The Political Right and Party Politics

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The political right is a dominant political actor—or set of actors—in Brazil. This chapter examines the right as it is expressed in contemporary Brazilian party politics. We consider four broad topics. First, we interrogate the longstanding idea of a "conservative tradition" in Brazilian politics, one that would somehow advantage the political right. Second, we take a historical approach, tracing the evolution of the civilian political right from the postwar Republic of 1946 through the military-authoritarian regime of 1964-1985. Third, we review several of the most outstanding characteristics of right-wing party politics in the post-1985 democracy. Finally, while most of the 21st century right can be classified as clientelistic and office-seeking, we reflect on the fragmentary emergence of multiple programmatic "rights"—an economic right, a social right, and authoritarian right—as democracy enters its fourth decade.

Is There A "Conservative Tradition" in Brazil?

Historians and social scientists have often noted the surprising ease with which conservative politicians have navigated Brazil's various transitions: from colony to empire, from empire to oligarchical republic, and from military-authoritarian rule to mass democracy. Prior to the breakthrough victory of the Workers' Party (PT) in the 2002 presidential election, analysts commonly characterized Brazil as having an uninterruptedly elitist political culture. Within this vague "tradition," scholars emphasized several key elements. One was the predominance of political conservatism, understood in its most general sense as a drive to preserve the political and economic status quo as well as *paz social* (social peace), and to limit the possibilities for popular participation (Faoro 1958). Another was clientelism, a style of politics based primarily on the exchange of favors between individuals of unequal status (Hutchinson 1966; Leal 1977; Flynn 1974; Cammack 1982; Geddes & Ribeiro Neto 1992). A third was a patrimonial or "cartorial" state (Oliveira Vianna 1920, 1949; Faoro 1958; Santos 1977; Schwartzman 1982), a state that is powerful, centralized, and bureaucratic, and a state that elites penetrate and turn to their advantage in profoundly anti-republican style through practices such as *empreguismo* (the use of public employment for political ends), nepotism, and various forms of corruption. A fourth element was vertical collaboration among elites across levels of government, i.e., politicians at the federal center delegate considerable autonomy to regional and local elites in return for their assistance in maintaining social control (Leal 1977; Cintra 1979; Hagopian 1996).

While few doubt the salience of particularism and patrimonialism in Brazilian politics, there are several problems with such a monolithic, deterministic view of the power structure. First, the concept of patrimonialism itself has been overused and is easily subject to conceptual stretching (Pereira 2016). Second, the patrimonialist interpretation prevents us from distinguishing between the "political elite" and the "political right," even though progressive forces have penetrated the national power structure on various occasions since the mid-20th

century. The PT governments of 2003-2016 are the most dramatic example. Third, an excessive emphasis on "traditional politics" obscures meaningful differences between political regimes, of which Brazil has had at least five in the republican era. Finally, a serious drawback of the "conservative tradition" approach is that it discourages us from distinguishing between actors within the right itself. Like most plural democracies, Brazil in 2018 has multiple rights: an economic right, a religious right, and a hardline law-and-order right are easily identifiable, but their interests do not always coincide. Thus, a proper understanding of the "Brazilian political right" requires attention to both changes across time and to differences among contemporary actors.

Changes Across Time: The Right and Recent Regimes in Brazil

In this section we compare and contrast the partisan expressions of the political right across three regimes: the immediate postwar democracy (1946-1964), the military authoritarian regime (1964-1985), and the Third Wave democracy (1985-present).

The political right to 1964. In the Old Republic (1889-1930) there was no significant left/right cleavage among political elites, which were regionally rather than nationally focused. Political contestation was an elite affair between the "ins" and the "outs," with minimal popular participation. This was the heyday of the "politics of the governors," in which a handful of notables, mostly drawn from the populous states of São Paulo and Minas Gerais, alternated in power. But in the 1930s the rise of Getúlio Vargas and urban populism reoriented the political system, giving it a fully nationalized character for the first time. The Vargas years sparked national debate about issues of popular participation and redistribution, and his person and policies combined to introduce a new cleavage (for or against *getulismo*) within the national elite. This cleavage long outlived the democratic transition of 1945.

The 1946 Republic permitted free elections and the expansion of suffrage, mobilizing huge numbers of new voters into the system and opening up spaces for new and diverse political appeals. The electorate grew from 1.9 million voters in 1930 to 6.2 million in 1945, doubling to 12.6 million in 1960 (Love 1970: 9). The political right, now disunified by the Varguist thunderclap and by the reality of democratic competition, fractured into several identifiably conservative political parties (Soares 1984: 44-55). Two of these were highly influential and competitive throughout Brazil.[1]

The *Partido Social Democrático* (PSD) was one of two parties created by Vargas in 1945 to preserve the extensive political machine he had built during the Estado Novo dictatorship (1937-1945). Unlike its urban junior partner, the *Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro* (PTB) engineered by Vargas' Labor Ministry, the PSD was interwoven with long-established networks of rural domination in the less developed regions. Born of the Estado Novo bureaucracy—most early leaders of the PSD had been Vargas-appointed *interventores* in state governments—the

[1] The other right-leaning parties were the *Partido Republicano* (PR), a holdover from the Old Republic, led by the aging former president Artur Bernardes; the *Partido Libertador* (PL), political vehicle of Raul Pilla, a leading figure in Rio Grande do Sul; the Christian Democratic Party (PDC), launching pad for future Catholic leaders such as Franco Montoro and Plínio de Arruda Sampaio; and the *Partido de Representação Popular* (PRP) led by Plínio Salgado, remnant of a brown-shirt movement of the early 1930s.

party always had a close relationship to the state apparatus. In return for delivering votes, local PSD brokers won access to state resources and the right to make appointments in the state bureaucracy. The party was pragmatic, with a reputation for moderation and conciliation. Given that the PSD's impressive penetration throughout the interior of the country made it an ideal vehicle for generating support for governments, the party was seen as a major stabilizing force in electoral politics (Hippolito 1985). In many ways, the PSD was the forerunner of and model for all subsequent *partidos de sustentação* (government support parties) in modern Brazil, including ARENA, the PFL/DEM, and the PMDB. The PSD did not lose a presidential election until 1960, and it maintained a plurality in Congress until 1963.

The *União Democrática Nacional* (UDN), the other major conservative party, was the second strongest electoral force for most of the Republic of 1946. The UDN was an umbrella party for sectors of the national oligarchy that opposed Vargas. Initially the UDN's social base was similar to that of the PSD, being concentrated in rural areas and small towns. Over time, however, the UDN began to do better in urban areas and to capture middle-class voters, especially in what is today the state of Rio de Janeiro (Soares 1973: 217-218). But the party's lack of access to state resources stunted its growth; despite token representation in the first two PSD cabinets and official backing of Jânio Quadros (winner of the 1960 presidential election), the UDN never truly wielded national power.

Both main conservative parties were only weakly ideological, though the UDN had slightly greater programmatic pretensions (the PSD limited itself mainly to vague endorsements of Varguist national-developmentalism). The UDN styled itself as liberal, anti-statist, and democratic, but it engaged in contradictory behavior, flirting with the military throughout the 1950s and supporting the eventual coup of 1964 (Benevides 1981).

Arguably, the most important political trend in the Republic of 1946 was not the semi-loyal opposition of the UDN, but rather a shift in the balance of forces *within* the dominant pro-Vargas coalition (PSD-PTB) itself. While in 1945 the conservative PSD's congressional delegation was roughly seven times the size of that of the labor-based PTB, by 1963 the PTB could claim to be the senior partner. An unexpected historical twist—the resignation of Quadros in August 1961—gave the presidency to a PTB politician, vice president João Goulart. A populist former Labor Minister and protegé of Vargas, Goulart was widely distrusted by the right, which conspired with the armed forces to install a parliamentary system and reduce Goulart's presidential powers. Goulart won them back in a plebiscite in January 1963, but polarization and civil-military relations worsened dramatically in the following year. The traditional "moderating power" of Brazilian politics, the armed forces, intervened on April 1, 1964, to oust Goulart and reestablish a conservative governing coalition.

The political right from 1964 to 1985. The military coup was welcomed by the rightist sectors of the political class, who considered it their restoration. The first military president, Humberto Castello Branco, signed the Second Institutional Act (AI-2) in October 1965, abolishing all existing parties and imposing a two-party system. Faced with a binary choice, nearly two-thirds of federal legislators, and all twenty-two state governors (that is, those that survived the early *cassações* or political purges), chose to join the pro-government *Aliança Renovadora Nacional* (National Renovating Alliance, or ARENA) rather than the opposition

Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (Brazilian Democratic Movement, or MDB) (Jenks 1979: 106-126). Research by Wesson and Fleischer found that some 90% of the UDN's deputies and 100% of its senators joined ARENA, making the ex-*udenistas* the largest single bloc within the new party (1983: 103-105). The former PSD experienced some division, but still mostly opted for ARENA, with 65% of its federal deputies and 74% of its senators affiliating. Thus ARENA was built largely on the foundations of the defunct conservative parties, and became the new—and only—partisan vehicle for rightist civilians.

The new party had several clearly defined tasks in the military regime. As part of a larger strategy to maintain the trappings of a democratic system—which involved an opposition party, regularly held elections, and the retention of the National Congress—ARENA was expected to generate legitimacy for the military regime. But ARENA was also expected to assist in the work of governing Brazil, thus permitting the military to enact its policies and programs within the states (Grinberg 2009). From its creation, ARENA did what the PSD had done so well in the Republic of 1946, which was to build political networks and clienteles within the vast, underdeveloped interior of the country.

The first national elections under military rule, held in late 1966, established voting patterns that would persist until the return of political democracy in 1985. ARENA dominated in the less developed areas of Brazil, especially in the impoverished Northeast, whereas the opposition MDB had its best showings in the South and Southeast, the most developed regions of the country (Alves, 1985; Kinzo, 1988; Lamounier 1984, 1989; Lamounier & Meneguello, 1986). Wherever indices of development were higher—and this includes the capital cities of poor states, which tend to be islands of modernity in the less developed regions—ARENA performed poorly in elections. These patterns were so clearly defined that by the early 1980s, when the opposition vote was surging rapidly, ARENA's strength had become geographically restricted: the PDS, successor to ARENA, could accurately be nicknamed the "party of the Northeast" (Lavareda 1985).

In the second decade of authoritarian rule, government legitimacy waned, and the MDB became a more potent opposition force.[2] Manipulation of electoral rules in the late 1970s failed to stop the MDB's growth, so president Gen. Ernesto Geisel opted to "divide and conquer" the opposition by permitting a return to a multiparty system in 1979. As expected, the MDB (renamed the PMDB) fractured and shrank, while new opposition parties emerged in its orbit, among them the innovative *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT). Meanwhile, the pro-government ARENA party, suffering fewer defections, simply changed its name to the *Partido Democrático Social* (PDS). Political liberalization accelerated, and direct elections for state governors were scheduled for 1982. The opposition won control of ten states responsible for 75% of Brazil's total economic output (Alves 1985: 228-9), and the PDS lost its absolute majority in Congress. This was a traumatic blow to the PDS.

The historic *Diretas Já* campaign of January-April 1984, while failing in its immediate goal to reestablish direct elections for president, led to internal schisms and to the emergence of a soft-line faction (the "Liberal Front") within the PDS. This reformist group was willing to distance itself from the generals and engage in negotiation with the PMDB. The Liberal Front

[2] On liberalization and democratization in Brazil, see Mainwaring (1986), Smith (1987), and Skidmore (1988).

shocked the PDS by supporting the PMDB's Tancredo Neves in the indirect presidential election of January 1985, supplying senator José Sarney as vice-presidential running mate.[3] Although Neves secured a peaceful transition from military rule, his untimely death in April gave the presidency to Sarney and his new Party of the Liberal Front (PFL). Like Sarney himself, the core of the PFL leadership had entered politics in the old UDN and had remained loyal to the official ARENA/PDS throughout the dictatorship. The PFL would remain the leading party of the Brazilian right for the next two decades.

The political right and regime change. The splintering of the PDS in 1984 set the tone for party development in the new democratic regime. The 1984-1985 presidential succession was a power struggle among conservative civilian politicians, who quickly became factionalized, allowing the opposition PMDB to seize victory in the indirect election. This outcome illustrated the "artificiality" of the PDS, a party created by the military regime in order to aggregate and institutionalize its support within the conservative sectors of the political class. Yet rising political liberalization revealed old political rivalries within the party—some of them dating to the pre-coup era—and revealed new ones that had developed over twenty years of "cohabitation" within the authoritarian coalition (Carvalho 2008).

This brief historical overview of the pre-1985 right highlights three themes of enduring relevance for the current democratic regime. First, parties of the right have historically depended on access to state resources for survival. While this is true to a certain extent of all Brazilian parties, state largesse is disproportionately more important to the right than the left, because conservative parties have weaker capillarity and are less rooted in society than progressive parties (Mainwaring 1999). Second, an earlier tendency toward erosion of the right caused by socioeconomic modernization (Soares 1973, 1984) was slowed by military intervention. Third, party-centered cooperation among conservative forces was rare, and persisted only during the compulsory two-party system of 1966-1979. Given the strong role of regional oligarchies and personal machines, the default configuration of the right is fractionalization.

The Right in the Post-1985 Democracy

We now turn to six prominent characteristics of the post-1985 political right as constituted in the Brazilian party system. These are: (1) an advantageous position in early democratic politics; (2) accelerated fragmentation; (3) the ongoing reluctance to identify itself as the right; (4) a new and uneven commitment to neoliberalism in the 1990s; (5) an incursion by the PT-led left into the geographic strongholds of the right in the 2000s, leading to new patterns of both local and national politics; and (6) a window of opportunity opened by the collapse of the PT government in 2013-2016. We now consider each of these factors in turn.

A head start in 1985. The circumstances surrounding the birth of the current democracy were largely favorable to the civilian political right. The departing military regime had chosen to retain a political party system and a functioning legislature, thus carving out an institutional space for civilian politicians to cultivate their electoral bases. Although authoritarianism ended on a sour economic note, its overall stock of performance legitimacy was still reasonably high,

[3] Sarney was required to formally join the PMDB for legal reasons, but he represented the PFL in the coalitional bargain (Dimenstein et al. 1985).

given that the regime displayed higher economic growth and lower levels of physical repression than in counterpart regimes in the Southern Cone (O'Donnell 1992). The mode of transition to democracy was pacted and gradualist: liberalization was initiated from within the authoritarian regime itself and took the form of "transition through transaction" until regime change accelerated in 1983-1984 (Share & Mainwaring 1986; Hagopian 1990).

Thus it is not surprising that the right navigated the transition with relative ease. This was visible in the founding legislative elections of 1986, which produced the National Constituent Assembly (ANC) that drafted the current Constitution in 1987-88. Veterans of the former promilitary ARENA won over 40% of all seats along with 86% of the PDS delegation to the ANC, 77% of the PFL delegation, and even 21% of the PMDB caucus (Power 2000: 77-79). The ex-ARENA cohort formed the majority of the misleadingly named *Centrão* ("Big Center"), a cross-party bloc founded to dilute progressive reforms in the constitutional text (Martínez-Lara 1996; Marcelino et al. 2009). In the Sarney government (1985-1990), the PFL controlled many of the most important cabinet ministries, and Sarney himself (though legally affiliated to the PMDB) remained honorary president of Brazil's principal conservative party.

Partisan fractionalization. Under the current democracy, the trend toward partisan fragmentation of the right continued. Although the pro-military right was elected to the ANC by seven different parties, by 1990 they were dispersed into more than a dozen parties, even without an intervening election. The two "authoritarian successor parties" (Loxton 2018), the PFL and the PDS, retained their leading positions and their historical association with the defunct dictatorship, but they were by no means the only options for conservative politicians or even voters (Mainwaring, Meneguello, and Power 2000; Paiva 2002; Almeida 2004).

[TABLE 1 HERE]

In fact, the current democratic regime has been marked by an explosion in the number of small center-right parties, most of them nonprogrammatic and opportunistic. Their forerunners in the 1980s were the Brazilian Labor Party (PTB, unrelated to the pre-1964 party) and the Liberal Party (PL, later called the Republican Party or PR). The PTB and PL supported both right-leaning (e.g., Cardoso) and left-leaning (e.g., Lula, Dilma) coalition governments, and their success in extracting benefits from presidents spawned countless imitators in the second and third decades of democracy.[4] The most prominent recent example is the Social Democratic Party (again unrelated to its pre-1964 namesake) founded by conservative former São Paulo mayor Gilberto Kassab in 2011. The new PSD was an opportunistic "shuttle party," created as a vehicle for center-right politicians to move out of an uncomfortable position of opposition to the (then-popular) Dilma Rousseff government and into the circles of power. But the PSD's alliance with the PT lasted only five years: in 2016, Kassab and the PSD supported Dilma's impeachment and moved seamlessly into the successor government led by Michel Temer. The PSD's successful

[4] In this category of center-right or right-wing microparties founded after 1985, we can identify at least twenty other cases, here identified by their TSE code numbers: 10 PRB, 17 PTRB, 17 PSL, 18 PST, 19 PTN (now Podemos), 20 PSC, 26 PAN, 27 PSDC, 28 PRTB, 30 PGT, 30 NOVO, 31 PSN/PHS, 33 PMN, 36 PRN/PTC, 44 PRP, 51 PEN, 54 PPL, 56 PRONA, 70 PT do B (now Avante), 77 SD, and 90 PROS (for full names and further information, see http://www.tse.jus.br/partidos/partidos-politicos/registrados-no-tse). Of these, only PSC, PRONA, and NOVO were seen as reasonably ideological or programmatic.

jockeying to remain in power was reminiscent of another shuttle party—the PFL—three decades earlier.

Table 1 shows that despite the proliferation of right-of-center parties, only five have ever held more than 5% of the seats in the national legislature under democracy. This group includes the two main authoritarian successor parties (originally PDS and PFL, now known as PP and DEM respectively), plus three others (PTB, PR, and PSD) also founded by politicians with roots in pre-1985 right-wing politics. These five parties share a common genealogy and are reputationally conservative. This leaves the question of how to classify two other (and vastly more important) organizations that do not have roots in pre-1985 conservative party politics but today are perceived as right of center: the Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement and the Party of Brazilian Social Democracy (see Figure 1). After the transition to democracy, the PMDB was colonized by numerous opportunistic politicians who appreciated the party's lack of programmatic content and its ability to pivot to both right-leaning and left-leaning coalitions. More a federation of local machines than a party, over time the PMDB became a *partido de sustentação* much like the pre-1964 PSD. The PSDB, on the other hand, first moved rightward for programmatic reasons, as a champion of neoliberal reforms in the 1990s. By the time of the second Cardoso government (1999-2002), it was already perceived as a center-right party, and its reputation shifted even further right after the political polarization of 2013-2016 and the impeachment of PT president Dilma Rousseff. Although lacking historical roots in pre-1985 conservative parties, the PMDB and PSDB are now closely associated with the government of Michel Temer (2016-2018), whom legislators perceive as the most hard-right president of the democratic era (BLS 2017).

[FIGURE 1 HERE]

Figure 1 shows the changing ideological reputations of key parties as recorded in the Brazilian Legislative Surveys from 1990 through 2017. Federal legislators place all other parties (not their own) on a left-right scale; the data are then rescaled to correct for respondent and temporal effects across the eight waves of the survey (Power & Zucco 2012). The ideology scale is centered at zero and ranges from approximately -1 (left) to 1 (right). The graph shows that the leading left party, the PT moderated its position over time, and the main pivotal party, the PMDB, moved from center to center-right. But the most dramatic reputational movement was that of the PSDB, which moves from the center-left to a clear right position over 27 years. The PSDB in 2017 was located to the right of conservative stalwarts PTB and PR, and today it is unambiguously a right-wing party.

The "embarrassed right." In addition to the trend toward fragmentation, another key characteristic of the political right after 1985 was its efforts to avoid the labels of "right-wing" and "conservative." This phenomenon, sometimes referred to as the *direita envergonhada* (ashamed right) was identified in the very first electoral cycles after the transition to democracy (Pierucci 1987; Souza 1992). An early survey of ideological self-classification by Leôncio Martins Rodrigues, focusing on 428 delegates to the ANC in 1987, found that not a single politician would accept the label "radical right," and that only 6% called themselves moderate right or center-right. The rest of the delegates claimed to be of the center (37%), center-left (52%), and radical left (5%). It is of course thoroughly implausible that only 6% of Brazilian

politicians could be located rightward of the center point on the scale: as Rodrigues noted, if we were to rely on self-classification alone, we have concluded that post-transition Brazil did not actually have a political right (Rodrigues 1987: 97). But far from being a "period effect" of the early post-authoritarian era, the *direita envergonhada* has been shown to be a relatively stable aspect of Brazilian elite political culture, confirmed repeatedly in surveys of national legislators. Hypothesized reasons for this ideological obfuscation include the right's desire to escape association with the discredited military regime in the 1980s, a later impulse to distance itself from the pain of neoliberal reforms in the 1990s, and an opportunistic attempt at bandwaggoning on the successful redistributive policies of PT-led governments in the 2000s (Power & Zucco 2009, 2012). As we discuss in a later section, only in the period of heightened polarization that began around 2013 did Brazil see actors and movements openly defining themselves as right-wing.

Identification with neoliberal reforms. As was the case in the Republic of 1946, contemporary parties of the right have been only weakly ideological (Nylen 1992; Mainwaring 1999). However, a wave of pro-market reforms in the 1990s opened up space for some factions of the right to identify themselves with the new neoliberal zeitgeist. This process led to a 21st century right that is ideologically disjunctive: some programmatic forces are unevenly embedded within a network of mostly clientelistic "parties for rent."

Aggressive state-shrinking initiatives first appeared in the Collor government in 1990, but were aborted by his impeachment (Weyland 1993). Collor's reform agenda was revived by his successor Itamar Franco and was championed most successfully by the Cardoso government in the second half of the decade. During these years, the PFL—Cardoso's main coalition partner and the largest party of the right—attempted to reinvent itself as a "liberal" party that enthusiastically backed Cardoso's modernizing platform. Inspired by the German Free Democrats (FDP), from whom it received logistical support, the PFL claimed that it was liberal in two complementary senses: political (in terms of loyalty to the new democratic regime) and economic (support for individualism, free markets, and a smaller Brazilian state) (Tarouco 1999: 68-71). The first of these commitments was intended to be a historic break with tradition on the Brazilian right: it would distance the PFL from the "ambiguous liberalism" (Benevides 1981) of the pre-1964 UDN, whose support for democracy was inconsistent at best. According to Paiva (2002), the PFL's efforts to carve out a distinct ideological space were also motivated by the party's need to brand itself differently from the rival PDS, with which it shared common roots under military rule. Corbellini (2005) claims that this re-branding was also intended to position the PFL/DEM as a "modern" party, aligned with ideological currents that were gaining in international legitimacy in the 1980s and 1990s.

Cardoso's strategic alliance with the PFL was successful: among the parties in his coalition, the PFL had both the greatest attitudinal commitment to economic reform and the highest level of behavioral support in Congress for his constitutional reform agenda, even higher than that of Cardoso's own PSDB (Power 1999). The close association with Cardoso and neoliberalism weakened the PFL after the PT's electoral breakthrough in 2002; unlike the less programmatic parties of the center-right, the PFL could not simply pivot to Lula and join his heterogeneous coalition. With only a brief hiatus during the campaign of 2002, the PFL (which

changed its name to *Democratas* in 2007) has been a consistently close partner of the PSDB since 1994, forming the core bloc in favor of market liberalism in Brazil.

The PT incursion into the right's social bases. Between approximately 2004 and 2013, the redistributive policies of the Lula and Dilma governments sharply reduced poverty and inequality throughout Brazil, especially in the less developed regions. In this so-called "inclusionary decade" (Neri 2011), the electoral gains for the PT and allied left parties were only modest in the more socioeconomically modernized South and Center-South. But sustained pro-poor policies had dramatic effects in the impoverished Northeast, the historical stronghold of conservative machines and the main base of the PFL/DEM after 1985 (Hunter & Power 2007; Zucco 2008). The result was growing pluralism and competitiveness, leading to breakthrough victories of the left in key Northeastern states, notably in 2006 in Bahia, Maranhão, and Pernambuco. In 2010, PT-led coalitions won the state governments of Bahia, Ceará, Pernambuco, Piauí, and Sergipe. In terms of conservative hegemony, these states were the Brazilian equivalent of the old "Solid South" in the United States, but in a rapidly changing Brazil they were "flipped" by the PT in the space of only two electoral cycles.

By the Dilma years, new research on the electoral sociology of the Northeast (Borges 2011; Montero 2012, 2012) claimed that federal social policies in the PT years had undermined traditional clientelistic networks and weakened local oligarchies throughout the region. The main victim of this process was the PFL/DEM, whose star fell mightily (Ribeiro 2014). In the heyday of neoliberal reform in 1998, the year Cardoso won his second term as president, the PFL elected the largest delegation to the federal Chamber of Deputies with 105 seats. By 2006, it was the fourth largest party, with 65 seats in the lower house, and by 2014, it was only the *tenth* largest, with a paltry 22 seats (only 9 of these elected in the Northeast). The near eviction of the PFL/DEM from the Northeast clearly caused its sharp erosion nationally, with several knock-on effects. Other conservative parties that had sought accommodation within the PT-led coalition—notably the former PDS, now called the *Partido Popular* (PP)—were advantaged by the PFL/DEM's loss of hegemony on the right. The fractionalization of the right into new microparties accelerated sharply during the Lula/Dilma years. And in Brasília, the once-formidable PFL/DEM was reduced to a small satellite of Cardoso's PSDB, which itself shifted to the right under the PT.

[FIGURE 2 HERE]

In Figure 2, we illustrate the changing electoral geography of the right over the past two decades. We use the Municipal Ideology Score (Power & Rodrigues-Silveira 2018), a measure of electorally expressed conservatism. The MIS is calculated by computing the fractional vote shares won by each party in a given municipality, multiplying these shares by each party's left-right ideological placement as recorded in the Brazilian Legislative Surveys (BLS), and summing these values. We use the value for each party as observed in the BLS wave closest in time to the election. The eight waves of BLS data have already been rescaled to account for party ideological movements over the past 25 years (Power & Zucco 2012). Thus the MIS adopts the same left-right scale as the BLS, which is centered at zero and ranges from approximately -1 (left) to 1 (right). Because the MIS is sensitive to votes given to *all* parties (including two dozen

microparties), it is an appropriate way to compare the aggregate ideological preferences of municipal electorates across both space and time.[5]

We note that our BLS-derived measure of ideology also addresses two main pitfalls in the measurement of ideology highlighted by Kearney and Machado (2018) and Carreirão and Rennó (2018) in their respective chapters in this volume. Focusing on the difference in estimating ideological positions through both self-reported ideology and policy placement, Kearney and Machado (this volume) find that most people are clustered around five on a 1-10 scale of self-placement in ideology. They suggest that respondents tend to have a much clearer and more differentiated picture when it comes to recording policy preferences (e.g. on same-sex marriage) as compared to using the abstract left-right scale. Carreirão and Rennó (2018), on the other hand, argue that ideology is not central to explaining political behavior in Brazil. They make reference to recent studies that test for ideology in electoral behavior and find no strong association with it. They also challenge Singer's (2012) argument on the realignment of the electorate towards a more left-leaning position, especially among low-SES voters.

We employ here an indirect measure of ideology wherein political elites are invited to classify all other parties (and not their own) on the ideological scale. This empirical strategy presents two main advantages when compared to self-placement by ordinary voters. Firstly, being professional politicians, federal legislators are particularly well-informed and acutely aware of ideological differences among parties. Secondly, people are more capable of differentiating among established brands than of classifying themselves. To grade many options comparatively requires a composite effort of (a) locating each party on the same scale; and (b) establishing the relative distance among parties. Although requiring post-survey rescaling, this procedure makes it relatively easier to generate reliable results, since respondents use their opinion of all parties in the system in order to locate them in relation to one to another (Power and Zucco 2009, 2012).

Figure 2 displays the MIS for the lowest measurable level of PR elections, for municipal councilors (*vereadores*). The time series begins in 1996, at the high water mark of neoliberalism in Brazil, when the PFL dominated the Northeast and was on its way to becoming the largest party in the National Congress. Taken together, the maps clearly show that Brazil leans to the right. The few municipalities with an MIS of less than zero (left of center) are shown in white, and the rest are shaded by the intensity of their electorally revealed conservatism. But what is interesting is the change over time. The transition from the Cardoso era to the PT's redistributive policies is clearly reflected in the elections of 2004, 2008, and 2012; the shift to the left is most radical in the Northeast, which provided the greatest electoral support for military rule and for authoritarian successor parties (especially the PFL/DEM) after 1985.[6] The decline of electoral conservatism is visible across at least three electoral cycles, giving rise to the thesis that

[5] BLS ideological scores were available for 15 parties that won approximately 86% of the vote across the period in question. The rest of the vote was won by microparties whose ideological positions were imputed using procedures described in Power and Rodrigues-Silveira (2018).

[6] We remind the reader that the MIS is an aggregate measure incorporating the performance of *all* parties and cannot be used to infer the performance of any single party. Leftward movement in the MIS does not necessarily imply that the PT is "winning" or that the PFL is "losing," but rather that the bloc of all left parties is, on the whole, performing better than the bloc of all right parties in PR elections. Much of the leftward shift in Pernambuco, for example, was actually driven by the Brazilian Socialist Party (PSB), another left of center party in the PT coalition.

traditional right-wing politics was on the decline. Some scholars went so far as to claim that Brazil's "inclusionary decade" would lead to a long-term electoral "realignment" in favor of a progressive coalition led by the PT (Singer 2012).

A window of opportunity with the PT collapse. Dramatic changes in national politics during the Dilma Rousseff administration (2011-2016) led to a new political opening for conservative parties, especially the DEM and PSDB. The economy began to slow notably in 2012 and pitched into deep recession beginning in late 2014, just as Dilma was being reelected to a second term. A massive corruption scandal implicated key figures in the PT, leading to a sharp decline in mass support for the party (Mainwaring, Power, and Bizzarro 2018; Samuels & Zucco 2018). Political polarization and the breakup of the Lula-era grand coalition—in which the PT had received consistent support from the PMDB and from small parties of the right such as the PP, PR, and PTB—set the stage for Dilma's impeachment and eventual removal from office in 2016. Her replacement, Michel Temer of the PMDB, pivoted sharply to the right and created the first government with no party of the left since 2002. The main beneficiaries were the PSDB and the DEM, which reentered national government after many years and were rewarded with key ministries. The DEM also recaptured the speakership of the Chamber of Deputies, a remarkable achievement for a party that had nearly disappeared in the elections of 2014.

[TABLE 2 HERE]

Most of these events were unforeseeable. They demonstrate that political change in Brazil, even when underpinned by authentic socioeconomic change as in the "inclusionary decade," should never be seen as irreversible. In Table 2, we again use the MIS to demonstrate how a "period effect" such as the crisis of 2016 can offset the effects of structural variables—such as socioeconomic modernization and local political competition—that have traditionally been inimical to the political right. The reference year in the regression is 1996, arguably the strongest moment of the political right prior to Temer. The model shows that in the past two decades rising human development in Brazil has indeed eroded electoral conservatism, as has increasing political pluralism (measured as the effective number of electoral parties at the municipal level). These findings are consistent with modernizationist theories devised to explain an earlier erosion of the Brazilian right in the Republic of 1946 (e.g., Soares 1973). By including dummy variables for each electoral cycle, we can inspect how this trend is impacted by specific moments over the past two decades. A time-sensitive model confirms the gradual weakening of electoral conservatism through 2012. But in 2016, in the wake of Dilma's impeachment and the collapse of the PT, the trend comes abruptly to a halt—as Figure 1 also suggests visually.

This exercise suggests that the opportunity structure for the modern Brazilian right can be shaped as much by coalitional politics in Brasília as by sociopolitical change at the micro-level. The right clearly benefited from the natural exhaustion of a long-entrenched governing party, the PT. The context of the PT endgame was characterized by political polarization and a trend toward "negative partisanship" (Samuels & Zucco 2018), i.e., an antipathy toward a ruling party which in 2003-2016 brought sustained progressive government to Brazil for the first time. The reversal of a commodity-driven economic boom, widespread corruption scandals, and the subsequent collapse of the PT opened up new possibilities for conservative parties in the Temer interregnum. In other words, rumors of the right's death were greatly exaggerated.

Conclusion: Brazil's Multiple Rights in the 21st Century

As Brazilian democracy moves into its fourth decade, it is clear that the right has demonstrated an unprecedented level of behavioral compliance with the rules of the game. This distinguishes the contemporary civilian right from its earlier incarnations in the Republic of 1946, when it frequently sought military intervention to resolve recurrent political crises, and in the authoritarian regime of 1946-1964, when it adopted a servile role. In this sense, the right has contributed to democratic sustainability, or at least has not openly undermined it.

As democracy spins the webs of its own history, it is clear that the modern right is not the monolithic, reactionary force that was often assumed by traditional approaches to the Brazilian political system. In fact, the 21st century right is plural. There are today at least four identifiable sectors of the political right. One of these is a large family of weakly ideological, pragmatic, office-seeking parties and politicians. These conservative actors, who rely heavily on state largesse and the exchange of favors, are characterized by a permanent impulse toward *governismo* (opportunistic support for the government of the day). They are uninterested in (if not downright allergic to) programmatic politics, which makes them attractive partners for policy-seeking executives who aim to centralize the legislative agenda. The PMDB is the "most valuable player" in this category. In this camp one also finds the center-right "parties for rent" such as the PTB, the PR, and the PP, parties that were equally comfortable in the PT-led or PSDB-led coalitions of the past 20 years. This sector also includes a dozen or more nondescript microparties (*nanicos*) that typically do not win executive power, but routinely elect a handful of Congressional representatives who are quickly coopted into progovernment alliances (nonprogrammatic microparties have no discernible utility as opposition vehicles). The *governista* faction of the right is the most stereotypical: it comes closest to embodying the "patrimonial tradition" (Roett 1999) in Brazilian politics.

The three other sectors of the right are remarkable in that they have observable (although sometimes inconsistent) programmatic impulses. These are, respectively, the economic right, the religious right, and the neo-authoritarian right.

The economic right is committed to an agenda of state shrinking and pro-market reforms. It identifies itself with the successful economic stabilization policies of the mid-1990s (the Real Plan) and the package of liberalizing constitutional amendments that followed. While the Cardoso administration (1995-2002) was frequently criticized by the left for pursuing reform without redistribution, the subsequent PT governments were derided by the economic right as offering redistribution without reform. Thus the economic right aims to revive what it sees as a neglected agenda. The economic right receives strong backing from mainstream media outlets and from São Paulo industrial and financial interests. Its clearest partisan vehicles are the PSDB, which has dominated São Paulo state since 1994, and the DEM. These parties are by no means homogeneous, and each contains ordinary careerist politicians uninterested in policy, but the

main agenda of neoliberal economic reform in Brazil is shared between these two longtime allies.[7]

What is often termed the "religious" right—meaning the parties, political networks and community organizations maintained by neo-Pentecostal churches—is sometimes difficult to disentangle from what we have called the clientelistic or *governista* right. Many pastors and faithful enter politics through the PMDB and smaller center-right parties, including microparties and personalistic movements: in partisan terms, Pentecostals are highly diasporic. Yet in recent years the Social Christian Party (PSC) has emerged as the most programmatic of the many vehicles for Pentecostal political involvement. The PSC has a clear moral and religious agenda in public policy, including stern opposition to abortion and homosexuality, and it is an enthusiastic participant in the "culture wars" fought in both the mainstream and online media. The PSC's presidential candidate in 2014, Pastor Everaldo, and its leading figure in Congress, Marco Feliciano, are two of the most prominent politicians advocating a conservative Christian policy agenda. The PSC remains small, but with astute use of the media it "punches above its weight."

The final camp of the contemporary right combines a radical law-and-order discourse with occasional nostalgia for the military regime. Elements of this approach were already visible in the 1980s and 1990s in the defunct Party for the Reconstruction of National Order (PRONA), led by the late fringe candidate Enéas Carneiro. Over time, as security entrepreneurs were increasingly elected to Congress, the "Public Security Caucus" (sometimes referred to as the *bancada da bala*, the bullet-benchers) became of the one of the largest groupings in the national legislature. In 2015 this caucus had approximately 50 members in Congress, with 22 of these being classified as "hard-liners"—mainly former police officers (DIAP 2015: 135).

Over the past decade, leadership of the hard-line authoritarian faction has increasingly been assumed by the theatrical seven-term deputy Jair Bolsonaro, a former military officer. Originally an advocate for military families, Bolsonaro later adopted a radical public security agenda based on support for gun rights and open justification of extralegal killings. He is openly hostile to racial and sexual minorities and especially to human rights advocates, whom he sees as "defenders of criminals." Almost alone among national politicians, he unflinchingly defends the policies and actions of the 1964-1985 dictatorship. While his nostalgia for anticommunism may have little purchase on the public imagination, his praise for two purported characteristics of military rule—higher levels of public safety and lower levels of official corruption—has proven very effective as a political tactic, and he has successfully leveraged legions of supporters on social media. Bolsonaro has no national party organization, so it is not correct to say that authoritarian nostalgia has a direct expression in the Brazil system, but even as a fringe populist he has clearly made it easier to say things that were once off-limits. In this way he may yet influence the behavior of other mainstream right parties.

In sum, several cleavages permeate the 21st century Brazilian right. An overarching cleavage separates the clientelistic majority from the programmatic minority, and within the

[7] In 2011, a new microparty called the *Partido Novo* appeared advocating classical liberalism in perhaps the purest form ever seen in Brazil, advocating the immediate privatization of Petrobras and the Banco do Brasil, not to mention full independence for the Central Bank.

small policy-seeking camp there are significant differences over what to emphasize: economic reform, religious moralism, or authoritarian nostalgia. In this sense, there are several Brazilian "rights," and there is no reason to expect that they will coalesce into a monolithic political force in the near future. Recent experience has shown that sectors of the right are subject to changing opportunity structures that can advantage or disadvantage them in unpredictable ways. In Brazil's fragmented political system, their pathways to power depend not only on the persuasiveness of their agendas but on the wisdom of their coalitional choices.

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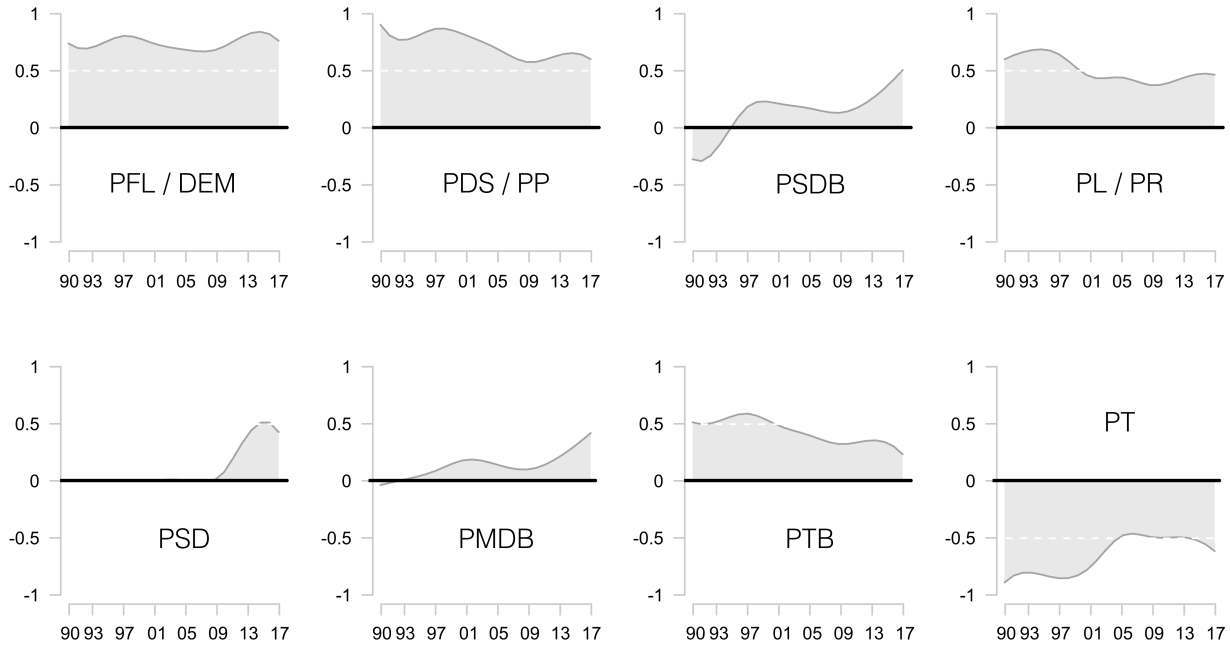
Table 1. Principal Right-of-Center Parties in the Post-1985 Democracy

Party	Seats (2018)	Orientation and Background
Clear Pre-1985 Conservative Lineage		
Progressive Party (PP), founded 1966, last renamed 2003	52	Formerly the pro-military party in 1964-1985, known first as ARENA then as PDS; shrank drastically in 1980s; has changed names four times; later made pragmatic alliance with PT governments after 2003
Democrats (DEM), founded as PFL in 1984, renamed 2007	33	Founded as Liberal Front by mostly Northeastern defectors from military regime in 1984; pragmatic, clientelistic "party of power;" key leaders supported every president from 1964 to 2002; ally of PSDB and consistently opposed to PT
Brazilian Labor Party (PTB), founded 1980	19	Clientelistic "party for rent" that supports most presidents; after 2003, an early repository for opportunistic center-right politicians wishing to support Lula
Party of the Republic (PR), founded 2006	42	Clientelistic party based on merger of former Liberal Party (PL) and PRONA party. Founded as PL in 1985, originally a programmatic Thatcherite party, but quickly became a nondescript "party for rent"
Social Democratic Party (PSD), founded 2011	42	Opportunistic shuttle party created by politicians (mostly from DEM, but some from PTB, PP, PSDB) who wanted to align with the PT government after the PT won a third consecutive term in office
Independent Origins Yet Currently Right of Center		
Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (PMDB), founded 1966	83	Legal opposition party during military regime of 1964-1985; heterogeneous, decentralized, catchall support party for virtually all presidents since 1985; never a viable presidential contender; inherited presidency with Temer in 2016
Party of Brazilian Social Democracy (PSDB), founded 1988	56	Originally a progressive faction of PMDB; in pre-Cardoso years described as Western European-style social democratic; held presidency 1995-2002 and moved to center with pro-market reforms; moved further right during PT years

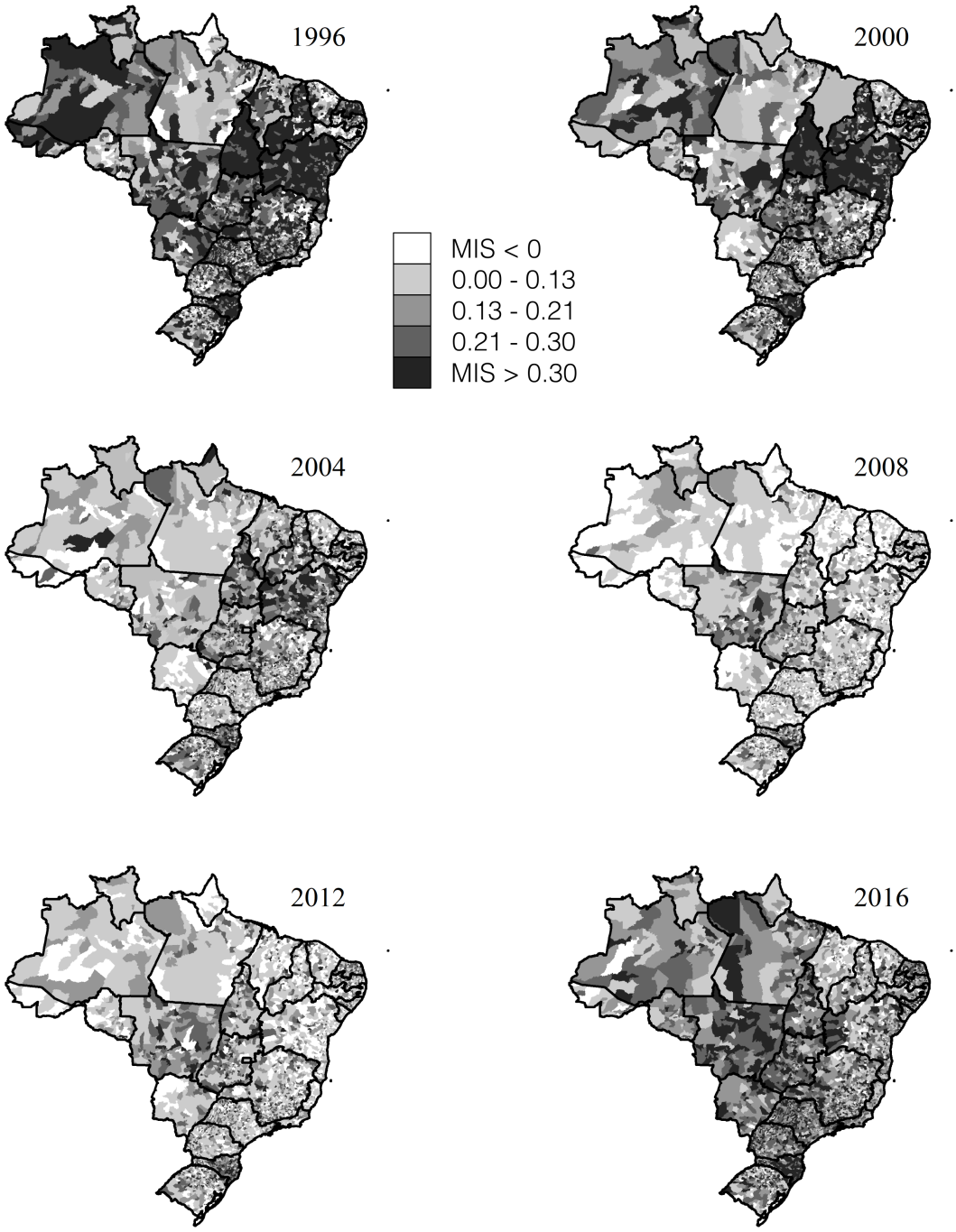
Notes: table shows all existing right-of-center parties that have held at least 5% of Congressional seats at any point since 1985. Second column shows the number of seats held in the bicameral National Congress (N=594) in 2018. For a complete roster of smaller conservative parties, see footnote 4 in text.

Figure 1. Ideological Movement Among Leading Brazilian Parties, 1990-2017



Notes: the ideology scale is centered at zero, and ranges from -1 (left) to +1 (right). Source: compiled by authors using BLS data.

Figure 2. Decline and Resurgence of the Right: Electorally Expressed Conservatism in Brazilian Municipalities, 1996-2016



Notes: Dependent variable is the Municipal Ideological Score (MIS) an aggregate ideological outcome, where the left-right ideology of each participating party is weighted by its vote share in the PR elections for local councillors. The ideology scale is centered at zero, with -1 as left and 1 as right. White represents municipalities with an MIS to the left of the center point; shading represents intensity of support for right-leaning parties, with darker shades indicating higher levels of electoral conservatism. Sources: BLS and Tribunal Superior Eleitoral.

Table 2. Predicting Electorally Expressed Conservatism in Brazilian Municipalities, 1996-2016

Human Development Index	-0.152***
	(0.010)
Effective Number of Electoral Parties	-0.006***
	(0.0004)
Election Year 2000	-0.022***
	(0.003)
Election Year 2004	-0.095***
	(0.003)
Election Year 2008	-0.142***
	(0.003)
Election Year 2012	-0.085***
	(0.004)
Election Year 2016	-0.004
	(0.004)
Constant	0.406***
	(0.005)
N	31,741
R^2	0.157
Adjusted R^2	0.157

Significance levels: * < .10;**p < .05; ***p < .01

Notes: Dependent variable is MIS (see text and notes to Figure 1). Reference year is 1996. Effective number of electoral parties is for local legislative elections (municipal councils). Sources: Brazilian Legislative Surveys, IPEADATA and Tribunal Superior Eleitoral.