GROWTH AND TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORKERS' PARTY IN BRAZIL, 1989–2002*

Wendy Hunter

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Wendy Hunter is Associate Professor of Government at the University of Texas. She was a 2004–05 visiting fellow at the Kellogg Institute. Her early work focused on Latin American militaries during the transition from authoritarianism, and resulted in the book *Eroding Military Influence in Brazil* (University of North Carolina Press, 1997). More recently, she published several articles on social policy decision making and human capital formation in Latin America. Currently, Professor Hunter is writing a book on the transformation and growth of the Workers' Party in Brazil. She received her undergraduate degree from Cornell University (1982) and her PhD from the University of California, Berkeley (1992).

ABSTRACT

The *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT) in Brazil, a once radical and programmatic party whose impressive rise in Brazil's patronage-oriented political system appeared to defy institutionalist logic, has come to look more like its catchall competitors. Rather than continuing to build upon its earlier promise to shape the party system in a more programmatic direction and induce higher standards of conduct among the country's politicians, the PT—once called an "anomaly" and the most likely case for continued difference—has itself become more like a typical Brazilian party. This evolution resulted from the increasing emphasis that party leaders placed on immediate vote–maximization and the corresponding moves to bring the party closer to the political center. While this shift expanded the party's electoral base, the pull to power rendered the PT more vulnerable to institutional incentives and effectively compromised its political integrity. Thus, rather than transforming the system, the PT became yet another of its victims.

RESUME

El *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT) de Brasil, que fuera un partido radical y programático cuyo notable ascenso en un sistema político orientado hacia el patronazgo parecía desafiar la lógica institucionalista, ha comenzado a parecerse a sus competidores atrapa-todo. En lugar de continuar construyendo sobre sus promesas iniciales de orientar el sistema de partidos en una dirección más programática e inducir pautas de conducta más exigentes entre los políticos del país, el PT (alguna vez calificado como "anomalía" y del que se esperaba que siguiera siendo diferente) ha devenido más parecido a un típico partido brasileño. Esta evolución resultó del acento creciente que los líderes partidarios colocan en la maximización inmediata de votos y del correspondiente desplazamiento del partido hacia el centro del espectro político. Aunque este cambio amplió la base electoral del partido, el arrastre hacia el poder volvió al PT más vulnerable a los incentivos institucionales y puso en riesgo efectivamente su integridad política. Así, en lugar de transformar el sistema, el PT se convirtió en otra más de sus víctimas.

The Workers' Party has become a major player in Brazilian politics. Between Luis Inácio Lula da Silva's first unsuccessful run for the presidency in 1989 and his eventual victory in 2002, the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (Workers' Party, or PT) went from having a radical platform with a limited core of supporters to moderating considerably and expanding its electoral base greatly. In these same years more Brazilians came to identify with the PT than with any other single party.[1] The party's delegation grew to constitute the largest bloc in the lower house of Congress.[2] PT mayors won office and governed in an increasing number and impressive array of Brazil's cities.[3] And finally in 2002, after winning progressively greater first round vote shares in every presidential election since 1989, the party captured national executive office for the first time.[4] Notably, the PT expanded not only in relation to the political center and right, but also became the hegemonic force within the left.[5] Indeed, the growth of the PT is one of the most striking phenomena of Brazil's post-authoritarian democracy.

This article analyzes the strategies behind the PT's remarkable expansion between 1989 and 2002. Its first goal is to explain why the party leadership pursued a path of differentiation and promoted the party's left identity in the first half of this period, yet adopted a more mainstream electoral strategy and aligned the party closer to the rest of the political field in subsequent years. Its second objective is to reflect upon how the party's evolution speaks to analytical debates about whether and to what extent political actors adapt to institutionally given opportunities and constraints. The PT is a critical case to analyze since it began as a highly ideological party and resisted the adoption of vote-maximizing measures for quite some time. Important signs indicated that the PT was singularly poised to retain its programmatic identity and withstand institutional pressures to assume platforms and characteristics more typical of Brazil's catchall parties. That even the PT eventually succumbed to these pressures testifies powerfully to their strength. While the party remains distinct on some organizational characteristics—e.g. such as party loyalty and discipline—it has changed dramatically on those features that relate more directly to enhancing the party's vote share, such as moderating its ideology and entering into electorally opportune alliances.

To date, systematic and theoretically informed analyses of the party's post-1989 evolution at the national level are few and far between.[6] Instead, the literature concentrates on other issues: most prominently, the local governments and social movements associated with the party (e.g., Abers 2000, Genro and Souza 1997, Baiocchi 2003).[7] David Samuels (2004) provides an interesting and compelling analysis of the party's post-1995 evolution, yet his account focuses on *endogenous* sources of change, namely, the flexibility permitted through specific internal rules and the rise of pragmatists in the rank and file following the party's success in mayoral elections. The point of departure for the present article is that there is more to be said about factors *exogenous* to the party that militated in favor of radicalism prior to the mid-1990s and moderation thereafter.

Part one introduces the theoretical debate about party change that the present article will assess. This debate turns on whether externally mobilized left parties like the PT will remain ideological or adapt strategically to changing political environments and institutionally based incentives. Part two examines the path of differentiation followed by PT leaders in the first half of the 1990s and analyzes the basis of this "policy-seeking" orientation. Part three investigates the conditions motivating the party to become less radical and more "vote maximizing" in the second half of the decade. Part four discusses the compromises to its core identity that the PT incurred by seeking to broaden its appeal and increase its competitive capacity in Brazil's political system. The conclusion returns to the relevant analytical debates at hand. It underscores the weight that systemic incentives exerted on the PT after it decided to pursue vote maximization, which in turn rendered the party more like its catch-all competitors.

I. POLITICAL PARTIES AND THEIR MOTIVATIONS

Do parties with highly ideological pasts remain principled and policy-seeking or do they undergo strategic adaptations and become vote maximizing over time? Under what conditions do they shift their goals and behavior? These are central issues in the literature on political party formation.

Historical Institutionalist Perspectives

Martin Shefter's notion of an "externally mobilized party" exemplifies the historical institutionalist perspective in this debate. In his definition, "externally mobilized parties are established by leaders who do not occupy positions of power in the prevailing regime and who seek to bludgeon their way into the political system by mobilizing and organizing a mass constituency" (1994: 5). Most often, they orient their energies towards long-term organization building over short-term vote maximization. Because such parties are led by individuals with strong ideological commitments who struggled to gain a mass following, they will not, in this view, turn readily into catch-all parties willing to get ahead by adjusting to the political winds. Instead, the origins of externally mobilized parties will continue to be apparent, imbuing them with an ideological policy-seeking cast well into the future (1994: 33). Reinforcing the propensity for continuity over change is the bureaucratic element of the mass organizations created through previous periods of mobilization, widely thought to limit the strategic flexibility of such parties.[8]

The PT's origins conform well to Shefter's conception of an externally mobilized party. Formed in 1979 by a grassroots coalition of labor activists, Christian base communities, and leftist intellectuals, the PT struggled from outside the official political system against the military dictatorship of 1964–1985 (Meneguello 1989, Keck 1992). Growing out of a labor movement that challenged Brazil's system of corporatist regulations, the PT soon thereafter helped found a landless movement that eventually became the largest and best organized of its kind in Latin America, and mobilized citizens in favor of direct presidential elections to usher in the country's new democracy. Indeed, the PT is often described as the only Brazilian party to have truly formed through societal mobilization. Its organizational structure is that of a mass bureaucratic party. The historical institutionalist perspective outlined above would expect the PT to maintain a radical profile even with eventual changes in its external environment.

Strategic Frameworks

Challenging this vision are frameworks that regard parties as more strategic and open to change. Rational choice institutionalism underscores the importance of institutional context in the calculations of politicians and their parties. In this perspective, the opportunities and constraints presented by given institutional arrangements (e.g., electoral rules, whether executive power is presidential or parliamentary, the degree of state centralization, etc.) shape the strategies and actions of political actors whose overriding priority is to win elections (Cox 1997). Analyses rooted in this logic expect that vote-maximizing mainstream parties will converge in adopting dominant strategies that conform to institutionally based incentives.

What features characterize the institutional context of competition in democratic Brazil, and what predictions about party strategies can be derived from them? Brazilian politicians face a landscape of low partisan identification, high party-system fragmentation, and strong orientations toward personalism and pork barrel politics, outcomes fueled by the open–list feature of Brazil's system of proportional representation for lower house elections (Ames 2001, Mainwaring 1999). Existing rules of the game encourage the pursuit of executive office (Samuels 2003, Amorim Neto 2005). The most coveted executive position, Brazil's presidency, carries extensive prerogatives, especially with respect to shaping the congressional agenda and playing a proactive legislative role (Mainwaring 1997; Shugart and Carey 1992: 155; Payne et al. 2002). Politicians and parties serious about making their mark will therefore be determined to capture presidential office.

Winning the Brazilian presidency requires a candidate to capture a majority of votes in a direct popular election. If no candidate obtains a majority in the first round, a runoff is held between the top two first round finishers.[9] The challenge facing presidential candidates in Brazil is to obtain such a high threshold of support in a system of such pronounced party fragmentation and weakness. The majoritarian feature of presidential elections within the broader context of Brazilian politics suggests a dominant strategy for parties whose foremost goal is vote-seeking. One would expect such parties to 1) adhere to mainstream messages rather than promote a far-reaching ideological program; 2)

pursue alliances across the political spectrum; 3) put forth candidates with widespread personal appeal; 4) closely track and conform to trends in public opinion; and 5) base political campaigns on the projection of slick images and the distribution of material goodies rather than on substantive ideas and platforms, a strategy requiring ample financing.

Stated in spatial terms, the dominant strategy outlined above essentially entails conforming to the inclinations and preferences of middle-of-the road voters. The most unnuanced theoretical articulation of this spatial perspective of competition remains Downs (1957), whose point of departure was that "election is the goal of those parties now out of power" and "parties formulate policies in order to win elections, rather than win elections in order to formulate policies" (1957: 11, 28). In this understanding, voters' preferences are given and politicians are motivated to attract the median voter. Accordingly, parties will moderate their policy positions and adapt the organizational features of catch-all competitors. Other classical party theorists such as Duverger (1954) and Kirchheimer (1966) agree that parties water down their ideologies sooner rather than later in order to capture as large a share of the electoral market as they can.

The special imperatives and constraints faced by ideological parties can be understood within a modified spatial framework, which recognizes that such parties may have to evolve for long periods in opposition before vote maximization make sense. Since outsider parties can rarely offer voters patronage or governing experience, they typically have little choice but to present themselves as new programmatic alternatives (Greene 2002). Moreover, difficulties their leaders face in accessing campaign resources such as the media heighten their dependence on the commitment and energies of more ideological rank-and-file activists (Duverger 1954, Kitschelt 1994, Panebianco 1988). The perceived need to balance vote maximization with activist recruitment may well restrain their ability to moderate party platforms.[10]

Party strategists also need to consider how many votes would be gained by making incremental adjustments. In Kitschelt's formulation, "parties may pursue policy maximization at the expense of other objectives if their supply of voters or their chance of winning government office is inelastic to incremental changes in the party's policy positions" (1994:116–117). For instance, if a party's initial position is extreme, dramatic

shifts are not credible and slight moderations may not be worthwhile electorally, especially when balanced against potential costs. In short, various strategic considerations may militate in favor of a profile-enhancing rather than a vote-maximizing orientation, at least until the latter becomes more plausible.

How are these analytical perspectives useful for understanding the evolution of the PT? To preview and summarize the argument elaborated at greater length below: Insights from historical institutionalism shed light on why the party initially valued organization building and policy seeking more than the unconditional winning of elections and thus did not want to employ catch-all strategies of competition. Spatial dynamics explain why the party could not have competed on these grounds anyway, which reinforced the initial preference for organization building and differentiation. Yet even then, institutional features opened up a different route to becoming a consequential party, albeit one not yet capable of winning the presidency. PT politicians took advantage of Brazil's system of proportional representation in districts of large magnitude to gain political traction via the lower house of Congress. Once that strategy was chosen, they rode it out until its limitations became apparent and changes external to the party rendered vote maximization a more plausible and promising goal. When party leaders decided that they had pursued party building and policy seeking long enough and that it was time to make winning elections their first priority, they adopted crucial aspects of the dominant strategy of Brazil's catchall parties, falling strikingly in line with the expectations of rational choice institutionalism. In short, while the hand of history helps account for some aspects of continuity (e.g., the party's organizational and policy-seeking goals until the mid-1990s), even more noteworthy are the changes the party has undergone since then in strategic response to evolving external conditions, shifting spatial dynamics, and the opportunities and constraints that PT leaders have seen in them.

II. THE CONTINUITY OF "DIFFERENCE"

Analyses of Brazilian parties all depict the PT as decidedly leftist in orientation, strong organizationally, and fundamentally different from its catchall counterparts in the late 1980s and early 1990s.[11] Clearly, the core of leftist leaders and sympathizers that had

built the PT under the military regime was committed to extending its profile of difference into the more competitive context of Brazil's new democracy. Notably, even the most pragmatic elements within the party—the "Articulação" faction linked to Lula and his fellow trade unionists—rejected a fuller adaptation to the incentives of the political environment as the PT's catch–all competitors understood them. In this vein, Lula cautioned repeatedly, "We must not let electoral concerns take over the party's agenda" (translation mine) (Machado and Vannuchi 1991: 6). Along these same lines, he insisted repeatedly that electoral losses were not necessarily political defeats if the PT managed to get its name out and promote its programs.

The PT's programmatic profile was defined by positions it assumed vis-à-vis two dimensions that anchored Brazil's major parties and distinguished them from one another from the late 1980s to 2002. The key economic cleavage among the parties concerned how much they favored market reform vs. state management of the economy. The central political issue separating them had to do with how programmatic and institutionalized vs. clientelist and/or personalistic they were. Central to the PT's emergence as the leading opposition party in the 1990s was the identity it carved out in the lower right cell (see Figure F): statist economics and programmatic politics.[12]

The Economic Dimension: International trends coupled with Brazil's poor economic performance and fiscal crisis of the 1980s and 1990s had led politicians to debate the country's future economic orientation. Market advocates favored privatizing the economy, diminishing trade barriers and reforming the state. Their detractors opposed the privatization of state enterprises and public services, and similarly rejected the "flexibilization" of labor and the introduction of measures designed to enhance fiscal efficiency in the social sectors.

During the period under discussion, the PT projected a statist orientation in a number of ways. Most importantly, it adopted pro-labor, anti–foreign capital positions in the Constituent Assembly (1987–1988), called for socialism in Lula's 1989 and 1994 presidential bids, fiercely opposed President Fernando Collor's pursuit of market reforms during his presidency (1990–1992), and vociferously rejected the well-known array of "neoliberal" reforms approved under the first government of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1994–1998).

FIGURE 2

BRAZIL'S POLITICAL LANDSCAPE (1989–2002)

Economic Liberalism

The Political Dimension: A cluster of political characteristics crystallized and came to distinguish Brazilian parties from one another in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The twin maladies of clientelism and corruption drew public attention through numerous high-profile scandals, the most notorious of which resulted in the impeachment of President Fernando Collor (Weyland 1993). Ongoing signs of opportunism among politicians from Brazil's catchall parties were also rife. They included defying the

directives of party leaders, outmaneuvering those within their own ranks, switching parties, and forging coalitions in line with shifting political calculations. The media highlighted these practices and their deleterious effects on governability and citizen wellbeing. This gave politicians from more institutionalized parties—namely, the PT—a perfect way to distinguish themselves from their competitors.

The PT's classification as programmatic and party-oriented is rooted in the outstandingly high rates of cohesion, discipline, and loyalty displayed by its legislative delegation (Mainwaring and Pérez Liñan 1998, Melo 2000, Souza 2004, Hagopian 2005a, Leal 2005, Roma 2005). In line with this profile, the PT observed a very restrictive alliance policy, joining exclusively with parties on the left in the 1989 and 1994 elections.[13] This separated the PT not only from major parties on its right, such as the PFL (Liberal Front Party), but also from its main center–left competitor, the PSDB (Brazilian Social Democratic Party), and leftist rival, the PDT (Democratic Labor Party). Engagement in activities to combat clientelism and corruption contributed further to the PT's distinctive political profile. Beyond efforts to expose and hold guilty parties accountable in specific corruption scandals at the national level, PT politicians at the municipal level aimed to make government decision making more transparent to the public. Participatory budgeting schemes were arguably the best known and most celebrated of these (Abers 2000, Avritzer and Navarro 2002, Nylen 2003, Wampler 2004).

Making Sense of the PT's Policy-Seeking Approach

Why did party leaders follow such a policy-seeking approach, manifested most visibly in the special niche of statist economics and party-oriented politics that they carved out and defended so fiercely?

Ideological Commitments and the Promise of Consciousness-Raising: No doubt genuine ideological commitments played a role in their mix of motivations. After all, these were individuals who felt strongly enough about political change to risk life and limb defying the military regime but a few years earlier. All indications are that most PT partisans believed firmly in the developmental and redistributive capacity of the state and opposed vehemently the clientelistic orientation of Brazilian politics. Although they

faced an uphill battle in a new political system dominated by the civilian heirs of that regime they nevertheless dedicated themselves to the collective cause. Their sacrifices included donating between 10 and 30 percent of their salaries to the party, depending on the position they held within it.

Holding economic and political positions considerably to the left of most other parties and the vast majority of the electorate, the PT placed basic ideological principles above that of power acquisition. Notwithstanding internal debate over the degree of emphasis to place on long-term organizational efforts vs. more immediate electoral goals, party leaders resisted conforming to pre-existing lines of public opinion (Almeida 1996: 27–28), making strategic alliances with non-left parties, and abandoning the party's strong programmatic commitments. Instead, they advocated raising public consciousness and promoting the party label.

Party leaders harbored a faith in the intrinsic appeal that the PT's redistributive platform would have in a country of record-high socioeconomic inequality. They were also hopeful that the weak attachment of citizens to other parties would help them gradually build a mass following for their radical program. Well less than half of the electorate expressed a preference for any party in 1989 (Carreirão and Kinzo 2004: 141). Among voters with only a primary school education, that number was closer to 30 percent. Thus, although PT strategists were aware that prying voters away from patronage-providing politicians would be a challenge, gathering backing for the party would at least not require breaking many strong partisan ties.

A dense civil society promised to facilitate the PT's task of moving individuals towards its strategy of collective empowerment. Brazilian society is considered relatively well organized, especially by Latin American standards (Encarnación 2003). Rates of church affiliation are comparatively high (McDonough, Shin, and Moisés 1998; Hagopian 2005b). Trade-union membership has remained steadier than in other countries that have undergone market reform, especially among public-sector workers (Roberts forthcoming). Neighborhood organizations abound in a cross section of the country's cities. Preexisting levels of organization would make it easier to reach large numbers of people as well as to retain their allegiance. Groups which the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s had mobilized, such as the Christian base communities, held particular

promise in this regard. Organized networks—partly by insulating the party from short-term trends such as negative media effects and the entry of new and attractive outsiders—could give the PT a reliable support base, an important edge in a country with one of the highest rates of electoral volatility in the world.[14]

Ideology and faith aside, it made strategic sense in these years to underscore the party's distinctiveness. Resource constraints and spatial considerations made it *necessary* to chart out a course different from that of other, more "normal" Brazilian parties. In short, the "logic of difference" that applied to the party's early years (Keck 1992) extended into the more competitive context of Brazil's new democracy.

Resource Constraints: As a resource-poor opposition party in a patronage-oriented system where campaigns are notoriously expensive and dependent upon private financing, the PT had little choice but to appeal to voters on programmatic grounds and to promote the party label over individual candidates. Although the dominant tendency of the electoral system is "candidate centric," the rules do allow votes to be cast for a party label instead of for specific candidates (Nicolau 2002, Samuels 1999). By 1994, the PT was the party with by far the single largest share of label votes in the system (Samuels 1999: 499–500).[15] This strategy translated into lower campaign costs and allowed the PT to elect candidates with a lower number of total votes. The related effort to change "hearts and minds" made the PT far more dependent on the commitment, "can–do" outlook, and high energy of its activists than any other Brazilian party (Mainwaring 1999: 172). Diluting the party's image earlier on to attract a greater number of non-ideological voters may well have diminished the enthusiasm of its partisans.

Spatial dynamics: Spatial dynamics rendered this potential trade-off even less attractive. The radical content of pre-1989 party programs—which included proposals to nationalize leading industries and launch a major land reform—had placed the party on the far-left tail of the political spectrum and distribution of voter preferences. Since the Brazilian public was not particularly left-leaning (Singer 1999), small centrist shifts beginning in the late 1980s would not have been likely to yield many additional votes anyway. And needless to say, more dramatic moves to the center would not have been viewed as credible by the electorate or have received approval among left factions within the party.

The social democratic profile of the PSDB until the mid-1990s made it even less likely that the PT could fashion itself successfully in center-left terms. The occupation of that space by a party full of experienced politicians and reputable technocrats was additional rationale for the PT to stay further to the left. Paraphrasing the words of one PT senator, "Competing against credible centrist opponents put us in a difficult situation. We preferred polarized races in which we faced an openly right-wing competitor."[16] For this and related reasons, beginning the process of moderation much sooner than the PT did or accelerating its pace would have made little sense.

Institutional Viability: If these considerations sustained the PT's policy-seeking orientation by constraining its alternatives, institutional rules pertaining to Brazil's electoral system made the strategy minimally viable. Brazil's system of proportional representation (PR) in districts of high magnitude (as large as states themselves) allowed radical PT politicians to gain a foothold in a key national political body, the lower house of Congress. Amassing sufficient support to meet required thresholds of representation would have been far less likely under a plurality arrangement or even a PR system with smaller districts. Since the proportional element of electoral design permitted the party to grow, if only incrementally, a core goal of the PT's early strategizing was to build up the party's legislative delegation.[17] It did just that, winning 3.3 percent of all seats in 1986, 7.0 percent in 1990, 9.6 percent in 1994, 11.3 percent in 1998 and 17.7 percent in 2002.[18]

The Benefits of Differentiation

What impact did the PT's strategy of differentiation have on the electorate? At the very least, it helped make the PT a household name and gave Brazilians a general sense of what the party stood for. A survey conducted in February 1994 shows that more people expressed a familiarity with Lula than with any other politician asked about, including Leonel Brizola and Fernando Henrique Cardoso.[19] The same survey put forth a list of parties and for each party asked respondents to say whether they favored it, opposed it, or had no basis for an opinion. The PT elicited the clearest opinions (positive and negative) second only to the PMDB (Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement).

Polls conducted around the 1989 and 1994 elections also suggest that the PT was building a core electoral following, a process no doubt enhanced by its distinctiveness.

Surveys of specific groups, such as Catholics associated with Christian base communities,[20] union affiliates (especially those from the *Central Única dos Trabalhadores*—CUT, or Unified Workers' Central), the labor confederation most closely associated with the PT),[21] and members of the landless rural workers' movement[22] reveal overwhelming support for Lula in these years. A more general poll conducted just before the 1994 presidential election shows that 88.04 percent of those expressing a partisan preference for the PT intended to vote for Lula. That they supported Lula strongly over Cardoso even in an election that the latter was able to sweep due to the wildly successful stabilization plan (*Plano Real*) he had devised as Finance Minister in the preceding government testifies powerfully to their loyalty. It is highly doubtful that a more "watered down" PT could have consolidated such a following.

The PT's emphasis on social equity resonated also among people who were not necessarily PT partisans but who reported voting for the party in 1989 and 1994. In one survey, people who said they intended to vote for the PT in the 1989 presidential election ranked as their highest motivation Lula's commitment to social goals, such as bettering the life of workers and helping the poor (Carreirão 2002: 89). A similar pattern shows up for the 1994 election. Lula voters regarded issues like hunger and unemployment as more problematic than did supporters of other candidates (Almeida 1996:192–93) and (across all educational levels) reported that "Lula's concern for socio-economic problems" was one of the principal reasons for selecting him (Carreirão 2002: 130).

From these perspectives there was a logic to difference. The PT was making reasonable electoral progress by unifying behind clear alternative positions on major political and economic issues, building strong networks, and restricting its alliances to within the left. By foregoing a more meteoric political ascendance, the party managed to retain its core identity and not be sucked into the corrupting whirlpool of Brazilian politics. Some observers even went so far as to argue that the PT was inducing other parties to become more programmatic (e.g., Rosas and Zechmeister 2000). This transformative effect was thought to play out especially with regard to the state/market dimension. All of this appeared to challenge the expectations of rational choice institutionalist theory and confirm those of historical institutionalism.

III. THE SHIFT TO VOTE MAXIMIZATION AND NORMALIZATION

Yet in the mid-1990s the party changed course. Its emphasis shifted from organization building and policy seeking to vote maximization. As part of this new priority on winning elections, especially presidential contests, the PT went to great lengths to moderate its platforms and soften its public image (Amaral 2003). Sharply punctuating this centrist move were Lula's defeat in the 1998 presidential race and the approach of the 2002 elections. The timing, deliberate nature, and fairly rapid pace of the party's moderation conform to a strategic understanding of change. The impact that pursuing majoritarian offices (namely the presidency) had on the decision to moderate bears out the importance of institutional constraints in shaping strategy.[23]

In explaining the party's increasing conformity much has been made of the pragmatic leadership role of José Dirceu, a close political ally of Lula, who won the first of two successive terms as party president beginning in 1995 (1995–2002). Yet such an approach does not account for why Dirceu's group, moderate within the PT but decidedly on the left of the political spectrum, undertook such a dramatic move to the center in the mid-1990s rather than previously. Their faction, the *Articulacão*, had led the party at various times before—including in the late 1980s—but had charted quite a radical course then. Clearly, a more systematic set of factors motivated the party to shift directions, pursue vote maximization, and moderate in the second half of the 1990s. Most prominent among these were the recognized limitations of the previous strategy, the perception of new opportunities created by changes in the spatial landscape, and opposition fatigue.

The Limits of Consciousness Raising and Party Building: Although a strategy of differentiation had helped the PT consolidate a core following, there were limitations to this course, especially if it wanted to win the presidency any time in the near future. Party leaders were forced to recognize that consciousness raising and organization building would be slower processes than they had imagined. Poverty and inequality, however egregious, did not translate readily into votes for the party. In fact, the poorest and least educated sectors of society voted decisively against Lula and for the conservative populist candidate Fernando Collor in 1989 (Singer 1990). And in 1994, the evaporation of Lula's early lead over Fernando Henrique Cardoso with the success of the inflation-

reducing *Plano Real* and the latter's close identification with it suggested that the PT's promises to combat deep structural causes of economic misery (e.g., unequal land distribution) were not a surefire route to electoral victory (Meneguello 1995).

These losses fueled a discussion of the vote ceiling entailed in the party's radicalism. PT strategists estimated the party's reliable support base to be between 18 and 30 percent of electorate (Almeida 1996: 44). They focused on Lula's first round vote shares (17.2 percent in 1989 and 27.0 in 1994) as being more indicative of his "raw" support than second round vote shares. In this connection, they were well aware that the PT's near victory in the 1989 presidential election was due to a highly unusual conjuncture of circumstances, not least of which was that Brazilian voters were presented with two polarized options: Lula or Fernando Collor, a right-wing populist from Brazil's Northeast who cut his political teeth under the military regime. Given the alternative to Lula, people with centrist leanings who would not have voted for Lula ordinarily may have done so.

Going beyond such limited first round vote shares would depend on gaining ground among demographic groups that had systematically leaned toward more conservative options in the past: residents of small towns and rural areas (especially in Brazil's Northeast, North, and Center-West regions), older individuals, the least educated, and those in the lowest income brackets. The party could also benefit from attracting more female voters and closing the small but remaining "gender gap."[24] In short, while the PT's distinctiveness was crucial to building a core following, maximizing its share of the electorate necessitated bringing in more marginal sympathizers.

Spatial dynamics: Spatial changes and the possibility of success that these raised lured the PT onto a more mainstream course. Numerous factors had set into motion a convergence of popular opinion and party opinion. Fifteen years of organizing, governing at the local level, and leading the national opposition had brought a reasonable share of Brazilians around to the party's ideals. This was reflected in increasing levels of partisan identification (Carreirão and Kinzo 2004) as well as growing vote shares in elections for a diverse array of political offices. At the same time, exogenous events, namely, the fall of socialism internationally and the spread of market reform, had led many PT politicians to rethink their earlier radicalism and the rank and file to support a more pragmatic

leadership. This brought the party closer to the distribution of popular preferences. The resulting approximation between party and public opinion rendered further moves to the center more and more profitable for the PT. Compared to the situation the party faced years earlier, each increment in ideological moderation promised a larger benefit in terms of additional voters.

Reinforcing the rationale of a centrist strategy were changes in the PSDB, which by the mid-1990s had begun to move to the right. Its embrace of the market and the alliance it struck with the PFL in 1994 marked the start of this rightward drift, which created an opening in the center-left. Governing Brazil for the next eight years would reinforce the PSDB's moderation and adoption of clientelistic means of governing. Since the PT could consider its hold over the far left secure, the newly open space available in the center-left presented itself as an invitation with the PT's name on it.

These constraints and opportunities worked together to give party pragmatists the upper hand, which in turn put the PT in a better position to capitalize on a prime asset, the charisma and personal appeal of Lula. Lula had always been able to attract votes from people who were not particularly inclined toward the party as such (Samuels 2006), yet other supportive conditions were not in place for him to obtain the majority necessary for a PT presidential victory. By the late 1990s, they were closer to being so.

Opposition fatigue: Opposition fatigue reinforced the rationale for moderation. Wearing the party down were the hardships associated with being in the opposition in an executive-centric system, as well as striving for the presidency and losing repeatedly. While the PT could contribute decisively to blocking the government's legislative proposals, it encountered extraordinary difficulty having its own policy goals enacted. Even PT deputies getting resources appropriated for mundane purposes—such as building infrastructure projects in their home states—proved more difficult in the opposition (Pereira and Mueller 2004: 808–809). Winning the presidency would finally enable the party to enact the top-down programs that it had long labored to promote from the grassroots and in the national opposition. José Genoino, future party president (2002–2005), encapsulated the leadership's thinking in his statement, "It's now time to win, not just to stake out our ground" (translation mine).[25]

Responding to Majoritarian Imperatives

A determined effort to win the presidency would imply major changes in the party's strategic behavior. Because the PT had previously considered organization building and policy seeking to be more important goals than electoral victory per se, it had not employed practices typically used by its catchall competitors, namely, projecting a watered-down ideological profile, entering into politically heterogeneous alliances, conforming to voters' preferences instead of trying to change them, and raising large sums of money to fund extravagant campaigns. The new priority on vote maximization compelled party leaders to consider employing these behaviors (e.g., Dulci 1997, Almeida 1997).

While maintaining its insistence on clean government and related "valence issues," the party broke with the past and publicly acknowledged the benefits of adapting to international market trends. This first occurred with Lula's third run for the presidency in 1998 and was accentuated in the 2002 campaign. Beyond omitting the word "socialism" from the party program, the most notable sign of moderation on the economic dimension was the promise to adhere to Brazil's existing agreements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Retaining some "product differentiation," however, the party continued to advocate policies that would enhance the welfare of poorer Brazilians, such as job creation, substantial increases in the minimum wage, and even a minimum income provision.

Similarly, the leadership began to consider alliance partners that it would have rejected out of hand earlier.[26] Coalition building was difficult since there were few leftist parties of significance and the PSDB, a natural partner from an ideological standpoint, was unavailable since it was the governing party and had become the PT's arch rival. By the mid-1990s, Lula was busy making speeches to convince militants of the mathematical odds of winning a majority without loosening the party's restrictive alliance policy. These efforts helped pave the way for a stark concession to pragmatism that the party made in 2002 in the form of an alliance with the small, right-wing Liberal Party (PL), known for its unusual leadership mix of evangelical pastors and affluent businessmen.[27] The alliance was thought to be opportune for various reasons (Miguel 2003).

Evangelicals, a group that has voted against the PT historically, constitute a sizable share of Brazil's population.[28] Also, the PL's stronghold, Minas Gerais, is the state with the second largest number of electoral votes.[29] Moreover, the PL's president, industrialist José Alencár, has strong connections to the business community. The reasoning was that he could soften business resistance to the prospect of a PT-led presidency if he became Lula's vice-presidential running mate.[30] With similar calculations in mind, the PT also managed to secure the support of one faction of the PMDB, arguably the most opportunistic of existing Brazilian parties.

The shift to a vote-maximizing orientation induced the PT leadership to adopt another standard practice of catchall Brazilian parties: to closely analyze public opinion polls and respond to their findings with the help of professional consultants and publicists. Whereas the PT had eschewed such practices earlier, considering it more important to clarify the substance of its programs and convince people to embrace the party's ideals (Sampaio 1989), three presidential losses suggested that this was not a winning strategy, at least in the short to medium term. Party pragmatists led the way in advocating that the PT gain more knowledge about what voters actually thought, especially about the party. Accepting the importance of style and media images as bases for voters' judgments, they built support for the notion of political marketing (Almeida 1997: 12–15). By 2002, Lula had hired to run his campaign Brazil's best-known and most expensive publicist, Duda Mendonça, who had earned a reputation for successfully advising a number of prominent politicians from the right. One of Mendonça's main objectives was to remake the image of the party and its candidate, embodied in everything from giving Lula a more typically "presidential" physical appearance to formulating catchy yet unobjectionable slogans like "Lula, paz e amor" (Lula, Peace and Love) and "O PT: para um Brasil decente" (The PT: For a Decent Brazil.)

Pragmatism apparently won out as well with respect to addressing the party's financial shortfalls. The PT had always struggled to progress with exceedingly modest resources in a country where political campaigns are among the most expensive in the world. Due precisely to its radicalism, the party was not a natural recipient of (legal) business contributions. Compared to other parties, the PT not only received far less money from donations overall,[31] but a smaller percentage of it came from business

(Samuels 2001: 39).[32] Monetary restrictions had hampered the effectiveness of Lula's first three presidential campaigns in wide-ranging ways. Pursuing vote maximization in a system where mainstream parties employ high levels of private campaign spending turned the PT's limited resources into an even greater obstacle than when party building was the overriding priority and organizational strategies—such as mobilizing militants to promote the party label—went a longer way toward overcoming material disadvantages. Although the PT's image and aspirations had shifted by the late 1990s, its financial standing continued to reflect a more radical past and thus posed an obstacle to its new ambitions.

In the end, the single-minded determination to win the presidency subjected the party to financial pressures and temptations it had previously withstood. Just how far the PT was willing to bend the ethical standards at the core of its reputation became clear halfway into Lula's presidential term. Apparently, underpinning the 2002 campaign (and possibly that of 1998) was an intricate and illegal scheme whereby PT mayors extracted kickbacks from private and public firms seeking municipal contracts (most prominently in the area of garbage collection and transportation) and then diverted these "donations" into a secret campaign slush fund. Disputed details aside, no one within the PT denies the existence of a "*caixa dois*" (second cash till). The publicist responsible for Lula's 2002 campaign has admitted receiving money from these funds through an illegal account held in the Bahamas. Even Lula himself has acknowledged the party's use of the *caixa dois* in a defense to the effect of "The PT only did what other Brazilian parties have done all along" (*O Globo*, July 18, 2005).

The Benefits of Moderation Against a History of Difference

Election and survey results from 2002 suggest that the PT had evolved to the point of striking that crucial but difficult balance between retaining an alternative identity and assimilating to the political environment, a challenge for former ideological parties seeking to broaden their support base. Otto Kirchheimer encapsulated it well: "There is need for enough brand differentiation to make the article plainly recognizable, but the degree of differentiation must never be so great as to make the potential customer fear he will be out on a limb" (1966: 192). In short, while the PT continued to benefit from the

broad contours of the political and economic profile it had established in earlier years, moderating its image no doubt helped it expand its vote share.[33]

Clearly, many votes cast for Lula in 2002 were rooted in the PT's historic profile. A binomial logit analysis based on Brazil's National Election Survey of 2002, presented and explained at length elsewhere (Hunter 2005), suggests that voters' reservations about economic liberalism and their attachment to modern political principles had a positive and significant impact on voting for the PT in the first and second round presidential contests. These attitudes were determined through indexes constructed around relevant survey questions. The economic index was based on what respondents thought should be the ideal level of government involvement (full public control, full private-sector control or mixed public/private control) in various sectors of the economy. The political orientation index was constructed around people's stated criteria in selecting a party (with options like "the party program" and "the honesty of party personnel" considered more modern than answers like "having friends and family members in the party") and around a scenario where the reception of given public services depends on political intermediation, and the respondent is asked whether political assistance should be accepted to secure the good. Anti-market attitudes and anti-clientelist political sentiments were important predictors of voting for Lula even though anti-incumbent sentiment also figured prominently.

At the same time, the PT's moderated profile clearly enhanced its electoral support base. Comparisons of key variables across the four presidential races in which Lula was a candidate are telling in this regard. Falling rejection rates reflect well the evolving image of the party and of Lula, its symbolic leader, in a less sectarian direction over time. Whereas the number registering an active aversion to Lula was judged to be as high as 40 percent of the electorate in 1989,[34] this rate decreased to roughly 32 percent in 1994,[35] fell further to approximately 27 percent in 1998,[36] and was estimated at somewhere between 10 and 16 percent in 2002.[37] Needless to say, while lower rejection rates do not necessarily translate into active support for a given candidate, they can only increase a given candidate's chances of gaining an electoral majority.

TABLE 5

Pro-State & Politically Modern Influences on the Lula Vote (Logit Results), 2002

Variable	Coefficients (with standard errors)	
	Lula Vote 1st Round Model 1	Lula Vote 2nd Round Model 2
Political Modernity		
Political Modern Index	.190 (.086)*	.134 (.098)
Educationally Modern	.208 (.104)*	.313 (.116)*
State/Market Attitudes		
Pro-State Index	.019 (.008)*	.029 (.009)**
Controls		
Family Income	-.111 (.036)**	-.067 (.035)
Educational Attainment	-.007 (.011)	-.009 (.012)
Evangelical	-1.045 (.168)**	-.150 (.175)
Medium-Sized City	.302 (.033)	.189 (.189)
Large-Sized City	.478 (.175)**	.122 (.190)
Mega-City	.278 (.175)	.072 (.189)
South	.215 (.173)	.216 (.254)
Southeast	.191 (.236)	.310 (.218)
North	.310 (.205)	-.168 (.357)
Northeast	.034 (.221)	.594 (.239)*
FHC Problem Solving	-.247 (.338)**	-.251 (.035)**
PT Partisan		1.683 (.171)**
PSDB Partisan		-1.928 (.355)**
Constant	-.123 (.345)	.014 (.369)
N	1656	1650
-2 Log Likelihood	2238.489[a]	1888.690 [a]
Cox & Snell R Square	.075	.172
Nagelkerke R Square	.100	.237
Null Model	51.2%	65.1%
Predicted Model	62.3%	70.4%
Reduction of Error	22.7%	15.2%

* $p > .05$; ** $p > .01$.

Source: Brazilian National Election Survey, 2002

Other survey responses reflect a similar perception of a less sectarian party in later years. For example, a 1994 poll asked people whether they thought Lula, if elected president, would confer with broad-ranging societal sectors (including the business community) or confine his consultations to the party. In 1994, nearly 40 percent of all respondents thought he would not seek out broader opinions when making decisions

(Almeida 1996: 215). By contrast, in 2002 only 14.8 percent of respondents reported thinking this way.[38]

Furthermore, by softening the ideological content of its campaign, the PT was able to appeal to a wider range of voters.[39] Whereas Lula's early following featured an overrepresentation of voters with high levels of education and middle-class incomes, over time it included more and more people from the lowest education and income brackets. And while Lula initially suffered a deficit of support among older Brazilians, by 1998 and 2002 he had made significant headway in this regard. Similarly, whereas polls from 1989, 1994 and even 1998 show a nine to ten percentage point male preference for Lula, in 2002 he closed this gap. Lula was also able to extend his support over a significant portion of the ideological spectrum, with the exception of people who classified themselves on the far right (Brazilian National Election Survey, 2002). The regional base of support for the PT also evened out strikingly over time. In 1989, PT followers were concentrated in the South and Southeast, the wealthier and more industrialized regions of the country. By 2002, the party was able to bring the majority of voters from the less developed North and Northeast into its camp, along with the Center-West.

TABLE 6				
Regional Breakdown of Second Round Presidential Election Results ('89 vs. '02)				
	Collor vs. Lula (1989)		Lula vs. Serra (2002)	
NORTH	70.5	29.5	58.2	41.8
NORTHEAST	55.7	44.3	61.5	38.5
SOUTHEAST	50.5	49.5	63.0	37.0
SOUTH	48.3	51.7	58.8	41.2
CENTER WEST	63.2	36.8	57.3	42.7
BRAZIL TOTAL	53.0	47.0	61.3	38.7

Source: Jairo Nicolau's IUPERJ website.

In short, if the aim of PT strategists was to pick up the "median voter," they succeeded in doing so or at least in moving much closer to this goal.
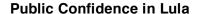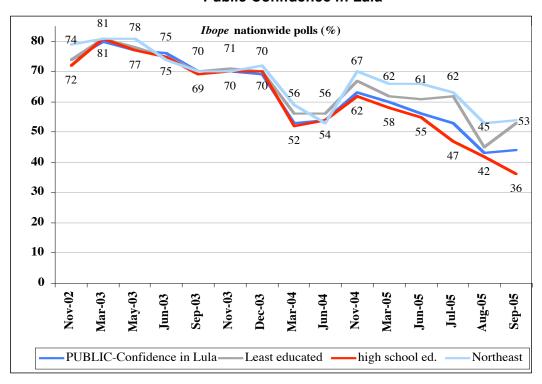
IV. THE DARKER SIDE OF ADAPTATION

All of this came at an eventual cost, however. While the shift to vote maximization allowed the PT to become a leading political contender, it rendered the party more susceptible to systemic incentives, including those related to the financing of campaigns.[40] The full weight exerted by these incentives became apparent only much later, with the media's revelation in July 2005 of the *caixa dois* scheme coordinated by PT mayors. The news broke in conjunction with the discovery of another corruption scheme, this time operated by the PT-led national government.

Presidential victory had shifted the structure of institutional incentives facing the PT from the electoral to the governing arena, opening up new issues. The most prominent of these was the disjuncture between holding the presidency and controlling less than 20 percent of seats in the Chamber of Deputies. How Lula and his team would muster Congressional backing—especially since the campaign pledge to pursue neoliberal constitutional reforms in areas like social security and taxation would require supermajorities—would crucially affect the government's success and the party's future. Evidently, one method they used was the *"mensalão,"* monthly bribes amounting to several million dollars paid to congressional allies in exchange for their legislative support.

The *caixa dois* scheme, together with the *mensalão,* has severely damaged the reputation for programmatic and ethical politics that the party built over the course of two decades. Testifying to this loss in the public's faith are falling approval ratings of the government and of Lula himself despite the strong performance of the Brazilian economy. The impact of these corruption scandals has been serious enough to jeopardize Lula's chances of winning reelection. Once thought to be a "shoo-in" for 2006, this is now far less clear. In short, after what appeared to be an initial reaction of disbelief and denial among many Brazilians, the public has begun to digest the fact that somewhere along the way the party that once offered hope for change fell prey to the system.

FIGURE 7

Public Confidence in Lula

Ibope nationwide polls (%)

The scandal has also thrown the PT into an internal crisis. Militants who dedicated years of their time and energy to the party and its ideals feel tremendously betrayed by the leadership, which took pragmatism to the extreme. After quieting down in the period surrounding Lula's presidential victory, longstanding divisions and tensions about how far the party should go to enhance its competitive capacity have resurfaced dramatically. A number of historic PT figures have left the party. The party organization has responded to these developments by asking members to redouble their commitment to the PT. It remains to be seen whether this plea will meet with the same level of sacrifice that PT enthusiasts were willing to make in the past.

Ironically, the measures deemed necessary to come to power and be successful thereafter are precisely those now threatening the party's future. Facing perhaps the single most severe crisis of its existence, the party and its future are open to question. Even if the PT manages to smooth over internal tensions and keep winning enough votes

to remain a significant party, it can no longer claim to stand above "politics as usual," a crucial aspect of its electoral success even as recently as 2002.
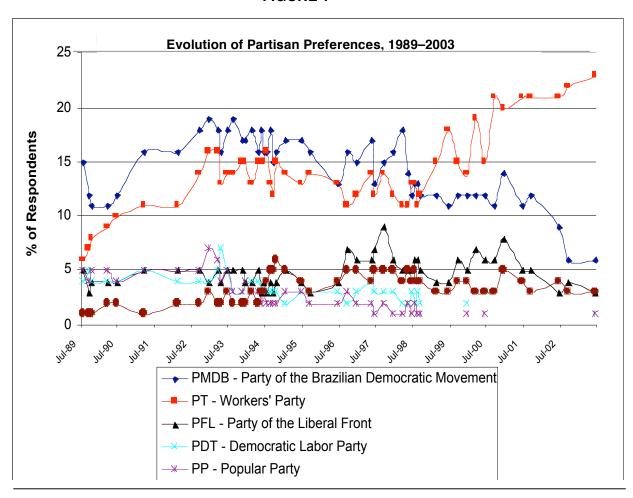
CONCLUSION

The PT, a once radical programmatic party that rose against expectations in Brazil's patronage-oriented political system, has come to look more like its catchall competitors. After an early period of pursuing a strategy of differentiation, the party turned to vote maximization and moved toward the center. Testimony to the powerful role that institutional incentives exert on parties that care about maximizing their share of the electorate is the fact that even a party like the PT, with a committed core of militants and a long history of radicalism, fell into traditional patterns of behavior after it redefined its interests. If even the PT could not resist employing measures that are the logical instruments of a vote-maximizing strategy within the context of Brazilian politics, it is highly unlikely that any other party could. That the individuals responsible for designing and implementing these measures had played a prominent role in founding the party, that they supported radical platforms before the mid-1990s, and that they switched course fairly rapidly thereafter in line with a changing political landscape featuring a new mix of opportunities and constraints all reinforce support for a strategic perspective of political change.

The PT had originally hoped that it could help change Brazilian politics by virtue of its own example of difference. In this connection, after Lula's 1989 loss to Fernando Collor, Margaret Keck wrote, "While prevented by its very project from fully adapting to its political environment, it has not succeeded in changing it. Ten years after it began, the PT remains an anomaly"(1992: 19). Where is the party twenty-five years after it began? The PT may well have contributed to some changes, e.g., the creation of a more organized civil society, a greater sense of empowerment among the poor, and a more institutionalized party system with lower rates of volatility. But it has fallen woefully short of transforming Brazil's political system. Moreover, having adopted many of the practices of its catchall competitors, no longer is the party an anomaly. Without changing the established rules of the game—infinitely larger and more powerful than the party itself—rather than transforming the system, the PT become yet another victim of it.

APPENDIX

FIGURE 1

Evolution of Partisan Preferences, 1989–2003

I thank David Samuels for permission to use this graph.

TABLE 1

CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS

Year	% of PT Seats in Chamber of Deputies	# of PT Seats in Chamber of Deputies	# of PT Senators
1982	1.7	8	0
1986	3.3	16	0
1990	7.0	37	1
1994	9.6	50	5
1998	11.3	60	8
2002	17.7	91	14

Source: JAIRO NICOLAU's IUPERJ website.

TABLE 2

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

YEAR	PT MAYORS	PT COUNCILLORS
1982	2	127
1988	36	1006
1992	54	1100
1996	115	1895
2000	187	2475

Source: JAIRO NICOLAU's IUPERJ website.

TABLE 3

LULA'S RECORD IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

YEAR	1ST ROUND % OF VOTES	2ND ROUND % OF VOTES
1989	17.2	47.0
1994	27.0	—
1998	31.7	—
2002	46.4	61.3

Source: JAIRO NICOLAU's IUPERJ website.

TABLE 4

IDEOLOGICAL BLOCS IN THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES (1982–2002)*

1. CHAMBER de DEPUTIES FROM 1982 UNTIL 2002

	1982	1986	1990	1994	1998	2002
RT	49.1	33.4	42.2	38.9	35.7	33.3
CT	44.5	56.9	36.7	39	41.5	33.3
LT	6.5	9.6	19.9	21.6	22.1	32.3

2. PT SHARE WITHIN THE LEFT BLOC

1982	1986	1990	1994	1998	2002
26.1%	34.3%	35.1%	44.4%	51.2%	54.7%

Source of electoral data: Jairo Nicolau's IUPERJ website.

*Coppedge (1997) informs these categorizations of left, right, and center.

ENDNOTES

[1] Partisan identification rates are notoriously low in Brazil (Carreirão and Kinzo 2004; Samuels 2006). Figure A (in the appendix) charts the evolution of partisan support for the PT.

[2] In Brazil's highly fragmented Congress, the PT held 91 of 513 seats in the lower house following the 2002 election. Figure B (in the appendix) shows the evolution of the PT delegation in that body.

[3] See Figure C in the appendix.

[4] Figure D (in the appendix) shows Lula's first and second round vote shares in the 1989, 1994, 1998, and 2002 presidential elections.

[5] Not surprisingly, the left bloc has grown since Brazil's transition to democracy in 1985, as suggested by Figure E(1). What deserves special attention is the expansion of the PT within the left, as Figure E(2) shows. Other left options that were reasonably viable in the 1980s have faded in favor of the PT.

[6] Meneguello (1989) and Keck (1992) remain excellent analyses of the PT in the first decade of its existence (1979–1989).

[7] PT governance in cities was characterized by a participatory governing style and a unique array of social programs, such as school scholarship funds, microcredit, and family health programs.

[8] Levitsky (2003: 13–15) provides an excellent summary of this literature.

[9] Not all Latin American presidential election systems operate this way. Several (e.g., Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, and Venezuela) elect presidents by a plurality. Others (e.g., Argentina, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Ecuador) have reduced thresholds (40 or 45 percent) for candidates to be elected in the first round (Payne et al. (2002: chapter four).

[10] For others, see Strom (1990).

[11] There are, however, some differences of opinion over when the PT's moderation began to occur. While I regard the 1994 presidential loss as a decisive turning point, others (e.g. Novaes 1993 and Rodrígues 2002) date this process earlier.

[12] See Hunter (2005) for a description of the other major parties and a justification of their respective placement.

[13] The alliance issue has constituted one of the most ongoing sources of internal disagreement, with radical factions being less favorable than their more pragmatic counterparts to joining with non-left parties. *Teoria & Debate*, the PT journal that publishes differing viewpoints on such debates, frequently features articles that speak to this issue.

[14] Recent work by Andy Baker, Barry Ames, and Lúcio Rennó (n.d.) demonstrates this point well. First round presidential candidate Ciro Gomes managed to rise to second place at one point, but when a series of gaffes caused the "atmospherics" on him to turn negative there was no organization in place that could catch his fall. By contrast, Lula had a better-organized social network, which kept large numbers of PT affiliates with him to the end.

[15] Powerful testimony to the strength of PT efforts to cultivate party label votes comes from a public opinion poll done in 2002 (The Brazilian National Election Survey). Whereas 93.08 percent of all those polled were able to associate the number 13 with either the PT (77.13 percent) or with Lula (15.95 percent), less than one percent could link the appropriate party to any of the other numbers on the list.

[16] Author interview with PT Senator Ana Julia Carepa, Brasília, August 14, 2003. Put somewhat differently by one political opinion analyst, "There was more space for followers of Fernando Henrique Cardoso to grow in the electorate of Lula than for Lula to grow in the electorate of Fernando Henrique Cardoso" (Almeida 1996: 87). This same source notes that most people saw the PSDB more experienced and competent than the PT, and therefore a less risky option.

[17] Author interview with PT Deputy, José Eduardo Cardozo, Brasília, August 8, 2003.

[18] Compatible with this institutional arrangement is the fact that PT politicians with extreme views are to the present day more likely to be found in the Chamber of Deputies than in positions requiring an electoral majority (namely, the presidency, mayorships of cities over 200, 000 registered voters, and senatorial and gubernatorial positions).

[19] See IBOPE poll, no. 339, February 1994, questions 2901–2908, and questions 2801–2806. Unfortunately, questions in the 1989, 1994, and 1998 polls ask almost exclusively about Lula and not the party more generally.

[20] Pierucci and Prandi (1994) compare Catholics who are organized into base communities with those who are not. Support for Lula and the PT among the former in the 1994 presidential election was nearly universal. Unorganized Catholics showed an average propensity to vote for Lula.

[21] Opinion survey (no. 00730) carried out by DATAFOLHA in August 1997.

[22] Opinion survey (no. 00806) carried out by DATAFOLHA in February 1997.

[23] A central question that must also be asked is what allowed the party leadership such a high degree of strategy flexibility. Many socialist parties remain bureaucratically entrenched and unable to adapt to changing times. While recognizing the importance of this issue, I must "bracket" it as beyond the scope of the present paper to address, and refer readers to an informative piece by Samuels (2004) on the topic.

[24] Party leaders also recognized that they needed to attract voters who might have leaned toward the PT but for their aversion to risk. Many of these voters cast their lot with Cardoso in 1998 even after the limitations of his economic program had become clear.

[25] "Em busca do bilionário liberal." *Veja* On–line, February 27, 2002.

[26] See "Partidos começam a discutir alianças,"*Jornal do Brasil*, September 13, 1999: A–2. "PT reelege José Dirceu e abre para alianças," *Gazeta Mercantil*, September 1, 1997, A–8.

[27] This measure was criticized strongly by party radicals quick to draw a comparison with the PSDB–PFL alliance forged several years earlier, the "beginning of the end" of the once left-leaning PSDB in their view.

[28] Ideological differences, in addition to the historic enmity of some evangelical leaders toward the PT, made it exceedingly difficult for many *petistas* to swallow this aspect of the alliance (author interview in Brasília on August 14, 2003 with Athos Pereira, Chief of Staff, Office of the PT leadership in the Chamber of Deputies.) Yet, the consequences of foregoing these votes was significant given that at least 15 percent of all Brazilian voters

identify strongly as evangelicals. Moreover, evangelical Protestantism is expanding rapidly among working class Brazilians (Freston 1994: 23–26).

[29] The perceived importance of Minas Gerais was one reason the PT also cultivated the support of its PMDB governor, Itamar Franco. "PT não vence sem Itamar, afirma Dirceu." *Folha de São Paulo*, May 20, 2000, A–6.

[30] Em busca do bilionário liberal." *Veja* On–line, February 27, 2002.

[31] For example, whereas Cardoso's declared contributions in the 1994 campaign were on the order of $41,366,843, Lula's were $1,741,40. The numbers for 1998 were $37,088,337 and $1,933,129, respectively (Samuels 2001: 39).

[32] For example, legislative candidates from the PT each raised about 10 percent of the amount from business that candidates from non-leftist parties did in 1994 (and did only slightly better in 1998).

[33] I am not claiming to comprehensively analyze the determinants of the 2002 elections in this section. Those successes reflected the weaknesses of the governing coalition and of Lula's main competitor, José Serra of the PSDB, as much as they did the particular assets of the PT. After eight years of Cardoso, who in 1994 had saved Brazil from hyper–inflation but by 2002 was heavily criticized for not adequately addressing unemployment and a variety of other social ills, Brazilians wanted a change. José Serra, who squared off against Lula in the second round, could not possibly represent this given his close association with the Cardoso administration.

[34] IBOPE poll 00198, October 1989.

[35] IBOPE poll 00339, February 1994.

[36] IBOPE poll 01259, September 1998.

[37] DATAFOLHA poll 01601, February 2002; DATAFOLHA poll 01692, September 2002.

[38] IBOPE poll 1811, question 28, November 2002. The rest either did not know or said that he would listen to members of his governing team. Unfortunately, I could uncover no similar survey questions for 1989 and 1998.

[39] This is readily discernable by comparing a large number of opinion polls that use the same demographic categories across elections.

[40] To date, however, it has not changed all patterns of behavior but mainly those predictable from a desire to win elections. The PT's uniquely high levels of discipline, cohesion, and loyalty remain intact for the most part.

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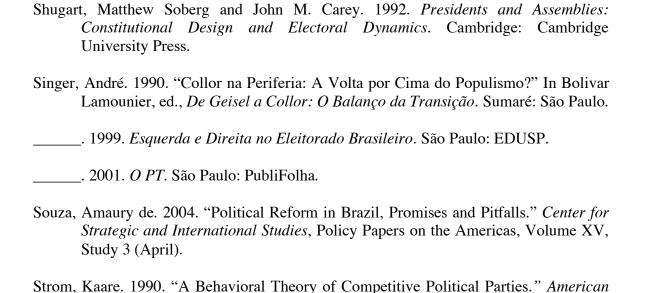
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