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**BRAZILIAN PARTY UNDERDEVELOPMENT
IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

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ABSTRACT

The first half of this paper argues that Brazilian political parties are uniquely underdeveloped. In contrast to the situation in the other more developed countries of Latin America, Brazilian parties have appeared and disappeared with remarkable frequency. The catch-all parties have limited autonomy with respect to the state, and parties have comparatively weak penetration in civil society. In these parties, the attachment of politicians to their parties is exceptionally weak. Politicians often change parties, and party discipline and cohesion in congress are very low. The second half of the paper examines some systemic causes of party underdevelopment. Because of the country's extreme social and economic inequalities, the masses do not participate effectively in the political system, and most of the electorate is relatively indifferent to issues and parties. The state bureaucracy, rather than parties and the legislature, has been the major focal point of Brazilian politics; this situation is inimical to party development. In response to the complex demands created by the combination of a presidential system, a fragmented multiparty system, and federalism, presidents have consistently attempted to undermine parties. Finally, Brazilian politicians have attempted to prevent more effective parties from emerging, believing that party loyalty and more disciplined parties would limit their ability to attend to their clienteles.

RESUMEN

La primera parte de este artículo argumenta que los partidos políticos brasileños son singularmente subdesarrollados. A diferencia de la situación en otros paises más desarrollados de América Latina, los partidos brasileños han surgido y desaparecido con notable frecuencia. Los partidos "catch-all" poseen autonomía limitada con respecto al Estado, y tienen débil penetración en la sociedad civil. Los lazos de lealtad de los políticos a sus partidos son excepcionalmente débiles. Los políticos cambian con frecuencia de partido, siendo la disciplina partidaria y la cohesión en el Congreso bastante bajas. La segunda parte del artículo examina algunas de las causas sistémicas del subdesarrollo partidario. Debido a las extremas desigualdades económicas y sociales del país, las masas no participan efectivamente en el sistema político, en tanto que la mayoría del electorado permanece relativamente indiferente a los debates políticos y los partidos. La burocracia estatal, más que los partidos y la legislatura, ha sido el eje central de la política brasileña; esta situación inhibe el desarrollo partidario. En respuesta a las exigencias complejas creadas por la combinación de un sistema presidencial, de un sistema de partidos fragmentado, y del federalismo, los presidentes han tratado consistentemente de socavar los partidos. Finalmente, los políticos brasileños han intentado prevenir el surgimiento de partidos políticos más efectivos, ya que partidos más disciplinados y la lealtad partidaria podrían limitar su capacidad para atender a las clientelas.

Until the 1980s, most analyses emphasized the similarities of political parties throughout Latin America. More recent scholarship has argued that this perspective is misleading.[1] Parties have been central political actors in some countries (Chile, Uruguay, Venezuela), and less important in many others. Even where parties have been less important, their nature can differ in significant regards, as can the reasons for the relative subordination of parties.

This point is important because many of my arguments about Brazilian party development resemble, on first appearance, conventional—and often mistaken—"wisdom" about the nature of parties in Latin America. Many analysts portray parties throughout all of Latin America as weak, but this characterization is somewhat misleading in its own right and draws attention away from the singular nature of party fragility in Brazil.   The first half of this paper argues that the underdevelopment of political parties in Brazil is exceptional in Latin America, and indeed on a world scale. Endowed with the eighth largest capitalist economy in the world, Brazil still lacks enduring parties that effectively represent civil society. The second half of the paper explores the causes of this party underdevelopment, focusing on the past decade.[2]

During more than two decades of military rule (1964-1985), Brazilian society was transformed in fundamental ways. The society that emerged was more urban, more industrial, more organized, features that led some astute observers to conclude that the chances for creating a more modern, fluid political system were good.[3] These transformations of the social structure and organizational network could augur relatively well for party development over the long run, but in the short run the Brazilian party pathology has reasserted itself. In the new (post-1985) democratic period, the catch-all parties have disintegrated, and retrograde forces have prevailed, creating doubts about the viability of democracy.

Many of the problems in party development in the new democratic period can be traced to conjunctural issues: the incompetence of President José Sarney; the economic crisis; and the unique features of the Brazilian transition to democracy, which only in 1989 culminated in democratic elections for president, and which had disruptive effects on the major parties.   A fundamental argument of this paper, however, is that beyond these temporary problems, four enduring features of the Brazilian political system create obstacles to party building.   First, because of abject poverty and extremely limited information about the political system, dozens of millions of Brazilians do not participate effectively in the political system. Dependent upon the state   for   their   survival,   these

people look to politicians for clientelistic mediations that make viable the "parties of the state" that still dominate the political scene. Second, the consolidation of a state with massive intervention and regulatory powers means that the bureaucracy, rather than representative institutions, has the decisive weight in the political system. The major parties remain dependent on the state. Third, the combination of presidentialism and a fractionalized multiparty system makes party building difficult. Finally, the Brazilian political class has consciously opted for weak parties. This option is reflected and institutionalized in party organization and in electoral legislation.

Assessing Party Development, 1979-1989

Compared to parties in the other more developed countries of Latin America, and even in some countries that are less developed than Brazil, Brazilian parties stand out for their short duration. Table 1 below provides evidence for this point, as well as underscoring the extreme fluidity of the party system since the last congressional elections in November 1986.   The discontinuity in parties from the previous democratic

TABLE 1
Distribution of Congressional Representatives by Party

Party	Number of Represen- tatives Feb. 1987	Number of Represen- tatives Sept. 1988	Number of Represen- tatives Jan. 1990	Year Party Founded
PMDB	305	235	200	1966/1979
PFL	134	125	108	1984
PDS	37	34	32	1966/1979
PSDB	0	48	61	1988
PDT	26	28	35	1979
PTB	19	29	26	1979/1945
PT	16	16	16	1979
PL	7	7	19	1986
PDC	6	13	17	1986/1950s
PCB	3	3	3	1922
PC do B	3	5	6	1962
PSB	1	6	8	1985
PRN	0	0	24	1989
Others	2	10	15	Post-1985
Total	**559**	**559**	**570**	

Sources: María D'Alva Gil Kinzo, "O Quadro Partidário e a Constituinte," *Revista Brasileira de Ciência Política* Vol. 1, No. 1 (March 1989), pp. 94-95; *Folha de São Paulo*, January 14, 1990, p. A12.

experience to this one is remarkable. Only two of the seven parties that have at least two percent of the representatives in the current congress have existed since before 1979, and these two (PMDB and PDS) date back only to 1966.[4] (See Table 2 for a glossary of party initials and party names.) The abrupt changes in party systems are equally notable. Since parties first emerged in the 1830s, Brazil has had seven distinct party systems (1830s until 1889, 1890s until 1930, 1930-1937, 1945-1965, 1966-1979, 1979-1984, 1984-present), with sharp changes in the number of electorally significant parties from one system to the next.

TABLE 2
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Glossary of Party Initials and Party Names
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PMDB   Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement. The PMDB's precursor, the MDB (Brazilian Democratic Movement) was created in 1966 as the official party of opposition to the military regime. It was renamed the PMDB in 1978. Since its inception, the PMDB has been an extremely heterogeneous party, but its hegemonic group is centrist, although many conservatives have flocked to the party in recent years.

PFL   Party of the Liberal Front. Created in 1984 by dissidents of the PDS, the PFL is a conservative party.

PDS   Social Democratic Party. Despite its name, the PDS is another conservative party. It provided the partisan support for the military regime.

PDT   Democratic Labor Party. A populist party with predominantly social democratic tendencies.

PTB   Brazilian Labor Party. A predominantly center-right party.

PT   The Workers' Party. A heterogeneous leftist party, ranging from some revolutionary groups to social democrats.

PL   The Liberal Party. A conservative party known for its anti-statist discourse.

PDC   Christian Democratic Party. In contrast to Christian Democracy parties in many countries, the Brazilian party is on the right end of the political spectrum.

PCB   Brazilian Communist Party. Follows the Soviet line.

PC do B   Communist Party of Brazil. An Albanian (!) oriented party.

PSB   Brazilian Socialist Party. An independent leftist party.

PSDB   Party of Brazilian Social Democracy. Created in 1988 by a dissident group of the PMDB, the PSDB follows the line of social democracy.

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On this dimension, the contrast to many Latin American countries is noteworthy. The two large parties in Colombia and Uruguay have existed for 150 years, and the two large Argentine parties for 100 and over 40 years, respectively. With the important exception of the Christian Democrats, the major parties in Chile have existed for between 50 and 130 years.   This comparison gives one rough indicator of the historic fragility of Brazilian parties, but in itself says relatively little about their present situation.

In 1979, the military government imposed an end to the two-party system it had introduced fourteen years earlier. Revisions in electoral laws in 1981 and 1985 and the erosion of the military government between 1983 and 1985 led to important changes in the party system between 1979 and the present. Nevertheless, these changes did not imply a complete rupture in the party system, so it is meaningful to take 1979 as a beginning point for our inquiry. This means that the parties have had a decade to establish themselves.   In some recent cases of democratization (Portugal, for example), ten years was sufficient time for the consolidation of a democracy in which parties play a central role in political life.[5] What has happened in the Brazilian case? What kind of parties are emerging? How do the parties bode for democracy and for the representation of popular interests?

In addressing these questions, it is important to avoid positing a specific kind of party or party system as necessary for the effective functioning of democracy. It would be misleading to imagine that democracy requires highly disciplined and programmatic parties, because of the well-known counterexamples (US, Canada, Costa Rica). The emergence of party systems dominated by "strong" (i.e., disciplined and programmatic) parties of the type described by Michels and Duverger is unlikely under current historical conditions.[6] This point is important because, as Reis has argued,[7] sometimes the problem of Brazilian parties is incorrectly identified as a lack of clear ideological positions, with the (at least once) ideological party systems of Western Europe serving as an implicit reference point.

Even from a minimalist perspective, however, the difficulties of Brazilian party development in the post-1979 period are notable. Many of the clichés about parties in Latin America—clientelistic, dependent on the state, little impact in formulating public policy—are partially misleading when applied to the other more developed countries of the region, but they are generally true in the Brazilian case. The following pages examine this ongoing fragility of parties by analyzing three crucial relationships that disaggregate the parties' functions in the political system: party and state; party and civil society; and party and politicians, especially congressional representatives.[8]

Let us first consider the relationship between parties and the state. Those in power continue to use the state apparatus to form—and deform—political parties. For most analysts, parties represent civil society, but the Brazilian reality is often otherwise. Through a variety of

mechanisms the state continues to interfere with and even control a broad range of party processes: party affiliation, voting behavior of parliamentary representatives, party sympathies and affiliations of mayors and deputies. By using the state apparatus to ensure or deny access to jobs, resources, promotions, and favors, state leaders (even when they are originally recruited from political parties) control the political parties that support the government. To some extent this is true in many democracies, but the magnitude of the problem in Brazil is exceptional.

Party membership is often stimulated and even coerced by the state apparatus as a way of strengthening the position of those who control the state. In exchange for joining the party in power, poor people win vouchers for milk and promises that they will get on a list for public housing. Politicians provide jobs to community organizers who deliver enough party members. People may even be paid in subterfuge ways from state resources in order to secure party affiliations, and they may be threatened with losing their jobs if they do not deliver. Obtaining a certain number of party affiliations may win an individual a promotion within the bureaucracy. Community groups can win sewer lines, electricity, pavement for the streets in the neighborhood, or other services if they deliver enough signatures for the party.

The use of state favors to promote party membership is an important tool in winning internal party control. Local party conventions are restricted to members of the party; whichever individual or faction can get the most people to the party conventions wins control of the local party. Whoever controls the party at the local level will be able to win the nomination for mayor—a decisive post because of local patronage possibilities. More important, local party conventions determine whom the delegates to the state convention will be. The state delegates, in turn, exercise the decisive voice in determining candidacies for governor, vice-governor, senators, and federal and state deputies, as well as deciding the composition of the state directorate and executive committee. The state delegates also vote to determine the national delegates, who elect the National Directorate and candidates for Vice-President and President.

Indicative of how effective the use of the state apparatus can be in securing control of the major parties is the fact that after the May 1988 conventions, all 22 PMDB governors controlled the party in their states. This control cannot be attributed to their popularity among the electorate because most of the governors had terrible reviews in public opinion surveys. In many states, widespread use of the state apparatus to obtain control of the party occasioned the departure of some of the party's most renowned figures, who claimed that it was impossible to fight back against the disloyal competition of the state machinery.

Among the more developed countries of Latin America, Brazil also stands out for the degree to which the state manipulates resources to influence the party affiliations and voting behavior of politicians. The survival of most politicians depends on their ability to deliver goods to the regions they represent. Mayors, governors, state secretaries, ministers, heads of

governmental agencies and firms, and presidents use this fact to pressure politicians into supporting their line, and in some cases even into changing parties. Access to state favors lubricates many changes of heart. An egregious case of using the state machinery to purchase support occurred during the Sarney government. Sarney built his coalition not through party politics, but through extensive repartition of the state apparatus. Many politicians need no such pressure; they actively seek to flock to join the government party, regardless of what it is. Thus, a two way process draws legislators to support executives: the latter use sticks and carrots, the former are drawn to those who hold power.

The use of state resources is so decisive in party processes—both internal struggles and competition among parties—that we can speak of parties of the state. By this I mean that Brazilian parties are formed by the state as much as they are by civil society, and that they represent interests in the state as much as they represent civil society.[9] Despite the sharp differences in the party systems, the catch-all Brazilian parties resemble the Mexican PRI in their symbiotic relationship with the state. Nowhere else among the more developed countries of Latin America does the state play such a decisive role in party formation.

Thus, it is not just that parties were formed by the state, as Souza compellingly shows.[10] Decisive party processes—joining the parties, becoming delegates, determining which factions of the parties are dominant, voting in congress, and voting for representatives among the general population—are still greatly influenced by the state apparatus. This state influence over party processes has deleterious effects on party building. It has undermined parties as agents of political decision making in congress; support is bought and sold, rather than determined along party lines. Such practices have contributed to a depoliticization among the population, both by creating a negative view of politicians and by generating pessimism regarding the prospects for political change. It has reduced major parties to agents of the state, agents that distribute state resources in exchange for political compliance.

The major parties' lack of autonomy vis-à-vis the state is also apparent in the parties' weak influence in formulating programs and policies. Even if one agrees with Epstein,[11] as I do, that the importance of the programmatic and decision making functions of political parties is often overstated, the catch-all Brazilian parties are singularly anemic. None of the major parties wrote programs for the 1986 elections or even for the constitutional assembly, precisely the kind of event that usually occasions party programs and internal programmatic debates. The PMDB has not rewritten its party program since 1981, when it was an opposition party in a authoritarian regime, and when social democrats had hegemony within the party. Since then, it has become the largest party in a period of civilian government; more conservative politicians now dominate the party; and yet the party has not bothered to revise its program.

Perhaps more revealing than the parties' lack of concern with updating programs is their limited influence in formulating policies. The influence of parties in the decision making process is generally limited to the fact that politicians name a wide range of bureaucrats and policy makers. Given the size of the bureaucracy and the inordinate number of patronage positions, this kind of influence is significant. The problem is that the nominations are almost always individually determined rather than made by the party. In fact, what is occurring is a private appropriation of the state apparatus rather than an increase in parties' influence in the decision making process. I interviewed several top level members of the various economic teams of the New Republic, as the post-1985 regime is commonly known. They almost all reported that no politicians debate policy matters with them, but that countless had come to request personal favors for themselves or for friends and relatives. One dissented slightly from this affirmation and noted that several politicians had come to discuss interest rates—but these politicians were either personally in debt or were supported by entrepreneurs who were. In brief, most politicians do not even attempt to affect macro decisions within the bureaucracy except through appointing friends and relatives to policy making positions.[12]

There is also evidence that parties have comparatively weak penetration in civil society. By international standards, levels of party identification in Brazil are very low. Table 3 shows levels of spontaneous party identification according to a June 1988 survey of 500 people (100 per city) in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Recife, and Curitiba. The rise of independent voters with no fixed party attachments is common to most Western democracies,[13] but the significance of this phenomenon is not uniform. In Brazil, it reflects not a questioning of old, well established institutions, but rather the failure of new ones to develop minimal roots and attachments in civil society.

TABLE 3

Spontaneous Party Identification

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Q: Which political party do you prefer?

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PT	11.7%
PMDB	9.9%
PDT	5.3%
PFL	1.9%
PDS	1.5%
PTB	0.8%
Others	1.0%

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Total number who mentioned a party	32.1%
No preference	65.7%
No answer	2.2%

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Party identification has decreased sharply since the days (1974 to 1978) of a two-party system with plebiscitary elections.[14] As Lamounier and Muszynski have argued,[15] this fact in itself is neither surprising nor worrisome. With a two party system, it was easier for the electorate, most of which has extremely limited access to political information, to retain the names and diffuse identities of the parties. The plebiscitary character of elections—for or against the military government—during the two party system also facilitated higher levels of party identification. What is more troublesome is the erosion of levels of party identification since 1985, a process that suggests disaffection with the major parties.

For most of the electorate, party affiliations are not significant in structuring the vote. Surveys conducted by the *Folha de São Paulo* in the city of São Paulo in 1985 indicated that the PMDB was overwhelmingly the preferred party among the electorate, as Table 4 indicates. (In contrast to the survey cited in Table 3, which measured spontaneous party identification, the *Folha* survey gave a list of parties and asked which one the person preferred.) Contrary to what might be inferred from the information on party preference, the PTB candidate won the November 1985 election for mayor in São Paulo, defeating the PMDB candidate by three percentage points and the PT candidate by almost a 2 to 1 margin.

TABLE 4

Party Preference in the City of São Paulo (in percentages)

Party	April 1985	June 1985	September 1985
PMDB	46%	54%	34%
PT	14%	10%	13%
PTB	3%	6%	8%
Other parties	11%	11%	9%
No preference	26%	19%	36%

Source: Datafolha surveys, each with 1000 respondants.

The limited extent to which parties structure the vote (especially for executive positions) was equally apparent in the 1989 presidential election. The eventual winner created a new party so he could run for president, and the second place finisher was from the PT, which had only 16 congressional representatives. Conversely, the candidates of the two largest parties fared dismally.

A massive repudiation of parties and politicians is also suggestive of the parties' weak penetration in society. The IBOPE survey of 500 residents of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Recife, and Curitiba, carried out in June 1988, asked the question, "Recently, many people and organizations have attempted to show the Brazilian people the real situation of the country. For each person and/or organization I mention, please tell me if you think they have always told the truth, told the truth more than lied, told more lies than the truth, or always told lies." The responses suggest generalized cynicism, but the credibility of politicians is especially tarnished; it is the lowest of all the major actors in Brazilian society, lagging far behind that of most others. The credibility of parties and politicians has fluctuated sharply since March 1985, peaking during the euphoric days of the Cruzado Plan (the stabilization plan of 1986) and plummeting since then. To some degree a parallel disenchantment with democratic institutions has occurred in other Latin American countries, but the magnitude and speed of the disenchantment in Brazil are singular.

TABLE 5

Credibility of Institutions, Organizations, and Individuals

	Always Tells the Truth	Usually Tells the Truth	Usually Lies	Always Lies	N.A.
Politicians	0.8%	4.4%	51.1%	41.2%	2.5%
President Sarney	4.5	17.4	35.7	36.6	5.8
Cabinet Ministers	1.2	10.3	43.9	37.4	7.3
Catholic Church	24.1	34.6	22.5	7.7	11.1
TV News	7.4	37.3	42.5	10.3	2.5
Newspapers	6.9	41.4	34.0	11.5	6.5
Labor leaders	7.9	32.8	34.6	10.2	14.5
Radio news	8.8	43.1	32.8	7.4	7.9
Entrepreneurs	2.1	17.1	40.9	28.1	11.8
Court system	5.6	23.6	36.3	22.1	12.4
Magazines	3.9	32.2	31.8	16.4	15.8

Source: IBOPE survey, 500 people, June 1988.

Countless other survey questions point to a profound disenchantment with parties. For example, only 38.8% of respondents agreed completely or mostly with the statement, "The main parties have proposals for the country's problems," compared to 52.5% who disagreed completely or mostly. The level of trust in the parties' ability to handle the crisis declines sharply among middle and high income groups, who are generally better informed. Agreement with the statement, "The parties only want the vote of people, not their opinions," was overwhelming: 75.4% completely agreed, 12.7% mostly agreed, 5.1% mostly disagreed, and a paltry 3.7% completely disagreed.[16] This distribution of answers reveals a perception that parties are self-serving and do not represent the desires of the Brazilian population. Clearly, parties have failed in creating sympathetic public images or enduring allegiances in civil society. And not only is public credibility low, it has also eroded dramatically since the failure of the Cruzado Plan.

It is not only among the population at large that the parties have weak penetration and credibility. Linkages to social movements are generally weak and have become notably more so this decade. Intellectuals, who possibly have more power and influence in Brazil than any other Latin American nation, became deeply engaged in partisan activities in the late 1970s but have become disillusioned since 1986.

Finally, the major Brazilian parties hold little authority over party members, including parliamentary representatives. Perhaps the most telling indicator is the stunning frequency with which Brazilian politicians change parties. The 559 representatives of the current (1987-1991) legislature have belonged to an average of 2.6 parties per politician.[17] The extraordinary degree

of party switching in recent years is suggested by Table 1 above, which compares the number of congressional representatives per party for February 1987, September 1988, and January 1990. All of the changes in the size of congressional delegations resulted from individuals who switched parties. In 1987, seventy-two congressional representatives of the PMDB had previously belonged to the party's arch-enemy (Arena and later the PDS) under the military government.[18] After 1982, when the opposition won state elections in 9 states, many politicians identified with ARENA and the PDS flocked to the side of their former opponents, joining the PMDB. There are differences in ideologies, practices, and social bases among the parties, but these differences are sufficiently diffuse that politicians of different stripes and colors can accommodate themselves within several parties.

Most politicians see parties as vehicles for getting elected, not as organizations to which they owe an attachment. The three ideological parties of the left (PT, PCB, PC do B) are exceptions to this generalization, but together they have under 5% of the representatives in the federal congress. Many individual politicians in other parties have programmatic commitments, but the parties themselves do not. As a result, even the politicians with programmatic commitments rarely have strong attachments to their parties. Politicians change parties at will, using the parties as vehicles to get on the ballot, but with generally limited allegiance to the party. Some politicians in the current congress have belonged to as many as five parties. Because of the high turnover in the Chamber of Deputies (the average turnover from one election to the next is about 60%), relatively few politicians have lengthy careers in congress, making the high number of party memberships all the more notable.

This practice of changing parties regularly is unheard of in the other more developed countries of the region. In several countries, party identities are relatively strong and consistent, especially on the part of activists and politicians. In Uruguay, where parties are notoriously loosely organized, the dispute between Colorados and Blancos has sharply divided the country's political elite. Politicians who changed parties would face virtually insurmountable difficulties in getting reelected. In Argentina, even though parties have generally not been central actors in political life, party cleavages defined political life in sharply polarized terms (Peronists vs. anti-Peronists) for decades. Despite mordacious internal squabbles, the Radicals and Peronists have a sense of party discipline unheard of among the Brazilian mass parties. In Chile, party identities not only historically dominated political life, but also penetrated many other aspects of social life in a highly politicized society.[19] In Venezuela, although the two major parties are relatively non-ideological, party discipline and cohesion are extremely strong.[20]   In all four countries, the relationship between parties and politicians is radically different from what one finds in Brazil. The Argentine, Uruguayan, and Venezuelan cases illustrate, as does the U.S., that it does not take ideological parties for politicians to develop a strong allegiance to parties.

Frequent party switching undermines one of the fundamental pillars of liberal democracy, namely the notion of representation. Citizens may help elect a representative, but the mechanisms of accountability between the population and the politician are tenuous at best. People may vote for an individual partially influenced by his/her party affiliation, only to have the representative switch to another party after the election. Perhaps no other feature so radically distinguishes Brazilian mass parties from those in the other more developed countries of Latin America as the extremely weak commitments of politicians to party organizations.

Nor were party affiliations a central axis in structuring the debates and votes of congressional representatives in the constitutional congress of 1987-88. The PMDB was badly divided on almost every controversial issue, and the PFL split on most of them. Table 6 below summarizes the voting by party on the most important issues in the constitutional congress. The table records information for those issues on which the prominent newspaper, the *Folha de São Paulo*, recorded how representatives voted. I excluded two issues on which all of the major parties came to a prior agreement; in these cases, there were no more than a couple dozen dissenting votes.

As Table 6 shows, only two of the six parties that had at least 2% of the representatives in the constitutional congress were minimally cohesive. With the rare exception of an occasional abstention, the PT demonstrated remarkable cohesion, and the PDT also manifested considerable internal cohesion. The other parties were highly divided on the most important issues, as is reflected in the Rice Index of party cohesion, shown in the bottom row of Table 6.

On most controversial issues, the PFL leadership was in the minority within the party, and a large fraction of the PMDB also voted against the leadership. Rather than parties, supraparty fronts dominated the constitutional congress. The PDS, the PTB, most of the PFL, about half of the PMDB, and some minor parties formed the conservative "Centrão," while the PT, PDT, the other half of the PMDB, and some minor parties formed the "Bloco Progressista." This formation of supraparty blocks was particularly noteworthy in the constitutional convention of 1987-88, but it is   nothing   new

TABLE 6

Voting by Party on Controversial Constitutional Issues
(% of votes that supported (+) and opposed (-) the winning position)

Issue	PMDB	PFL	PDS	PDT	PTB	PT	Total Percentage	Total Votes
Popular participation*	+59	+14	+15	+92	+32	+100	+48	(227)
	-41	-86	-85	-8	-68	-0	-52	(248)
Unrestricted property rights	+66	+15	+12	+92	+32	+100	+51	(248)
	-34	-85	-88	-8	-68	-0	-49	(236)
Guaranteed job stability	+73	+93	+94	+4	+42	+0	+71	(373)
	-27	-7	-6	-96	-58	-100	-29	(151)
Exclusive labor representation	+91	+43	+46	+92	+91	+0	+77	(340)
	-9	-57	-54	-8	-9	-100	-23	(103)
Presidential system	+49	+85	+61	+96	+63	+100	+62	(344)
	-51	-15	-39	-4	-37	-0	-38	(212)
5 year presidential mandate (general)	+55	+86	+68	+8	+70	+0	+60**	(298)
	-45	-14	-32	-92	-30	-100	-40	(198)
Economic order	+69	+19	+29	+93	+41	+100	+57	(279)
	-31	-81	-71	-7	-59	-0	-43	(210)
National monopoly of mineral resources	+80	+40	+36	+100	+89	+100	+73	(343)
	-20	-60	-64	-0	-11	-0	-27	(126)
Agrarian reform*	+36	+84	+86	+15	+68	+0	+49	(253)
	-64	-16	-14	-85	-32	-100	-51	(268)
Sarney's mandate (5 years)	+61	+86	+70	+7	+64	+0	+62	(323)
	-39	-14	-30	-93	-36	-100	-38	(202)
Cancelation of debts for contractors	+64	+66	+72	+94	+80	+0	+64	(286)
	-36	-34	-28	-6	-20	-100	-36	(163)
Rice Index***	33	58	47	86	41	100	-	-

* In these cases, the winning position had fewer votes than the losing position, but the latter failed to muster the 280 votes needed for approval.

** Incomplete totals.

*** Average Rice Index of party cohesion for the eleven roll call votes shown on this table. The Rice Index is calculated by taking the percentage of party members voting with the majority of the party, subtracting the percentage of members voting against the majority, and multiplying by 100 (i.e., dropping the percentage sign). See Stuart Rice, "Measuring Cohesion in Legislative Groups," in John Wahlke and Heinz Eulau, eds., *Legislative Behavior* (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1959), pp. 372-377.

Source: Compiled from information published in the *Folha de São Paulo* on the day following the indicated votes. Those who were absent or abstained are not included in the tabulations.

in Brazilian history. In the period between 1961 and 1964, the fundamental cleavages in congress revolved around such blocks rather than parties.

Organizationally, the large parties in Brazil are fragile. Party organs such as the Executive Committee have fairly broad powers on paper, but in practice meet rarely and decide even less. The situation in some European countries, in which representatives have limited autonomy vis-à-vis their parties and can even lose their mandates for failing to follow the party line, is anathema among the large Brazilian parties. This situation further undermines the significance of party platforms since the representatives have no obligation to follow the platform.   It could be countered that this situation is also true in the U.S., and that U.S. parties have, on balance, served American democracy rather well. But the lack of party cohesion in congress is notably more pronounced in Brazil than in the U.S., and one could logically suppose that a multiparty system would offer more, not less, cohesive parties.

Parties have few financial resources and few party volunteers. They have comparatively little control over who becomes a member, how politicians vote, what they do, and who gets elected. Brazilian parties are singularly loose organizations, designed to permit politicians to operate in a free wheeling fashion. The major parties lack cohesion; local disputes between political bosses, rather than ideological or political questions, frequently determine party affiliation. All of these points are true not only with respect to the "strong" parties of most European democracies, but also to the loosely organized agglomerations of many Latin American nations.

This battery of information about the functions of parties in the Brazilian political system could be expanded, but this should suffice to establish the main contours. The significance of any one of these measures as an indicator of party fragility could be questioned, but collectively, I think they provide a compelling portrait. Brazilian parties continue to have limited autonomy vis-à-vis the states, weak roots in civil society, and few controls over their representatives.[21]

Causes of Party Underdevelopment

Many observers would agree with these broad characterizations of the fragility of Brazilian catch-all parties, although some disagree. What is more controversial and less obvious are the causes of party underdevelopment. In what follows, I address this issue, focusing specifically on the post-1979 period and prospects for the future.

The discussion focuses on several "structural" features of the political system that have impeded party development and that are likely to continue acting as barriers to party building in the medium term. Because of space considerations, in this paper I do not analyze the impact of conjunctural factors, party leadership, or party strategy on institution building. Nevertheless, a complete analysis would necessarily take these factors into consideration.

This discussion of structural causes of party underdevelopment is necessarily elliptical. I present four main arguments, each of which could be expounded upon at considerable length. None of the four obstacles to party development are unique to Brazil, but in every instance the Brazilian case stands out as unusual. The four obstacles reinforce each other, creating a unique constellation of problems. The causal effects between weak parties and these four factors is not unilinear, but rather mutually reinforcing. For example, weak parties have helped sustain extreme social inequalities in addition to being a product of a society marked by such inequalities.

Social Inequalities, the Electorate, and Party Development

Political parties simultaneously reflect and shape the nature of civil society, respond to and shape public opinion. For this reason, it is important to analyze the nature of civil society and of public opinion and how they affect party development. Doing so can give us some preliminary insights into the problems of party development in Brazil.

Even though Brazil's aggregate level of modernization places it among the leaders of the Third World, some features of its civil society help explain party underdevelopment. Arguably no country that has reached Brazil's level of development is characterized by such egregious inequalities. In 1985, according to a government report, 20 percent of the population lived in extreme poverty, surviving (when they managed to) on less than one-fourth of the government established minimum salary per person, equivalent to about $10 per capita per month. According to 1980 income distribution data, the top 10% of the population earned 50.9% of national income, while the bottom half earned only 12.6%.[22]

These extraordinary social inequalities have simultaneously resulted from and sustained a political system which the masses have little impact. The scores of millions of Brazilians who live in abject poverty cannot participate effectively in the political system. Among this part of the population, political information is extremely rudimentary, and dependence on the state apparatus—and clientelistic politicians—for favors is considerable.[23]

As Converse and others have made clear,[24] most citizens in most democracies have limited information about politics. Yet Brazil is an extreme case; the level of citizen information, interest, and participation is far lower than in Argentina or Uruguay, not to mention the developed democracies. This fact becomes apparent through countless measures of citizen participation and information. To begin with, a high percentage of Brazilians state that they are not interested in politics. When asked to self-classify their interest in politics, 14.0% stated that they are very interested, 22.3% express medium interest, 17.8% express little interest, and 45.0% state that they have no interest. As is often true, interest in politics increases among higher income groups.

In Table 7 below, Classes A and B are medium and high income groups, and classes D and E are the lowest income groups.

TABLE 7

Level of interest in politics	Class A and B	Class C	Class D and E
high interest	22.2%	18.4%	6.0%
medium interest	31.3%	21.8%	17.2%
little interest	17.2%	12.8%	21.9%
no interest	29.3%	46.6%	53.3%
no answer	0.0%	0.4%	1.7%
N (total =500)	129	157	214

Source: IBOPE, 500 interviews, June 10 to 13, 1988, in 5 major cities—São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Recife, Curitiba, Belo Horizonte.

Surveys indicate widespread skepticism about the impact of political participation upon government. An IBOPE survey of 5000 people conducted in June 1987 asked three questions about citizen attitudes about political participation. Interviewers asked whether people agreed or disagreed with the statement, "This country is in the hands of a few powerful individuals and a citizen like me can't do very much." Seventy-two percent of respondents agreed, only 15% disagreed, 10% had no opinion, and 2% did not respond. The survey then asked for responses to the statement, "The government really pays attention to what people like me think." Only 29% agreed with this statement; 60% disagreed, 9% had no opinion, and 2% did not respond. The third statement was "I feel increasingly powerless about what is happening in the country." Seventy-one percent of respondents agreed, only 18% disagreed, 8% had no opinion, and 3% did not respond.

Levels of awareness and political information are very low. From March 1987 until September 1988, news about the constitutional congress filled the media. Every week day, all of the television channels carried two fifteen minute programs dedicated to the constitutional congress. Information about the constitutional congress also filled regular news programs on the television and radio as well as newspapers and magazines. Yet only a small percentage of the population knew what the constitutional congress was. In a survey of 5000 people from all over Brazil, conducted in May 1987, IBOPE asked the question, "Do you know what the National Constituent Assembly is?" Only 6.1% could answer well, 24.9% more or less knew the answer, 66.7% did not know, and 2.3% did not respond. Among those whose family income exceeds 10 minimum salaries, 16.6% could answer the question well, compared to a meager 1.9% among those whose family income was under 2.5 minimum salaries.

IDESP's electoral surveys have requested people to classify the main political parties from 1 to 10 on a right to left spectrum. Only a minority of people can do so, indicating either that they do not understand these fundamental labels of politics, or that they do not know enough about the parties to attach these labels to them, or, most likely, both of the above. In the 1982 survey, only 29.1% of respondents in the city of São Paulo ventured an answer for the PDS, and 28.6% for the PMDB. Figures for other parties were yet lower. Many of those who did answer the question gave replies that do not match well with reality. 12.7% of the respondents gave the PDS a ranking of 1 to 5 on the scale, assessing it to the left of center! 29.0% considered the PMDB a leftist party (1 to 3 on the scale), and another 16.6% viewed it as a rightist party (8 to 10 on the scale). Of course, a person could have considerable political information and come up with a heterodox interpretation of a party's ideological positions. However, if we cross this question with information on education, we find that less educated people were more likely to come up with the "heterodox" answers, making it likely that the answers reflect not well reasoned positions, but rather lack of information about the parties or lack of understanding about the concepts of right and left.

Inconsistencies in opinions among the electorate abound. Surveys in the first half of 1988, for example, showed that in the city of São Paulo, PT sympathizers preferred Sílvio Santos to the PT's own candidates by a hefty margin. Sílvio Santos is an enormously popular television personality known for his conservative political viewpoints and authoritarian personality. If he had run for mayor, it would have been on the PFL or PDS ticket or an alliance of Brazil's two large conservative parties. The overwhelming preference among PT sympathizers for Sílvio Santos would inevitably have declined sharply as the campaign progressed and as the party's own publicity got under way. Nevertheless, it is revealing that in Brazil's most industrialized city, ideological structuring is so diffuse that a conservative TV personality won support among the sympathizers of the country's major leftist party.

A vast segment of the population votes according to extremely diffuse images or for personal favors. This characteristic of the electorate limits the viability of parties with a sharp ideological profile that campaign largely along issues.[25] The population is receptive to individualistic and populistic campaigns; these predilections in turn favor non-ideological, populist parties. The major political mediations with the popular classes take place through individual politicians and state agencies. Most of the electorate is indifferent not only to issues, but also to parties. The party affiliation of politicians may be important in enabling them to gain access to the state agencies, but it is generally unimportant both to the clientele and the patron.

The counterpart to the fantastic social inequalities is the extraordinary heterogeneity of the society. This heterogeneity is clearest in contrasting the wealthy and poor poles of the society, but it is also apparent within social classes. The working class, for example, is marked by a

vast heterogeneity that helps explain the sharp divisions within the labor movement. These divisions make it difficult if not impossible for a political party to serve as the partisan channel of the working class.[26] The European situation, in which socialist, labor, or social-democratic parties served as the electoral expressions of the working class movement, is almost impossible given such intra-class heterogeneity.

The State and Party Development

In her pioneer book on the state and political parties in Brazil, Campello de Souza argued that the state has exercised a decisive impact on party formation. Criticizing those who had seen the fragility of Brazilian parties as resulting from the nature of the country's political leaders, she argues that the problem derives above all from the relationship between parties and the state. She states her main argument succinctly: "The existence of a centralized state structure *before* the emergence of a party system constitutes, in itself, a difficulty for the institutionalization of the party system and a stimulus to clientelistic politics."[27]

As Souza and others have argued,[28] historical patterns of state formation and interest representation are crucial because in most cases, once they are established, political institutions occupy "spaces" in the political system that usually foreclose later radical changes. Once the major political institutions are consolidated the actors in the political system function according to their logic. The identity of the actors is established in interaction with these institutions and other actors.[29]

This does not mean that change in political systems is entirely pre-determined by the events and sequences that ushered in modern political institutions. In some countries (Venezuela, Greece, Spain, Portugal), the institutionalization of the party system occurred late historically, but parties have still emerged as central political actors. Conversely, in a few cases early developments appeared favorable to party formation and consolidation, but later events aborted the institutionalization of parties as major actors. In Argentina, the emergence of a competitive political system with fairly broad participation occurred fairly early, 1916 being a key turning point. A high standard of living, a high level of urbanization, and considerable popular participation all could have favored party development. Beginning with the 1930 coup, however, this potential was consistently aborted.

From the vantage point of "spaces" occupied in the political system, the expansion of the state apparatus during the military regime creates renewed barriers to party development. More so than the legislature, the bureaucracy constitutes to be the focal point of most political action.[30] Omissive in the areas of welfare, health, and education for the masses, the Brazilian state is

omnipresent in a vast array of economic and regulatory areas. This situation is inimical to party building since it relegates parties and congress to a dispenser of patronage.

Some of this problem can be addressed by strengthening the legislative branch, a process that the new constitution, promulgated in September 1988, promises to facilitate. The new constitution will considerably expand the legislature's *de jure* authority, hence may stimulate the parties' influence in decision making. But optimism about the effect of enhancing congressional authority in decision making may be unwarranted.

This is so first and foremost because of the irresponsible character of much of the Brazilian political class. On the whole, it is a political class known for corruption and clientelism, and legislative responsibilities are often not a top priority. Clientelism has a legitimate place in politics, but in Brazil clientelistic activities have predominated at the expense of legislative functions. Even in the constitutional congress, major issues were often debated in cavalier fashion. Many politicians had a poor grasp of the issues, and the quality of debates was usually dismal.

Early this century Weber persuasively argued that where professional politicians do not have serious responsibilities in the political system, they are likely to turn to less responsible activities to compensate for their lack of real power.[31] This observation is apposite in the Brazilian case. To survive during the military period, politicians who supported the government were virtually obliged to make clientelism and patronage their primary focus. Even with the high turnover rates that characterize Brazilian congressional elections, many of these politicians have survived and thrived under democratic politics. The prevalence of this kind of politician creates obstacles to efforts to give more authority to parties and the political class. Enhancing congressional authority is necessary in view of the extreme enervation of the legislature's role during military rule, but in the short run one cannot assume that the political class will make good use of its new powers.

The other compelling reason to avoid excessive optimism about greater congressional authority is the likelihood that congress will become much more effective in blocking presidential initiatives, but without acquiring the capacity to initiate policy measures. Interactions between the executive and congress are likely to be quite difficult given several features of the Brazilian political system: a fragmented multiparty system, a presidential system of government, and federalism. A bicameral congress reinforces the overall proclivity towards a political system predicated more upon checks and balances than upon effective or quick processing of major decisions. But conversely, the multiple crises facing a country that is self-destructing with alarming speed favor technocratic decision making within the executive branch of government. Add to this the enormous power of the state bureaucracy and there are reasons to believe that the recent constitutional changes may not dramatically alter the relationship between parties and the state.

In short, in view of the massive powers of the state apparatus, strengthening the legislature may be more difficult than upgrading its formal powers. Finding a means of democratizing other state structures is also essential.[32] Furthermore, it is essential to balance strengthening the legislature with maintaining a fluid, agile decision process so that Brazil can effectively confront the multiple, agonizing crises that beset the country.

The political class has been acutely aware of the overshadowing of the legislature by the bureaucracy and has responded by expanding its influence within the bureaucracy. This "solution," however, amounts to a private appropriation of the state apparatus, and has done nothing to further party building. Furthermore, this solution has, in many cases, had deleterious consequences upon the efficacy of the state apparatus. Political criteria have reigned supreme; with some important exceptions, considerations of efficiency, rationality, and justice have been neglected. In view of the enormous importance of the state apparatus as an engine of economic development in the last half century, the consequences of this neglect are grave.

The problem of party building in a society in which there is such a profound gap between the development of civil society and of the state is complex. Some of the obvious solutions, such as granting more power to congress, turn out to be more problematic than one assumes. The lengthy history of weak representative institutions works against efforts to create them today. This does not imply some kind of historical determinism, but it does call attention to the importance of historical sequences and specifically to the difficulties created by late party development.

Presidentialism, the Multiparty System, and Party Development

In comparative perspective there is nothing unusual about authoritarian regimes taking measures against political parties. What is more unusual in the Brazilian case is the anti-party sentiments and actions of presidents in democratic periods (1946-64, 1985-88) and in the oligarchic Old Republic (1889-1930). Presidents have generally tried to govern in an autonomous fashion, above the parties. To do so, they have weakened parties as a basis of congressional decision making and policy making.

The presidency of Manuel Ferraz de Campos Sales (1898-1902) is the key to understanding much of the political system of the Old Republic. Campos Sales intentionally structured a political system in which parties were at most secondary actors. He strengthened the presidency, weakened congress, encouraged an extreme federalization of power, and relied extensively on the state governors for political support. Subsequent presidents followed his example, consolidating what became known as "the politics of the governors," which could also have been called the politics of anti-party executives. The only attempts to create national level political parties between 1889 and 1930 resulted in failures, in good measure because the

presidents had no interest in being dependent on parties. They preferred to administer free of such fetters. With the exception of Rio Grande do Sul, which generally had two competing parties, the states all had one-party systems, with a party that functioned only in that state.

The Old Republic came to an end in 1930, but the anti-party orientation of Brazilian executives did not. President Vargas's (1930-45) trenchant anti-party sentiments and actions are well known. Even before he abolished the parties in 1937, Vargas had encouraged the introduction of "professional" (Fascist-style) representation that was intended to correct the flaws of liberal (party) representation.

During the democratic interlude of 1946-1964, two presidents (Quadros, 1960-61, and Vargas, this time 1950-54) were unequivocal anti-party men. All of the presidents needed to muster supraparty alliances in order to govern effectively. All of them took some measures to weaken parties, and none of them bore partisan identifications once elected. Presidents have perceived parties as obstacles to realizing their objectives rather than agents for helping to achieve them. Their actions against parties and their efforts to construct a political system in which parties are not key actors have contributed to the secular weakness of parties.

President Sarney followed this lengthy tradition of anti-party presidents. Honorary president of both the PMDB and the PFL, Sarney clashed with both parties and did his best to destroy the former. A sizeable faction of the PMDB made programmatic demands inconsistent with Sarney's conservative predilections: agrarian reform, income distribution, confrontation with creditors on the external front, to name some of the most important. Another equally sizeable faction of the party made rapacious demands for positions within the state bureaucracy. Part of this latter faction was conservative, but many social democrats and radicals within the party also displayed an insatiable appetite for positions in the bureaucracy. Finally, Sarney correctly assessed that it was impossible to govern with the PMDB, given its extraordinary heterogeneity. The best he could do was govern with part of it and with the support of other parties as well. But doing this almost inevitably entailed serious confrontation with the other parts of the PMDB and ultimately triggered the president's efforts to undermine the party. At the same time, Sarney made countless attempts to articulate an independent base of political support. He also carried on the military government's tradition of governing by decree-laws, executive decrees that virtually bypass congress and political parties.

The anti-party actions of Brazilian presidents have been so common that it is important to ask whether there might not be some *systemic* cause, rather than individual idiosyncrasies and/or authoritarian proclivities of the various people who have occupied this position. In the period since 1945, part of the problem has stemmed from the combination of a fractionalized multiparty system and presidentialism.

Under the best of circumstances, presidential systems are less propitious to party building than parliamentary systems. This is so for four primary reasons. In the first place, parliamentary systems seem generally more conducive to stable democracy than presidential systems.[33] Continuity of the democratic process is in itself a powerful stimulus to party development because it facilitates the sedimentation of identities and practices that make parties a central axis of political life.

Second, because they are elected through a direct popular vote or an electoral college in turn dependent on the popular vote, presidents have an independent base of power.[34] In the age of the mass electronic media, presidents can make direct appeals to the population, thereby increasing their autonomy vis-à-vis the parties. Presidents cannot govern effectively when they consistently face a hostile majority in congress, but they can implement some important measures despite broad congressional opposition, thereby going above the parties. In parliamentary systems, the prime minister generally has less autonomy with respect to the parties. Especially in a parliamentary system where a multiparty coalition is ruling, his/her very position directly depends on the support of the parties. Implementing major policy decisions without the support of the parties is difficult in most decision areas.

Third, as Epstein persuasively argued, parliamentary systems have a strong incentive for cohesive—though not necessarily ideological—parties.

> The individual legislators of a governing (or potentially governing) party have an entirely rational motivation for cohesion in a parliamentary system that they do not have under the separation of power. Each parliamentary vote on an important policy involves the question of whether the M.P. wants a cabinet of his party or of the opposition… He knows that his own electoral fortunes would likely suffer with his party's if the party shows itself so uncohesive as to fail to maintain its leadership in office… No such incentive operates with sufficient force to impel American congressmen, under the separation of powers, to be so cohesive. A congressman is able to vote differently from his party leadership, … and he does not hurt his party in any way that is politically meaningful to him.[35]

Finally, party programs are often more important in parliamentary systems than in presidential systems. Everywhere, policy makers usually have considerable autonomy with respect to party programs, but in presidential systems, this autonomy is especially pronounced. In presidential systems, programs have symbolic importance, but usually have little impact on the policy making process. Personality assumes greater weight and issues usually have slightly less.

The combination of a presidential regime and a multiparty system is especially unconducive to party building and to democratic stability. In a multiparty presidential system, governing with the parties is particularly difficult, for the president rarely has a majority in congress. Presidentialism is based on the notion of a balance of independent powers. Where the executive power is constantly thwarted by a hostile legislature, political stability is easily undermined,

especially in less established democracies. And presidents will generally encounter more problems in creating a stable majority in a multiparty system than in a two-party system. In a multiparty system, it is difficult for a president to rely on parties as a basis for congressional action and policy implementation because there are few institutionalized mechanisms that establish fluid negotiations among the parties and between them and the executive. This problem does not exist in the same way in a multiparty parliamentary system because the parties negotiate and themselves determine the composition of the executive.

This combination of presidentialism and a multiparty system is further complicated by the strong federalist bases of Brazilian politics. Power is concentrated in the national government, but political careers are based on local or state politics. For a majority of federal representatives, having access to state resources is an essential part of representation and weighs decisively in prospects for future re-election. When it comes to ensuring that their states and regions get a fair share of the pie, they put aside party commitments and join hands. Indeed, much of the constant shuffling around of parties results from the need of clientelistic politicians to join the party in power, regardless of what it is. This means that democratically elected presidents must constantly balance an enormous range of demands, coming from different parties and different regions as well as different interest groups. Governing in this system is difficult, so much so that one president (Jânio Quadros) resigned office and another (Vargas) committed suicide; both were frustrated with the difficulty of implementing a program.

Party building in large nations with federal political systems always has some particular problems. The challenge of representing different regions acquires a saliency in the former that is completely unknown in smaller nations with a centralized political system. As a result, ideological parties are usually less prominent. The United States and Canada are obvious examples, but neither country faces the additional difficulty of the combination of presidentialism and a multiparty system.

Both of Brazil's democratic experiences (1946-64, 1985-present) have been characterized by this combination of presidentialism, federalism, and a multiparty system. Presidents have consistently responded—and are virtually obliged to do so—by attempting to govern "above" the parties. Governing above parties has entailed attempting to weaken them as political organizations. Winning an autonomous base of legislative support has been synonymous with using state resources to buy off politicians—and with undermining parties as a basis of congressional action. Where presidents have failed to win a supraparty basis of support, despite their broad powers they have been incapable of effective action. This helps explain the peculiar combination of omnipotence and impotence that has often characterized the Brazilian presidency,[36] as well as the frequent executive actions against parties. It also helps explain why congressional action has frequently occurred along supraparty blocks, rather than being based in

the political parties. In brief, the political structures of the Brazilian political system are quite complex, create obstacles to party building, and open the gates to a difficult relationship between the president and congress.

The relevance of the argument on presidentialism and multiparty systems is not limited to party building. The combination of presidentialism and multiparty systems is also unconducive to democratic stability. The vast majority of long established (25 or more years) democracies in the world have parliamentary systems.   The exceptions are the United States, Costa Rica, Colombia,[37] and Venezuela. It is probably no coincidence that all four countries have two-party systems.[38]

Politicians and Party Development

Brazilian party underdevelopment has been seen as residing largely in factors external to the parties that condition their role in the political system: private domination of the political system and of the parties, state domination of the parties, or state interventions against parties.[39] I believe that a factor *within* the parties is also crucial in explaining party underdevelopment: the relationship between politicians and parties.   Many features of the political system must be understood in relation not only to the strong state, but also to the power of political elites and the economic elites closely connected to them.[40] Parties are overshadowed not only by the state, but also by political elites who do not want parties to become major actors in the political system.

Generally speaking, analysts of Brazilian politics have seen the behavior of politicians as a product of their environment and have not asked the opposite question: how politicians have shaped the character of the parties and of the political system more broadly. Yet politicians are not simply products of the political system in which they act; they also help to create that system. The nature (and weakness) of Brazilian parties is, in part, an intentional consequence of the preferences of Brazilian politicians.

The desire to create effective parties is not sufficient for such parties to emerge, but it is indispensable.   Brazilian politicians have attempted to prevent more effective parties from emerging, believing that party loyalty and more disciplined parties would limit their ability to attend to their clienteles. With loosely organized parties, politicians are freer to attend to their own clienteles, without being bound to programmatic concerns or organizational commitments. At least since 1930, they have intentionally maximized their autonomy vis-à-vis their parties. Politicians have helped create a political system in which they can deal in more or less independent ways, free of the fetters that disciplined parties would imply.

The anti-party predilection of politicians has been institutionalized in the ways parties are organized and in electoral legislation, ensuring that there is a strong self-perpetuating anti-party

tendency. Several aspects of Brazil's party and electoral legislation have either no parallel or few parallels in the world, and there is probably no other democracy that grants politicians so much autonomy vis-à-vis their parties. This electoral and party legislation, in turn, reinforces the individualistic behavior of politicians. The extremely low degrees of party loyalty and discipline found in the major parties (excepting the parties on the left) are encouraged by this legislation.

The unusual combination of proportional representation and an open list means that parties have comparatively limited influence over which candidates stand the best chances of getting elected. The party presents a lengthy list of names, but the electorate determines the order of the names. Finland is the only other democracy that uses an open list system, although Chile used one between 1958 and 1973. Most countries that have proportional representation give the party far greater control over the list. As Katz shows, this is true even in countries that offer preferential voting in proportional elections.[41] In Brazil, the electorate chooses among an immensely long list of individuals; the election functions almost like a simultaneous primary and general election.

Because of this system, getting elected depends not on the candidate's links to the party, but rather upon personal effort and connections. An exceptional individualism and anti-party action result in most campaigns. The primary campaign adversaries of many candidates are *not* people of other parties, but rather other candidates of the same party. It is often easier to invade the electoral turf of a member of the same party than it is to make encroachments upon someone of another party.

In campaigns, there is often intraparty solidarity between people competing for *different* positions, but a sharp competition prevails among people competing for a similar position (for example, among individuals running for federal deputy). Campaigns are largely financed by individual candidates, the exception being that free TV time is allocated for the various parties, which divide their time among the candidates. Occasionally one finds campaign literature promoting candidates of different parties, even when these parties do not have an electoral coalition. Even the TV time, which is allocated to the parties, largely promotes individual candidates rather than party. (The exceptions here are once again the three leftist parties.) The catch-all parties exercise little control over the programmatic commitments of their candidates. Indeed, they recruit politicians from adversary parties.

Limited party control over political campaigns and who gets elected means that a politician is elected primarily because of his/her own initiative. This factor, in conjunction with others, gives the representative a great deal of autonomy vis-à-vis the party in congress. Politicians of the catch-all parties generally vote according to their own political interests and perceptions; the party has less weight. In a survey I conducted, only 31% of PMDB politicians and 13% of PFL politicians

said that they vote along party lines most of the time when there is a conflict between party interests and regional or state interests.[42]

Electoral legislation does nothing to prevent a politician from switching parties. One unique measure, revised in 1988, actually *required* politicians to switch parties if they wished to retain their mandates. Constitutional Amendment #25, approved in May 1985, stipulated that parties that failed to reach 3% of the total vote for the Chamber of Deputies, with at least 2% in 5 states, would not be represented in Congress, but that the representatives elected from those parties would maintain their mandates as long as they switched to another party within 60 days.

The ease of switching parties accentuates individual autonomy vis-à-vis the parties. It is difficult for parties to extract allegiance on controversial issues when a representative can easily change to another team if the party leadership gets too disagreeable. Although party legislation grants the parties the means of expelling recalcitrant representatives and of imposing party discipline in congressional votes, such measures are virtually unheard of. Party organs rarely meet to discuss major political questions, and even when they do, they hardly ever try to impose a given line on congressional representatives. The party outside congress has virtually no impact on voting behavior. Party programs are absolutely secondary, and in any case are not binding.

Another unusual and perhaps unique characteristic of Brazil's electoral legislation that has contributed to the autonomy of politicians vis-à-vis parties is the *candidato nato* (birthright candidate), by which any representative in a proportional position has the right to be on the ballot for the same position in the next elections. This means that a politician can violate all of the party's programmatic concerns, consistently vote against the party leadership, and still be guaranteed a place on the ballot. Moreover a representative can change parties, becoming a member of a new party in any one of the hundreds of municipalities in a given state, and then invoke the right to be on the slate in the new party. Even if the state and national party leadership opposed this representative's membership and candidacy, the only way to bar the person from running would be to expel him/her from the party—a difficult and rare process among the catch-all parties.

Most analyses of electoral systems have focused on the political consequences of electoral laws. This problem is important, to be sure, but exclusive concern with this side of the issue can be misleading. The political roots of electoral laws, i.e., the reason why politicians choose some laws rather than others, are as important as their political consequences.[43]

In addition to representing interests, politicians have interests of their own. To further these interests, politicians tend to favor some kinds of electoral arrangements over others. The reason is that electoral arrangements are not neutral. They discriminate against some groups and politicians while favoring others. Electoral systems and electoral reforms may not produce the results they are intended to when they are drawn up. Almost always, however, they are intended to help, or at least to not hinder, the interests of those who promote them. Altruism may not be

non-existent among politicians debating electoral systems and electoral reforms, but neither is it widespread.

Because of this non-neutrality, electoral and party legislation reveals interesting information about politicians' predilections. This is especially the case where electoral and party legislation is frequently revised. Where it is long-standing, one might argue that electoral legislation reflects conceptions about parties, politics, and society at the time the legislation was approved, but that it no longer necessarily does so. In these cases, it might be argued that politicians accommodate themselves to electoral legislation more than they shape it. But in Brazil and other countries where electoral legislation has undergone major changes or where a new constitution has precipitated debates about electoral legislation, electoral systems register the ongoing predilections of politicians.

Even though the profoundly anti-party implications of this electoral system have been recognized,[44] the great majority of the political class continues to prefer it. This was evident in the constitutional congress, which debated and rejected alternative models of representation. It was also evident in the survey I conducted among Brazilian politicians. In the four largest parties of the moment (PMDB, PFL, PDS, PDT), among those who preferred proportional representation, 60 representatives preferred an open list, to a mere 4 who preferred a closed list system.

Why do politicians prefer legislation that enhances their autonomy at the expense of weakening parties? Part of the answer lies in the ongoing importance of regional cleavages in Brazilian politics. Obliged by electoral legislation to belong to parties that are national in scope, Brazilian politicians regionalize the parties in practice by stripping them of power over congressional representatives. Under these circumstances, politicians can belong to *de jure* national parties but represent their regional clientele without interference from the parties.

Progressive factions of the catch-all parties have been complicitious in the generalized anti-party orientations of politicians. On first impression this appears somewhat puzzling because the individualistic nature of representation has facilitated a pervasive clientelism that helps underpin an archaic and elitist political system. The progressive factions fear that strengthening party leadership would weaken their own position in the parties because these factions generally do not control the catch-all parties. Moreover, it is common for progressives to neglect the organization building that clientelistic politicians have mastered. This is a case where individuality rationality—protecting minority spaces within the party by accepting the extremely loose organization and anti-party electoral legislation—has blocked the emergence of more desirable collective alternatives.

Finally, even though politicians enjoy broad autonomy with respect to their parties, they depend upon the state apparatus for survival and success. The importance of delivering material goods in securing re-election makes it difficult for many politicians to act with autonomy with

respect to those who control the state apparatus. Their insistence upon not being tied down by a political party is a reaction against this dependence on the state apparatus. This reaction has a compelling logic to it: holders of executive office often dominate political parties. In a system in which political competition involves access to state favors as much as disputes among leaders with different ideological proposals, party discipline could easily imply loyalty to a cacique more than to ideas.

Conclusion

The constitutional congress of 1987-88 afforded an opportunity to revise some of the historical obstacles to party consolidation and to attempt to create a more modern, fluid political system. In this sense, the new constitution is a disappointment. In the name of combatting authoritarianism, the political class adopted a thoroughly permissive electoral legislation that will surely lead to a highly fragmented party system. The anti-party components of electoral legislation have been reinforced. The complex and difficult combination of presidentialism, a multiparty system, and federalism has been consecrated. What may be the world's most disproportional system of proportional representation was made even more disproportional; the system overrepresents the backward parts of the country and underrepresents the modern parts.[45] With respect to political structures, the constitutional process made apparent the reluctance of a majority of political elites to effect even minor changes.   None of this makes impossible the consolidation of effective parties or of democracy, but it does make it more difficult. Meanwhile, the enormous political, social, and economic costs of a political system in which representative institutions remain underdeveloped continue to increase.

Although this paper has focused on barriers to the emergence of parties that more effectively represent civil society, some changes in the society and the political system are propitious to party development and could, in the medium run, prevail over the negative aspects. Some of the factors that could encourage the creation of a more modern political system with reasonably effective representative institutions are already present in the party system itself. While it is possible to use state resources to control party conventions, it is more difficult to control the electorate in general, especially in urban areas and in southern Brazil, which have a notable tradition of voting against those in power. Parties that challenge the "parties of the state" are almost certain to grow. Among the parties of civil society that have strong growth potential are the PT, PSDB, PL, and PDT.

The current lethargy in civil society should not be confused with the traditional weakness of the same. Urbanization, industrialization, and new collective associations and movements have markedly changed the character of civil society. Significant parts of the labor movement and the

industrial bourgeoisie are calling for a new model of development and of doing politics. These actors are demanding a modernization of the political system and a new kind of party.

Finally, in the 1980s, the huge Brazilian state has become increasingly crisis-plagued and inefficient, an obvious fetter to modernization. This crisis of the state may prompt efforts to modernize the political system and thereby help strengthen parties that represent civil society. If a modernization of the state takes place, it will undercut parties of the state, whose existence is predicated upon the balkanization and privatization of the bureaucracy.   Whether this modernization will occur is not certain, but one of the indispensable steps toward it has been taken by the constitutional congress, namely, the granting of greater fiscal autonomy to state and local governments.

The auspicious factors that favor party development leave us with a country in which political institutions remain archaic, but in which some powerful political actors are convinced of the need for political modernization. It is difficult to predict whether the archaic elements or the forces for change will prevail, although the balance for the 1980s is largely negative. What is clear is that the stakes are high.   If the parties of the state prevail, Brazilian democracy will fail, Brazil's egregious inequalities will go untouched, and the Brazilian economy will continue to falter. If more effective parties emerge, they will not guarantee the success of Brazilian democracy, but they are clearly a necessary ingredient.

End Notes

1   Among many examples, see Liliana De Riz, "Política y partidos. Ejercicio de análisis comparado: Argentina, Chile, Brasil y Uruguay," *Desarrollo Económico* 25 (January 1986): 659-682; Scott Mainwaring, "Political Parties and Democratization in Brazil and the Southern Cone," *Comparative Politics* 21 (October 1988): 91-120.

2   I specify this focus on the past decade because the causes of party underdevelopment have changed over time. The continuation of a condition does not always mean that its causes are constant. Nevertheless, I believe the factors that I identify as obstacles to party development in the current period also obtained for the 1946-64 period.

3   See Wanderley Guilherme dos Santos, "A Pós-Revolução Brasileira," in Hélio Jaruaribe, et al., *Brasil, Sociedade Democrática* (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1985), 223-335.

4   A PDC and a PTB existed before 1964, but they bear little resemblance to the current parties with the same name.

5   See Thomas Bruneau and Alex Macleod, *Politics in Contemporary Portugal: Parties and the Consolidation of Democracy* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1986).

6   Robert Michels, *Political Parties* (New York: Dover, 1959); Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State* (London: Metheun, 1954). Even in Western Europe, parties have tended to become somewhat less programmatic and disciplined since Michels and Duverger authored their classic studies.

7   Fábio Wanderley Reis, "Partidos, Ideologia e Consolidação Democrática," in Fábio Wanderley Reis and Guillermo O'Donnell, eds., *A Democracia no Brasil: Dilemas e Perspectivas* (São Paulo: Vértice, 1988), 296-326.

8   Most analysts of Latin American parties have restricted their focus to the first two issues. I also attach considerable importance to the third, which involves consideration of party organization and internal processes.

9   My distinction between "parties of the state" and "parties of civil society" bears some parallel to the dichotomy Simon Schwartzman established between cooptation and representation. See his "Representação e Cooptação no Brasil," *Dados* 7 (1970): 9-41. "Parties of the state" should not be confused with parties that have statist practices or programs. I am using the concept to refer to parties that are to a considerable extent created by the state apparatus, are controlled by the state, and whose continuing existence depends on the use of state resources to secure support in civil society. Parties of the state do have linkages to civil society, but they tend to be constructed through clientelistic mechanisms rather than through representation of organized groups. Parties of the state have been a fundamental pillar in a pervasively elitist political system.

10   Maria do Carmo Campello de Souza, *Estado e Partidos Políticos no Brasil (1930 a 1964)* (São Paulo: Alfa-Omega, 1976).

11   Leon Epstein, *Political Parties in Western Democracies* (New York: Praeger, 1967), 261-350.

12   The limited policy making capabilities and interest of Brazilian deputies is not dissimilar to what Ezra Suleiman described in France. See his *Politics, Power, and the Bureaucracy in France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 285-315. But in France, the

bureaucracy is highly insulated from deputies. The Brazilian bureaucracy has historically been divided, with some domains reserved for patronage politics and others insulated from the same. In the 1980s, according to both the politicians and bureaucrats I interviewed, the insulation of public administrative with respect to patronage politics has eroded sharply.

13   There is considerable literature on this subject. A good overview is Russell Dalton, "Cognitive Mobilization and Partisan Dealignment in Advanced Industrial Democracies," *Journal of Politics* 26 (February 1984): 264-284.

14   The elections of 1966 and 1970 took place in the context of a two-party system, but they were not yet of a plebiscitary nature.

15   Bolivar Lamounier and Maria Judith Muszynski, "A Eleição de Jânio Quadros," in Bolivar Lamounier, ed., *1985: O Voto em São Paulo* (São Paulo: IDESP, 1986), 1-31.

16   IBOPE survey, 100 citizens in each of 5 major cities (São Paulo, Rio, Belo Horizonte, Curitiba, Recife), June 10-13, 1988.

17   This is a rough approximation that underestimates the actual number of parties per representative. I compiled information on number of parties from three main sources: Câmara dos Deputados, *Assembléia Nacional Constituinte - 1987*, and special editions on the Constitutional Congress of the *Folha de São Paulo,* January 19, 1987, and the *Correio Brasiliense*, January 20, 1987. These sources did not register all party changes, and there have been many changes since their publication.

18   David Fleischer, "O Congresso Constituinte de 1987: Um Perfil Sócio-Econômico e Político," forthcoming article.

19   This theme has been developed by several analysts of Chilean politics, including Manuel Antonio Garretón, "Partidos políticos y otros actores sociales: El caso chileno," paper for the XIII World Congress of the International Political Science Association, 1985.

20   This theme is well developed by Michael Coppedge, "Strong Parties and Lame Ducks: A Study of the Quality and Stability of Venezuelan Democracy," Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1988.

21   One of the few ways in which parties are key actors in the political system is elite recruitment. To get to higher elected posts, most people need to work their way up the electoral ladder. Even this function of parties may be becoming less decisive as more business executives and radio or television personalities get elected without initiation through lower level political posts.

22   A "minimum salary" refers to a wage fixed by the government, but does not imply that all individuals make that much or more. An ample part of the work force makes less than 1 minimum salary. The minimum salary is not fixed in real terms; it has eroded by about 60% since 1958. As of this writing, one minimum salary is equal to about $40 per month. The data comes from Brazil (unspecified governmental agency), "Plano de Metas: Sustentação do Crescimento e Combate à Pobreza, 1986-1989," (Brasília, n.d.); José Serra, "Ciclos e Mudanças Estruturais na Economia Brasileira do Pós-Guerra," in Luiz Gonzaga Belluzzo and Renata Coutinho, eds., *Desenvolvimento Capitalista no Brasil* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1983), Vol. I, 64.

23   For an elaboration of this theme, see Fábio Wanderley Reis, "O Eleitorado, os Partidos e o Regime Autoritário Brasileiro," in Bernardo Sorj and Maria Hermínia Tavares de Almeida, eds., *Sociedade e Política no Brasil pós-64* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1983), 62-86.

24   Philip Converse, "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Politics," in David Apter, ed., Ideology and Discontent (New York: The Free Press, 1964), 206-261. Converse's seminal article has been criticized and debated from many perspectives. Some analysts have argued that he overstated how limited citizen information was, and most agree that the electorate is more informed now than it was at the time of his research. Nevertheless, his central point still obtains.

25   See Reis's previously cited articles, "O Eleitorado, os Partidos e o Regime Autoritário Brasileiro," and "Partidos, Ideologia e Consolidação Democrática."

26   For an extensive discussion of this point, see Margaret Keck, "From Movement to Politics: The Formation of the Workers' Party in Brazil," Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1986.

27   Campello de Souza, *Estado e Partidos Políticos no Brasil*, 36.

28   See also Arturo Valenzuela, "Origins and Characteristics of the Chilean Party System," Working Paper #164 (May 1985), Latin American Program, The Wilson Center; and Hans Daalder, "Parties, Elites, and Political Development in Western Europe," in Joseph LaPalombara and Marion Weiner, eds., *Political Parties and Political Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 43-78.

29   For an interesting elaboration of this traditional theme, see James March and Johan Olsen, "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life," *American Political Science Review* 78 (September 1984): 734-749.

30   During the process of constitution writing, the congress was the focal point of all political actors, but *qua* constitution maker and not *qua* legislator. The new constitution will strengthen congress's capacity to block political action (especially of the president), but I would be surprised if congress becomes a major formulator of policies or laws.

31   "The naive moralizing legend of our unpolitical literati reverses the causal relationship and maintains that parliament remained deservedly powerless because of the low level of parliamentary life. But simple facts and considerations reveal the actual state of affairs… The level of parliament depends on whether it does not merely discuss great issues but decisively influences them; in other words, its quality depends on whether what happens there matters, or whether parliament is nothing but the unwillingly tolerated rubber stamp of a ruling bureaucracy." Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 1392.

32   One of the most innovative proposals came from Fábio Wanderley Reis , who argued that it would be worth entertaining "corporatizing" the state so that the private arrangements between economic and political elites and state bureaucrats that have been so deleterious to the construction of a democratic order could be challenged. See his "Consolidação Democrática e Construção do Estado," in Reis and O'Donnell, eds., *A Democracia no Brasil*, 13-40. I confess some skepticism about the viability of this proposal. Corporatist arrangements are the product of historical experience and cannot simply be created because they afford some advantages. The heterogeneous nature of Brazil's civil society and its mechanisms of representation creates an additional problem, that of finding interlocutors acceptable to the various actors. This problem has fatally undermined prospects for a social pact, and I see no reason for greater optimism in creating corporatist interlocutors.

33   For recent statements along these lines, see Juan Linz, "Democracy: Presidential or Parliamentary. Does It Make a Difference?" unpublished paper; Valenzuela, "Origins and Characteristics of the Chilean Party System"; Fred Riggs, "The Survival of Presidentialism in America: Para-Constitutional Practices," *International Political Science Review* (October 1988): 247-288; Waldino Suárez, "El poder ejecutivo en América Latina: Su capacidad

operativa bajo regímenes presidencialistas de gobierno," *Revista de Estudios Políticos* 29 (1982): 109-144.

34 On this point, see Richard Rose, "Government Against Subgovernments: A European Perspective on Washington," in Richard Rose and Ezra Suleiman, eds., *Presidents and Prime Ministers* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1981), 284-347.

35 Leon Epstein, "A Comparative Study of Canadian Parties," *American Political Science Review* 58 (March 1964): 46-59.

36 Despite the enormous importance of the Brazilian presidency, little good work has been done on this subject. The dominant tendency has been to emphasize the imperial powers of the presidency, an interpretation with which I disagree. For an elaboration of this argument, see Scott Mainwaring, "Presidentialism in Latin America," *Latin American Research Review* 25, No. 1 (1990), forthcoming.

37 Because of limited competition for the presidency and limited participation, between 1958 and 1974 Colombia was a debatable case of a democracy. Whether it is included or excluded, however, does not affect my argument here.

38 The authors mentioned in note 33 above have argued that presidential systems may generally be less conducive to democratic stability than parliamentary systems. I think this is especially true in the context of a multiparty system.

39 On state domination of the parties, see Campello de Souza, *Estado e Partidos Políticos.* On state interventions against parties, see Bolivar Lamounier and Rachel Meneguello, *Partidos Políticos e Consolidação Democrática* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1985).

40 On this point, see also Frances Hagopian, "The Politics of Oligarchy: The Persistence of Traditional Politics in Contemporary Brazil," Ph.D. dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1986.

41 Richard Katz, "Intraparty Preference Voting," in Bernard Grofman and Arend Lijphart, eds., *Electoral Laws and Their Political Consequences* (New York: Agathon, 1986), 85-103. For an extensive discussion of the Finnish electoral system, see Klaus Törnudd, *The Electoral System of Finland* (London: Hugh Evelyn, 1968).

42 I conducted the survey in February 1988. Of 106 total responses, 58 came from the PMDB and 23 from the PFL.

43 For a similar point, see Dieter Nohlen, *Sistemas electorales del mundo* (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Constitucionales, 1981).

44 See, for example, Afonso Arinos de Melo Franco, "Os Partidos Políticos Nacionais," *Revista Forense* 157 (January-February 1955): 7-20; Bolivar Lamounier, "Partidos Políticos e Sistema Eleitoral," *Textos IDESP* 13 (1986).

45 On this point, see Gláucio Ary Dillon Soares, "Disigualdades Eleitorais no Brasil," *Revista de Ciência Política* 7 (1973): 22-48.