

The selection of candidates for public office is one of the key functions of parties and a crucial aspect of how representative democracies work (Gallagher and Marsh, 1988; Norris, 1997). Against a background of growing distrust towards parties, an increase in anti-party feelings and shrinking membership (Whiteley, 2011), candidate selection methods have changed significantly in Europe, namely through the adoption of more inclusive criteria of recruitment (Kittilson and Scarrow, 2003; Krouwel, 2012; Sandri et al., 2015b). It has been argued that such innovations might significantly affect party politics, namely in terms of members' attitudes, patterns of participation, intra-party competition, the profile of MPs, as well as the degree of responsiveness (Hazan and Rahat, 2010; Sandri et al., 2015b). Therefore, it is important to understand the process of primary elections, how they function and their potential effects on the recruitment of political elites.

This article contributes to the literature on primaries held across Europe by addressing a question that has remained overlooked: to what extent is the success of candidates in open intra-party elections a consequence of their political connections? While research about party primaries held in the American political system has already shown that individual endorsers affect the performance of candidates (Dominguez, 2011), it has remained untested whether this holds in other political contexts. In the following, we demonstrate that political connections also play a role in a less institutionalised, smaller party in a different political system. Our empirical analysis focuses on the case of the open primaries held by *LIVRE/Tempo de Avançar* (L/TdA), a Portuguese political party founded in 2014 that adopted this method for selecting and ordering candidates for

the 2015 national parliamentary elections. This instance of open primaries provides a relevant case study for two main reasons.

First, the rules adopted by L/TdA for its primary elections were quite inclusive in terms of both the selectorate and the candidacy. The novelty of primary elections implemented by L/TdA was of the utmost significance especially considering the Portuguese electoral system: a closed-list PR system that ranks among those in Europe providing less freedom of choice to voters (Pereira and Andrade e Silva, 2009). The results of the primaries conducted by L/TdA defined not only *who* would be a candidate but also the *order* of candidates within the closed lists. For this reason, the adoption of these primaries can be understood as a way of circumventing the institutional rigidity imposed upon citizens by placing additional discretion at their hands. While intra-party elections as open as these remain comparatively rare in the European landscape, the use of inclusive practices in candidate selection is expanding across the continent (Sandri and Seddone, 2015: 1). As a growing number of parties adopt inclusive selection mechanisms and provide space for non-member participation, the case of L/TdA offers the chance to test a set of specific propositions about the determinants of candidate success in this type of elections against which future cases can be evaluated.

Second, this case study illustrates how research about parties can be enhanced by looking at them not only as formal organisations but also as networks, following the cue of Katz and Mair (2009: 761–762). In this context, we should have in mind that different parties across the globe are adopting "a more networked model of organization that reduces the need for formal membership and gives grassroots supporters' a stronger decision-making role" (Gibson, 2015: 186). However, while understanding parties as networks might be theoretically appealing, it can be a challenge to find appropriate data to put this effort into practice. In this case, the primaries generated an

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extensive amount of data, as L/TdA publicised in its website relevant information about the candidates, their supporters and the electoral results. These data allow us to go beyond the examination of the individual attributes of candidates and to also take into account the complex set of relations that characterises the party and study it using social network analysis (SNA) techniques. Thus, we exploit relational data (Scott, 2000: 3) to unveil aspects in the life of political parties that typically remain out of direct observation.

The results suggest that obtaining endorsements from relevant actors and occupying a central position in the network of political connections significantly increased the electoral performance of individuals running in the L/TdA primaries. Thus, our case study provides new insights into the effects of primaries in the context of a recent party which was founded with the stated goal of expanding the scope of political participation of its members and sympathisers. Furthermore, our analysis enables us to shed more light on the patterns of intra-party competition and on the relationship among candidates, and contributes to a deeper understanding of internal dynamics of party primaries and their impact on political recruitment.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. The next section reviews the literature of candidate selection in Europe and presents our research hypotheses. The context and institutional procedures of this particular case of primary elections are described in the third section. In the fourth section we explain data collection and processing, while the fifth section presents the results of the analysis. We conclude with a discussion of the main implications of our findings.

2. Candidate selection and party primaries

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A number of scholars have emphasised the growing use of primaries in European countries (Pilet and Cross, 2014; Sandri et al., 2015b). Whilst many parties have adopted closed primaries for the selection of party leaders, open primaries for legislative candidates are still uncommon in Europe. Only Icelandic parties, left-wing parties in Italy and the Conservatives in the United Kingdom have opened their method of candidate selection to non-party members (Sandri and Seddone, 2015: 10).

The empirical study of primaries has provided interesting insights on this recent trend and its implications for political recruitment. Most studies have dealt with the origins of primary elections and the rationale behind the adoption of democratising reforms (Barnea and Rahat, 2007; Gauja, 2012; Sandri et al., 2015b). These studies suggest that, contrary to the US experience, the introduction of primaries in Europe has originated mainly from strategic motivations of party leaders who decided to open the inclusiveness of the selectorate in order to strengthen their control over the party organisation while, at the same time, benefiting from positive effects in terms of public image (Sandri et al., 2015a: 188).

The seminal contribution by Hazan and Rahat (2010) provided a systematic assessment of different methods of candidate selection and examined their consequences in terms of representativeness, participation, intra-party cohesion and responsiveness. This approach also permeates Sandri et al.'s (2015b) edited volume, which focuses not only on the functioning of primary elections but also on their consequences concerning electoral performance and party membership.

While there is a growing empirical literature on closed primaries for the selection of party leaders (Kenig, 2009; Wauters et al., 2015), the use of open primaries for the selection of candidates and their consequences constitute virtually an uncharted territory in European parties. The limited empirical evidence available suggests that more inclusive methods not only redefine the logic of

political participation, but also yield more unpredictable outcomes. For instance, primaries seem to have a substantive impact in terms of competition, as the position of incumbents is less secure than it would be if more exclusive methods of candidate selection were adopted, thus increasing the openness of intra-party competition (Kristjánsson, 1998). Primaries may also result in changes to the internal equilibria of parties, both in terms of the profile of members and their evaluation of intra-party democracy. A study on the Italian PD (Democratic Party) found, for instance, that new members are more enthusiastic about primary elections than older members (Bernardi et al., 2016). Overall, these works confirm the importance of primaries in shaping not only members' attitudes and behaviour, but also the dynamics that lead to the choice of specific candidates instead of others.

A considerable body of work focuses on the impact of primary elections on the electoral and parliamentary arena. On the one hand, more inclusive methods of candidate selection are supposed to boost parties' electoral performance, not only through an increase in its mobilization potential but also through the selection of more attractive candidates (Ramiro, 2016). On the other hand, the scholarly literature has investigated how primaries influence the party in public office, namely its cohesion and responsiveness. Here empirical research has not achieved consensual results. Studies dealing with open primaries in Iceland and Italy did not find strong evidence of significant changes in these dimensions (Kristjánsson, 1998; Lanzone, 2013). Yet, Mikulska and Scarrow's (2010) analysis of the British case found that more inclusive methods of candidate selection strengthen the congruence between parties and voters on the most salient issues, namely the economy. On the other hand, Gherghina (2013), drawing on the Romanian case, pointed out that the use of primaries increased the quality of candidates but failed to attract new figures. This means that the use of primaries strengthened the position of more established MPs and top politicians.

Although a number of empirical studies have shown that primaries have important implications for parties as intermediary actors (Gauja, 2012), little is known with regard to the reasons for their outcomes, and notably about why certain candidates are selected instead of others. We know from literature about candidate selection in the context of 'traditional' processes conducted by European parties that both political and institutional factors may be germane, for instance previous political performance or background (namely as office holders), the work done as MPs at the constituency level or fund-raising capacity (Gherghina and Chiru, 2010). On the other hand, some candidates are chosen because of their socio-demographic characteristics (such as gender, profession, or class) or because they represent specific interests (Norris, 1997: 6–8).

While knowledge about the determinants of candidate success in the context of the primaries of European parties is relatively scarce, there have been significant findings. For one, endorsements seem to be more important in open primaries compared to closed primaries, as reflected by the higher number of financial supporters attracted by candidates during the campaign (Indriðason and Kristinsson, 2015). The analysis on the open primaries adopted by the Five Star Movement in Italy for the 2013 parliamentary elections has shown that the selection of candidates was mostly 'a recognition among equals', as more popular candidates were those who held executive positions in the 'Meetup' circles and that were already active in previous local elections (Mosca et al., 2015). Thus the renewal fostered by primaries in terms of political recruitment was rather limited, and this was due mainly to the high degree of centralization of the primary process with regard to participation and the imposition of pre-selection criteria[1].

On the other hand, the determinants of primaries outcomes have been an old topic in the study of the American context (Bartels, 1988; Carson et al., 2007). Researchers of American primaries have recently found that party connections are important factors that help explain candidate

performance (Dominguez, 2011; Kousser et al., 2015). Specifically, the notion that electoral success is affected by the supporters of the candidate is firmly established in the literature, as authors have pointed to the importance of parties' informal social networks (Cohen et al., 2008; Masket, 2009). While fruitful, the literature incorporating the notions of social network analysis in the study of parties still presents some empirical and methodological shortcomings. Even if theoretically they assume that parties do constitute social networks, studies stay short of empirically unveiling the informal social network of parties. As Noel (2012: 2) points out, most research that applies formal social network analysis to parties is forced to take into consideration relationships that are 'theoretically one step away from the micro-processes that generate the party social network', whether those relationships relate to mailing lists for fund-raising (Koger et al., 2009) or participation in joint press conferences (Desmarais et al., 2015), for instance.

The argument guiding our research hypotheses is twofold. First, we believe that personal networks are extremely relevant for explaining candidate performance. This should be particularly the case in recent parties, where most political resources are not available, a situation that may lead political entrepreneurs to take advantage of their personal connections. Evidence suggests that open primaries are more likely to foster 'weak ties', by attracting uncommitted members that decrease the costs and the 'quality' of participation (Bernardi et al., 2016; Hazan and Rahat, 2010), and therefore being able to convert political connections into actual votes is critical. Second, we argue that the position of candidates within the network – and not simply the amount of links per se – is crucial for accounting for candidate performance. Research on the American context has shown that success depends not only on the number of individuals and organisations endorsing a given candidate but also on the 'quality' of such supporters (Dominguez, 2011), and the interest groups they represent (Bawn et al., 2012). It remains to be tested, however, whether and to what extent

the insights from the American case be helpful to understand primaries elsewhere.

These arguments, in articulation with the literature reviewed so far, lead us to building three hypotheses regarding the impact of the party social network in the outcomes of the internal election under analysis. We expect the centrality of each candidate in the party's informal social network to be an essential determinant of the candidate's success. The question then is how to define centrality. We identify three different ways by which a certain actor can be considered central in a party's social network, each corresponding to a research hypothesis. To begin with, a central actor is expected to have more ties to other actors within the party. Therefore, it should be expected that a candidate attracting a higher number of endorsements should be able to translate them into better electoral performance:

H.1. Candidates with a higher number of endorsers will be more successful.

However, number of endorsers by itself can be a crude predictor of network centrality. As the next section details, only 12 endorsers were needed to get into the ballot of the L/TdA primaries; therefore, perhaps candidates diminished their efforts to obtain more endorsers after achieving that threshold. Moreover, the literature makes clear that the 'quality' of political support matters (Dominguez, 2011). This should be even more crucial for a new party lacking crucial resources for mobilising and recruiting new candidates. A central actor, then, is expected to have ties with actors holding a formal leadership position in organigram of the party[2]. Therefore, we expect that:

H.2. Candidates supported by party officials will be more successful.

Our third hypothesis poses that there might be another way to conceptualise centrality in the context of party primaries. In addition to directly observable variables such as number of

endorsements (H1) or being endorsed by party officials (H2), centrality may refer to the relative position of individuals in the network of the party taken as a whole (Scott, 2000: 83–89). In their study of American parties as social networks Koger et al. (2009: 637) argue that "network members often influence each other by sending informative signals (for example, endorsements), linking network members together and co-ordinating action", and that "some actors exert more influence than others in a partisan network because they possess the connections and vision to co-ordinate collaborative effort". In this context, individuals can be considered central if they play a pivotal role within the party social network by acting as bridges between different groups that would be unconnected otherwise. Therefore, pivotal members of a party network can be said to be located at centre of a social network even if they are not directly endorsed by many individuals. Such candidates might profit from their position by being able to draw electoral support from different segments of the selectorate. Thus, our final hypothesis reads:

> *H.3. Candidates that play a pivotal role in the network by connecting its different parts*
> *will be more successful.*

3. Political context and rules of the election

LIVRE was officially founded in 2014 under the initiative of Rui Tavares, an MEP who had been elected as an independent in the electoral list of *Bloco de Esquerda* (BE) in 2009. The main stated goal was to create a left-wing party more prone to cooperate with the moderate left (Socialist Party, PS) than the two leftist parties already represented in parliament, the radical-left BE and the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP). On its electoral début, the 25 May 2014 European election, although it failed to elect an MEP, *LIVRE* was the sixth most voted party in the country with 2.2%

of the national vote, achieving an encouraging result in the district of Lisbon (3.6%). Candidates for the European election were selected by primaries in which candidates were not required to be members of the party; however, the selectorate was restricted to the members and sympathisers, which in *LIVRE* hold a formal status with their own set of rights and obligations. Since its inception, the promoters of *LIVRE* highlighted decentralization and voluntary participation from below as essential parts of the ethos of the party (LIVRE, 2013), which was perceived as a form of differentiation from existing left-wing parties.

In November 2014, after holding talks with other left-wing organisations, *LIVRE*'s leadership decided to rebrand itself as *LIVRE/Tempo de Avançar* (L/TdA), and to conduct primaries for the selection of candidates open to the participation of non-members. The rationale for the adoption of more inclusive methods of candidate selection was based on the imprint of the party's genetic model, which was centred on a strong emphasis on participation and more horizontal ties among members, as well as the rejection of an individual formal leadership (Brandão Guerra, 2014). This differs from the most frequent rationale behind the adoption of primary elections, which lies on a party's reaction to a (internal or external) crisis (Sandri et al., 2015a: 190). Moreover, the use of intra-party participatory procedures was not restricted to the choice of candidates, but also encompassed internal referenda and the conception of the electoral manifesto. Expanding the scope of participation of its members and of the public writ large had been a central goal of the party since talks about its inception, as was already stated in its founding statement of principles approved in November 2013 (LIVRE, 2013).

Eligibility to the primaries only required signing L/TdA's statement of principles and obtaining at least twelve endorsers among the proponents registered in the internal electoral census, which was open to the public (LIVRE/Tempo de Avançar, 2015). Endorsements could be expressed online,

did not imply any cost, and an endorser did not have to be a resident of one of the candidate's intended districts. Moreover, an individual could endorse as many candidates as he/she wanted. Candidates that obtained at least 12 endorsements competed in 22 electoral districts, replicating the national electoral map. Candidates could present themselves in as many as three electoral districts. Voters were able to express N ordered preferences, allowing them to handle 1 vote to their preferred candidate, 1/2 to their second choice, and so forth until 1/N, in which N varied according to electoral district of the voter. In Lisbon and Oporto, which elect more representatives due to their larger population, voters were able to award up to 1/15 of a vote. A voter expressing the maximum number of preferences would distribute precisely 3.318228993 'votes' among 15 different candidates. Candidates' electoral results therefore do not represent the number of single preferences obtained by them, but rather a weighted sum according to the total of ordered preferences of voters achieved in a given electoral district. Importantly, the primaries' results defined not only who the selected candidates were, but also their relative position in the closed list offered to voters in the national election.

In June 20-21, 2197 out of the 7850 registered voters cast their vote in the primaries, a turnout that was considered low by the organisers (Mariano, 2015). In Lisbon, 2864.84 preferential votes were expressed[3] and, as expected beforehand, two candidates dominated the race: the first was Rui Tavares - *LIVRE*'s most notorious founder - with 492.71 (weighted) votes, while the second was Ana Drago - a former MP and a dissident from BE - with 464.24 votes. These two candidates were far ahead of the rest of their competitors: the third candidate, José Castro Caldas, an economist, got 99.99 'votes'.

The decision to conduct party primaries in Portugal is particularly relevant as the electoral system offers minimal discretion to voters (Pereira and Andrade e Silva, 2009). Portugal has a proportional

representation system in which voters may express one vote in one of the competing parties' closed lists. Because it is a closed-list system, voters are only able to pick their chosen party, while parties order candidates according to their own criteria. The electoral system is also characterised by having a wide variance in district magnitude (Lago and Lobo, 2014) that implies that smaller fringe parties (polling below 5 per cent) can realistically only aspire to win seats in the two largest electoral districts of Lisbon (47 MPs) and Oporto (39 MPs)[4].

While Portuguese parties have expanded the selection of party leaders (Lisi, 2015), candidate selection has remained highly centralised in national party bodies and highly oligarchical, with crucial decision-making powers concentrated in party elites (Teixeira, 2009). Indeed, the party in central office is responsible for the choice of prospective MPs, while the party leaders have often the final say on the party list to be submitted to voters. This is the result not only of institutional characteristics – e.g. the electoral system and the administrative structure – but also of the 'internal origin' of the Portuguese parties.

In this context L/TdA's primaries were highly innovative and constituted a radical change with regard to previous patterns of candidate selection in Portugal, in terms of both inclusiveness and decentralisation. Both dimensions are germane to the analysis of party primaries, because the use of primaries in highly centralized parties may lead to negative outcomes and to failure in innovating intra-party democracy (Gherghina, 2013). Given this background, the process held by L/TdA was a major change for party politics in Portugal. By adopting open primaries for both candidacy and the electorate, this new party introduced new dynamics in the political system and unpredictable outcomes in terms of political recruitment.

4. Methods and data

Given our theoretical hypotheses, restricting the analysis to individual level variables would stay short of allowing us to answer properly to our research question. Our hypotheses assume the existence of factors influencing the electoral results of candidates that are a consequence of their position in the complex structure of political endorsements. Therefore, we complement the statistical analysis of individual attributes with social network analysis (SNA), which allows us to extract relevant metrics from the structure of political endorsements regarding the centrality of individuals. While our research draws on the recent literature on political parties incorporating social network techniques (Noel, 2012), it differs in two crucial methodological aspects. First, our research aims to directly describe the party's informal social network (Noel, 2012), instead of a related proxy. Second, our data do not refer to connections extracted from Internet social networks nor from surveys of organisations and/or individuals. Instead we use publicly available data linking candidates to their political supporters. Our data collection is thus 'unobtrusive' (Fowler et al., 2011: 452). The analysis was conducted using Gephi and R.

We extracted the required information for building the dataset of candidates and their endorsers using publicly available information at L/TdA's primaries website, which featured a page for each candidate containing their full name, a personal presentation, a statement of political intents and a list of endorsers[5]. As explained in the previous section, at least 12 co-signers of the party's declaration of principles were required for the candidate to be eligible. The presentation supplied by the candidates allowed us to classify them as holding previous political experience or not[6] and whether they occupied a formal leadership position in L/TdA's organigram. More importantly given our research hypotheses, we scrapped the complete list of endorsers of each candidate and then built a matrix of adjacency linking candidates to their supporters. We argue that these ties

mimic directly the party's informal social network as there were not any relevant costs to endorse a candidate. Furthermore, there was neither a limit for the number of endorsers allowed to support a given candidate, neither a maximum number of candidates that an individual could endorse.

The second step was to extract the electoral results once publicised. As the primaries were based on the institutional framework of the Portuguese electoral system described in section 3, taking into consideration the results from multiple electoral districts presented an additional challenge. Due to the party's uneven geographic distribution, there were significant differences in the number of candidates and votes between different districts. Moreover, if all districts were pooled together, we would be comparing what were *de facto* different elections. For instance, only in 7 of the 22 circles were more than 100 preferences expressed. Even among the circles with the highest turnout there are striking differences. While in Lisbon 2864.84 preferences were expressed in a race between 161 candidates, in Oporto, the second biggest race, only 768.57 votes were cast in a race with 72 candidates. To avoid comparability issues, we analyse solely the primary results in Lisbon[7]. Being the Portuguese capital and the centre of a metropolitan area with nearly two and a half million inhabitants, Lisbon offers a level of political scale and selectorate size that make it the critical district to take into account for the purposes of generalising from the experience of the L/TdA primaries to other contexts of primaries conducted at the national or metropolitan level. Moreover, from a political perspective, this was the most relevant district, due to the high expectations that L/TdA would elect at least one or two MPs in this constituency – a goal it ultimately failed to achieve despite polling projecting otherwise up until, and including, the day of the national elections.

5. Analysis

The L/TdA endorsement network has 952 nodes (individuals) and 9742 edges (endorsements). Of the 952 nodes, 383 are candidates, 161 of which ran in the Lisbon primaries. The most endorsed candidate, Rui Tavares, has 109 supporters. On the other hand, there are 10 individuals with 12 supporters, the minimum threshold. The mean number of endorsers per candidate is 25, while the mean number of outbound endorsements per individual is 10. We can visualise this by focusing our analysis on the network of individual candidates (ego networks). Figure 1 shows the individual networks of the two most successful candidates in Lisbon and of two other candidates that have an average numbers of endorsers. The grey (lighter) lines represent inbound connections (i.e. other individuals endorsing the candidate), while the red (darker) lines represent the outbound connections (i.e. the candidate's endorsements of other individuals). The difference in density between the top and the bottom figures is clear: the ego-networks of the most voted candidates are much more 'populated' than the two other candidates and inbound connections are more prevalent. This unequal social network can also be seen in the proportion of individuals in the network that endorse or are endorsed by the five most voted candidates in Lisbon. Figure 2 compares the complete network (A) and the combined network of those five candidates (B). And while the latter may seem much sparser than the former, since only endorsements *from* and *towards* these five candidates are displayed, this combined network includes about 30% of the nodes (individuals) of the whole network.

FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

The next step is to test our research hypotheses. In the following, we present the results of an OLS

regression with robust standard errors[8], using network centrality metrics as independent variables and the number of votes that each candidate received as the dependent variable. Given the high number of candidates and the electoral system detailed in section 3, the distribution of this variable is markedly skewed. Therefore we use as dependent variable the natural log of the raw number of weighted votes.[9]

Two batches of independent variables are included in our models. The first group stems from the hypotheses outlined in section 2, and concern the relative position of each candidate in the network, i.e. their centrality. To test H1 we use the candidate's values of *degree centrality. Degree centrality* simply measures the number of ties an individual has. We are interested in the number of endorsements each candidate has received, so we measure the *in-degree centrality*, which is simply the number of ties having node *i* as a target.

In order to cope with our second hypothesis, which concerns the impact of being endorsed by a member of the party's bodies, we created two variables, *Endorsement Comissão Coordenadora* (CC) and *Endorsement Grupo de Contacto* (GC), each summing the number of individuals belonging to the coordinating board (CC) and the party's executive body (GC) that endorsed a specific candidate.

Our third hypothesis is tested by using as an independent variable *betweenness centrality,* an indicator that captures 'the extent to which a particular node lies in the shortest path 'between' two other points in the graph' (Scott, 2000: 86). This metric complements *degree centrality* insofar as it signals whether individuals in the network 'play an important intermediary role' (Scott, 2000: 86) and thus occupy a central position. In our analysis, this variable accounts for the relevance of the ties that link a candidate with the remaining individuals in the network[10].

The second group of independent variables is related to some of the candidates' characteristics and preferences, which can be considered independent from position in the network of endorsements. Since candidates could run in up to three electoral districts, we create the dummy variable *Order*, which is coded as 1 if Lisbon is their top preference. We also include *Previous party* experience, which indicates if the candidate had been previously a member of another party[11]. Since L/TdA was partially formed by splintering groups of already existing left-wing parties, we expect that previous party experience increases the odds to be selected, as candidates may capitalise their previous connections into votes.

The political relevance of candidates is not fully captured by the network metrics, namely because being part of a decision making group inside the party might be an asset regardless of one's position in the social network. While it is true that being selected to the party structure is related with the position someone has in the social network of that party, they are not necessarily coincidental indicators. We thus include two dummy variables measuring whether the candidate is part of the executive board in charge of coordinating L/TdA (CC) and if the candidate is a member of the party's executive body (GC). We expect that candidates holding office in these structures to obtain higher electoral performance.

Variables such as previous experience in elected or executive office were not contemplated in our study as L/TdA is a new party in which only a tiny fraction of candidates would qualify as holding it. Information about other background variables like professional status or educational attainment was not systematically available for all candidates, and thus was not contemplated. A summary description of the candidates and namely the variables used in the model is provided in Table 1.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Our regression results are shown in Table 2, which reports the results of three models. In the first two columns each batch of variables is tested individually, while the third pools all the variables together. Overall, all individual variables are statistically significantly related with our dependent variable as expected, and our three hypotheses are confirmed. Our final model has a good fit, achieving an adjusted R^2 score of 0.49, and all variables, except membership in *GC* and *CC*, are significant with $p<0.1$ or less. More importantly for our theoretical hypotheses, even after controlling for the remaining variables, we find position in the network to be a relevant predictor of electoral performance in the primaries.

In particular, the results seem to indicate that individuals in central positions of the network have higher prospects of electoral success, whether we measure this centrality by the *in-degree* (H1) or *betweenness centrality* (H3). This means that not only the number of endorsements is important for electoral success, but also how central the candidate's position within the network is and how important his/her connections are. Additionally, being endorsed by a member of one of the party's bodies (H2) and having previous party experience are also linked with an increase in the likelihood of electoral success. It should be noted, however, that once the social network metrics are controlled for, being a member of either of the executive bodies loses its statistical significance. Obviously, it is expected that those who hold executive position within a party are more than likely to be central actors in the first place. Nonetheless, what the results suggest is that what matters more is a candidate's place in the informal social network rather than their formal position within the party.

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

6. Discussion

Open primaries for the selection of legislative candidates are still rare in Europe, but growing criticism towards mainstream parties, the emergence of new parties and the electoral dealignment that has challenged the stability of party systems over recent years provide a favourable context for their expansion. In this research note, the case of *LIVRE*, a recently created party, was used to investigate the impact of political endorsements in the success of candidates contesting such intra-party elections. Drawing on an original dataset, the findings largely support our hypotheses: centrality in the social network of the party, measured in a diversity of ways, was of the utmost importance in the process of candidate selection. The results provide new insights at both a substantive and a methodological level.

First, the article contributes to our theoretical understanding of how intra-party democracy works. According to the literature on open primaries in Europe, their potential for disruptive consequences on party politics is limited, mainly because of the learning process that enables party elites to tailor the use of primaries (Indriðason and Kristinsson, 2015; Lanzone and Rombi, 2014; Sandri et al., 2015b). Yet these mechanisms cannot work in newly formed parties adopting collegial forms of leadership. Against that background, our case study unveils an important device based on personal connections that might be easily activated during primary campaigns and explain electoral success (or lack thereof). These features are amplified by the fact that L/TdA is a recently created party, with a top-down genetic model that developed through a splinter group of politicians who brought into the party their own connections and personal circles. While this circumstance makes the position in social networks extremely important in the case of L/TdA, it is likely that centrality also matters in other cases, especially due to the growing personalisation of party organisations (Krouwel, 2012). Thus, our findings are also relevant for the debate about the 'personalisation of

politics', which accentuates the more prominent role of individual political actors at the expenses of parties and collective identities (Karvonen, 2010).

This research note also adds to the literature about parties and political recruitment in Portugal. The literature about political recruitment in Portugal has stressed the weak importance of local politics, and the lack of roots of political parties within civil society (Tavares de Almeida and Costa Pinto, 2003). It has also been shown that party politics in Portugal is mostly restricted to a relatively small group of activists with homogeneous traits based on high levels of education, working as liberal professionals and living in urban areas (Lisi, 2015: 73). While previous research had already underlined the importance of personal connections and coteries for the elites of parties in government (Jalali and Lisi, 2009) our research shows that ties between individuals also matter in the context of a party in which putative candidates do not have access to public resources. This finding may be relevant for analyses conducted in comparable party systems, particularly in Southern Europe.

Finally, the article shows how instances of intra-party democracy can be used to enrich methodologically the study of party politics writ large. While the importance of informal and personal connections in party politics is certainly not restricted to these processes, intra-party elections, primaries (or analogous processes) can expose features of party life that tend to remain out of sight. Indeed, primaries provide valuable opportunities to extract information about the relations between members that may allow researchers to properly chart the political party as a network. Therefore, relational data can complement other typical sources such as party documents, interviews with members and officials or surveys of behaviours and attitudes. In this article we operationalise these relational data to explain the outcomes of an internal election, but other applications are feasible.

The increasing availability of data about personal relations within parties will allow students of these political organisations to explore new research questions and to test hypotheses across different institutional settings and types of parties, with distinct ideologies, organisational models and sizes. Consequently, as the adoption of primaries expands, further comparative research is required to investigate whether the findings of this study can be generalised to other parties, in Europe and beyond.

TABLES

Table 1: Summary of variables used in our analysis.

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Result	161	17.794	53.960	0.170	492.710
Ln(Result)	161	1.911	1.283	-1.772	6.200
Order	161	0.696	0.462	0	1
Member of *comissão coordenadora*	161	0.050	0.218	0	1
Member of *grupo de contacto*	161	0.037	0.190	0	1
Endorsement *grupo de contacto*	161	1.596	2.054	0	12
Endorsement *comissão coordenadora*	161	1.292	1.588	0	8
Previous party experience	161	0.248	0.433	0	1
Betweenness Centrality	161	1,691.694	2,181.932	0	12,503.400
Square Root(Betweeness Centrality)	161	31.089	27.014	0	111.819
InDegree	161	27.795	15.643	12	109

Table 2. Determinants of candidate performance (OLS regression)

		Dependent variable:		
		Ln(Result)		
		(1)	(2)	(3)
Order		0.755***		0.849***
		(0.199)		(0.179)
Membership	*Comissão coordenadora*	1.679***		0.686
		(0.488)		(0.416)
	Grupo de contacto	1.333***		0.381
		(0.385)		(0.336)
Previous party		0.552***		0.310*
		(0.202)		(0.174)
In degree			0.206**	0.221**
			(0.083)	(0.090)
Square root (Betweeness Centrality)			0.243**	0.196**
			(0.100)	(0.088)
Endorsement	*Comissão coordenadora*		0.505***	0.393***
			(0.088)	(0.086)
	Grupo de contacto		0.169*	0.172*
			(0.093)	(0.093)
Constant		1.116***	1.911***	1.195***
		(0.177)	(0.081)	(0.159)
	Observations	161	161	161
	R^2	0.303	0.388	0.515
	Adjusted R^2	0.285	0.372	0.490

Note: Independent variables were standardized
*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

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Figure 1: Ego Networks of 4 candidates.

Notes: The two most voted candidates, Rui Tavares (A) and Ana Drago (B), a candidate who does not endorse other candidates (C) and a candidate who endorses other candidates (D).

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Figure 2: Social networks in LIVRE primaries

Notes: The whole social network of L/TdA (A); Ego networks of the 5 most voted candidates in Lisbon (B).

2. Acknowledgments

3. About the authors

João Cancela is a PhD candidate and a teaching assistant at Universidade Nova de Lisboa with a doctoral grant from the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT). He is a researcher at the Portuguese Institute of International Relations (IPRI), and his main areas of interest are elections and political participation. More about his work at
http://sites.google.com/site/joaocancela

António Luís Dias is a PhD candidate at Universidade Nova de Lisboa with an individual doctoral grant from the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), and a researcher at the Portuguese Institute of International Relations (IPRI). His areas of research are comparative politics and democratization.

Marco Lisi is assistant professor in the department of Political Studies, Nova University of Lisbon and researcher at IPRI. His research interests focus on political parties, electoral behaviour, democratic theory, political representation and election campaigns. He published several articles in national and international journals. His latest books are *Party Change, Recent Democracies and Portugal: Comparative Perspectives* (Lexington, 2015) and *Political Representation in Times of Bailout: Evidence from Greece and Portugal* (with André Freire, Ioannis Andreadis and José Manuel Leite Viegas, Routledge, 2016).

4. Notes

Included as endnotes in the end of this document.

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ONLINE APPENDIX

Correspondence should be addressed to: joaocancela@gmail.com

Scrapping for candidate characteristics

To create the variable *Previous Party* each candidate's personal presentation in Livre's website was scrapped. The variable was coded as positive (1) if the text included any of the expressions in Table A.1.

Table A.1. Previous party search terms

"PCP"
"BE"
"Comunista"
"Bloco de Esquerda"
"PS"
"Partido Socialista"
"MDP"
"UDP"

Distribution of electoral results and centrality

Figure A.1 depicts the distribution of the votes for the 161 candidates in Lisbon. As can be seen, it is markedly skewed, so we use the natural log as the dependent variable (A.1.B).
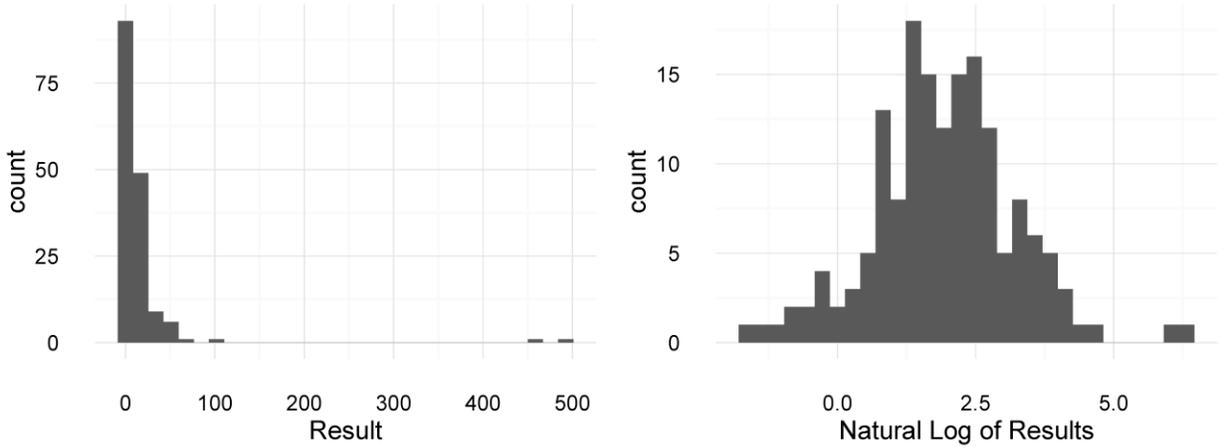
Figure A.1: Histograms of votes per candidate before (A) and after (B) log transformation

Regression Diagnostics

Figure A.2 presents basic regression diagnostics for model 3. Apart for problems with heteroscedasticity, visible in the top left figure, the regression does not violate any other regression assumption. As mentioned in the text, to deal with this problem robust standard errors were calculated using the *sandwich* package in R.

Additionally there was the need to transform the betweenness centrality measure as the relationship between this variable and our dependent variable was not fully linear. To try to address this problem we use the square root of the betweenness centrality in our model. Figure A.3 depicts the relationship between our dependent variable and (untransformed) betweenness centrality (A), the logarithm of that centrality measure (B) and its square root (C).
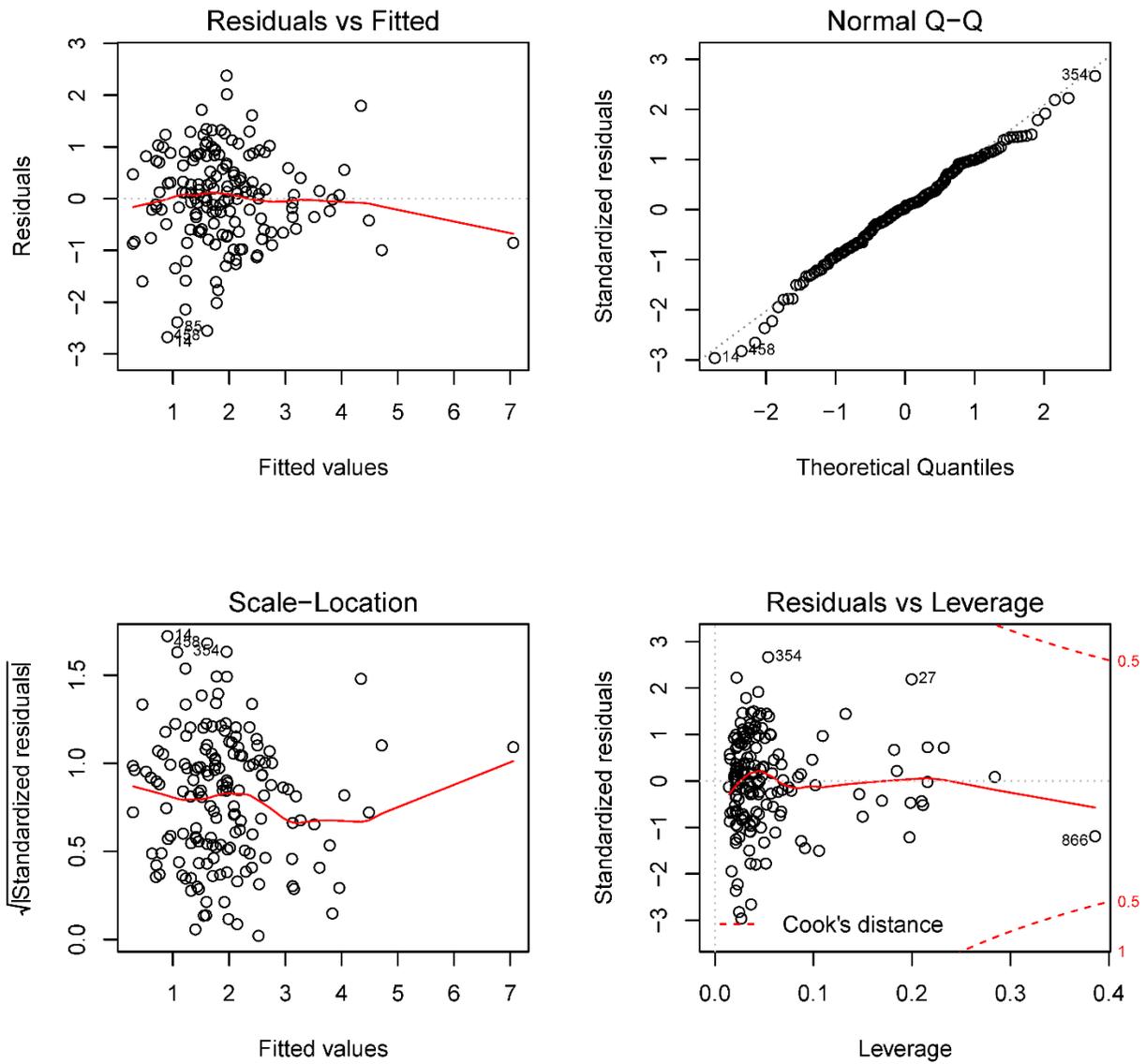
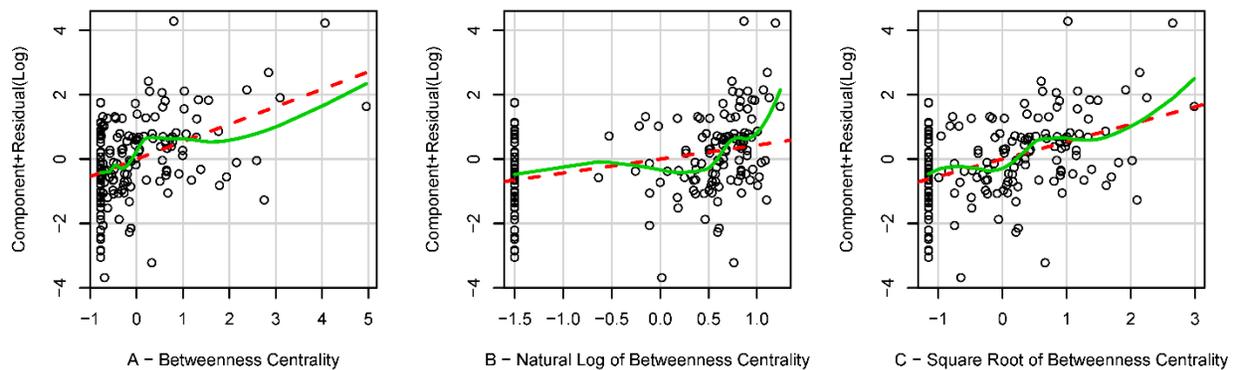Figure A.2: Basic Diagnostics for Linear Regression

Figure A.3: Partial Residual Plots of a Linear Regression Model with different transformations of Betweenness Centrality as independent variable and log of electoral result as dependent variable: A) Untransformed, B) Natural log, C) Square root

Reproducibility

To ensure the transparency and the reproducibility of our results we supply our database, which includes basic information for each candidate; the complete list of individual candidates' endorsers; and the R code used in our analysis. The R code creates the adjacency matrix and all social network analysis from the list of endorsers and performs the statistical analysis. The files are available at https://github.com/antoniodias/endorsements-in-intra-party-elections.

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[1] In practice, the party leadership decided to allow voting only to those members registered on the Beppe Grillo's website, as well as to exclude from competition all candidates holding a public office.

[2] At the time of the primaries, no L/TdA candidates held national elected office, although some had that prior background. Therefore, by party officials we refer exclusively to positions within the party organisation.

[3] Due to the electoral rules explained above, this is not the same to say that 2864 voters expressed their preferences.

[4] Before the 2015 election, the latest party to get into Parliament for the first time had been BE in the 1999 election. By then the party obtained two mandates with 4.9% in the Lisbon district.

[5] http://tempodeavancar.net/ . The data were collected between 3 and 27 June, 2015.

[6] The appendix provides a more detailed description of the operationalisation of this variable.

[7] While Oporto's primary had a considerable number of candidates, reported electoral irregularities later confirmed by the party (Gomes, 2015) reinforced our intention to exclude it from the analysis.

[8] Heteroskedasticity-consistent standard error estimators were used in all models following Hayes and Cai (2007) , as the homoskedasticity assumption was initially violated in our analysis (see appendix).

[9] In the appendix Figures 2.A and 2.B compare the distribution of this variable before and after the transformation.

[10] The highly skewed distribution of this variable poses some problems. From a theoretical point of view, we do not expect the relationship between it and the dependent variable to be purely additive, and therefore including it in an untransformed scale would not be an optimal approach. In such cases, the most frequent option is to apply a logarithmic transformation to the variable. However, diagnostic tests revealed that this transformation also implied problems in the distribution of residuals. We opted for a squared root transformation, which is "useful for compressing high values more mildly then is done by the logarithm" (Gelman and Hill, 2007: 65). See the appendix for details.

[11] See the appendix for a full description of this variable.