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Book Review

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Abstracts

Democracy, Redistribution, and Equality

Adam Przeworski

The article argues that economic inequality inevitably generates political inequality, which in turn reproduces economic inequality. Basic concepts are introduced first along with strong caveats concerning the quality of the cross-national data on income distributions; historical patterns of income inequality are summarized next, and with these preliminaries, a distinction is made between redistribution of consumption at a particular time and equalization of income earning capacities over time. Following this economic considerations, the article discussion moves to political factors that may block redistributions.

Keywords: Democracy; Inequality; Redistribution; Public policies; Political factors.

Actors, Interests and Strategies of Brazilian Foreign Policy on Biofuels

Marcelo Medeiros and Liliana Froio

This article aims to examine how the entry of biofuels into Brazil's international agenda came about and which actors and interests have influenced the formulation of the Brazilian foreign policy on biofuels. To this end, the article will be developed in two stages: (1) an analysis of the factors that explain how biofuels came to fit into Brazilian foreign policy; (2) an analysis of domestic and international actors and interests that impact the international strategy adopted by Brazil on biofuels. To conclude, some final considerations will be presented.

Keywords: Biofuels; Brazil; Policies; Regimes; Environment.

Empirical Determinants of Government Efficiency: A Study Based on Objective Indicators

Francisca Guedes de Oliveira

This paper is concerned with two things: finding an objective and easily quantifiable measure of government efficiency and testing possible determinants of government quality. As measures of government efficiency, we used ratios of infant mortality rate to health expenditures as a percentage of GDP, and ratios of drop out and illiteracy rates to education expenditures as a percentage of GDP. We assume that government efficiency in providing health and education services depends on economic, political and cultural factors.

Keywords: Government quality; Public goods provision; Efficiency; Political determinants; Cultural determinants; Economic determinants.

Trust and Political Information: Attitudinal Change in Participants in the Youth Parliament in Brazil

Mario Fuks and Gabriel Avila Casalecchi

This article analyses the impact of socializing experiences on the political attitudes of youngsters. More specifically, our goal is to evaluate the impact of the Youth Parliament program on youngsters' confidence levels in the Minas Gerais State Assembly (MGSA). The analysis focuses on the cognitive foundations of attitudes and results show a substantial increase in confidence levels in MGSA, an increase associated with the acquisition of information on the institution. It is asserted that the increase in confidence in MGSA represents an attitudinal "gain". The study design involves quasi-experimental research on a non-random sample. We conducted two rounds of interviews in 2008, prior and subsequent to the program, with 335 participants (167 in the treatment group; and 168 in the control group).

Keywords: Political attitudes; political knowledge; political socialization; civic education.

Women in Motion: Female Representation in the Rio Grande do Sul State Legislative Assembly

Alfredo Alejandro Gugliano and Andréia Orsato

This article seeks to further the debate on the political participation of women in the framework of a democratic political regime. Foremost, it analyzes women's representation as elected legislators in Brazilian state legislatures. Accordingly, the article draws on the contributions made thus far by some women authors – linked to a theoretical framework that, as the article unfolds, is presented as the feminist theory – as regards the critique of the model of democracy prevailing in Western societies. Next, we present and discuss an array of data on women's inclusion in the Legislative Assembly of the State of Rio Grande do Sul, encompassing all female state representatives elected since 1951, when the first gaúcha, as those born in the state like to call themselves, woman legislator took office. The findings in this article seek to advance knowledge of the history of women's political parliamentary participation, given the scarcity of information on the theme in the context of the aforementioned state legislature, as well as pointing out the main features of female participation in the Rio Grande do Sul State Legislature.

Keywords: Democracy; Feminist theorists; Women's political participation; Legislative branch.

Electoral Governance in Brazil

Vitor Marchetti

Electoral governance has increasingly more frequently been the object of study of the comparative politics literature. This article examines the electoral governance institutional model adopted in Brazil and its consequences for political/electoral competition. It is argued herein that Brazil's Electoral Justice System, motivated by the institutional design, has ended up becoming one of the main actors of the country's recent democratic consolidation, being decisive not only with regard to rule adjudication and application, but also to rulemaking. With the purpose of assessing this governance model in action, three important recent rulings by Brazil's Electoral Justice System are analysed here: verticalization of the coalitions, reduction in the number of councillors, and party loyalty.

Keywords: Brazil; Electoral governance; Electoral Justice System; Judiciary branch; Higher Electoral Court; Judicialization of politics.

Democracy, Redistribution, and Equality*

Adam Przeworski

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The article argues that economic inequality inevitably generates political inequality, which in turn reproduces economic inequality. Basic concepts are introduced first along with strong caveats concerning the quality of the cross-national data on income distributions; historical patterns of income inequality are summarized next, and with these preliminaries, a distinction is made between redistribution of consumption at a particular time and equalization of income earning capacities over time. Following this economic considerations, the article discussion moves to political factors that may block redistributions.

Keywords: democracy; inequality; redistribution; public policies; political factors.

Introduction

Soon after Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva was first elected the president of Brazil, I had a conversation with the secretary of the Workers' Party (PT) in a favela of Rio de Janeiro. When I asked my interlocutor what the newly elected government should do, his response was immediate "redistribute." "Ok," I said, "the government should increase taxes on the rich, but what should it do with the revenue?". His answer was still "redistribute." This is how far we got. And I wondered ever since what his answer could have and should have been.

What does it mean to "redistribute"? While redistribution of income continues to constitute the standard slogan of the Left around the world, specific programs do not go far beyond the silence of my interlocutor. When the idea of redistribution first appeared

* This is a much revised version of a lecture delivered at the University of São Paulo on October 7, 2011 and at the Third Congress of Mexican Social Science Association on February 27, 2012. I am deeply grateful to Carlos Acuna, Fernando Cortes, and Fernando Limongi for their skeptical, penetrating comments.

in modern history, in England during the seventeenth century, its meaning was clear for the asset to be redistributed was land.¹ Attacking the Levellers, Harrington's (1977, 460) claimed that "By levelling, they who use the word seem to understand: when a people rising invades the lands and estates of the richer sort, and divides them equally among themselves." Now, land can be carved into pieces and redistributed, thus equalizing the capacity to earn incomes. But what can be redistributed today, in economies in which most production is specialized and socialized, involving cooperation of many in large units constituted by modern firms? Moreover, what can be redistributed and how so as to reduce inequality of income earning capacities?

These are the questions addressed below. I should warn that this text is not more than a summary of the current state of knowledge, offering few if any answers. Persistent inequality is a central puzzle in economics and in political economy: articles that ask "Why the poor do not take it away from the rich?" appear almost every year in academic journals (Putterman 1996; Roemer 1998; Lind 2005; Huber and Stanig 2010). Note that "why not?" questions are notoriously difficult to answer indeed, they are unanswerable unless there are good reasons to expect that the answer should be positive. But in this case the reasons are good: after all, when the majority of the people are poor and when political decisions are made by majorities, incomes should be equalized. Yet they rarely are. All I can do is to list and add to extant explanations. But because there are so many explanations, choosing among them is not a simple matter.

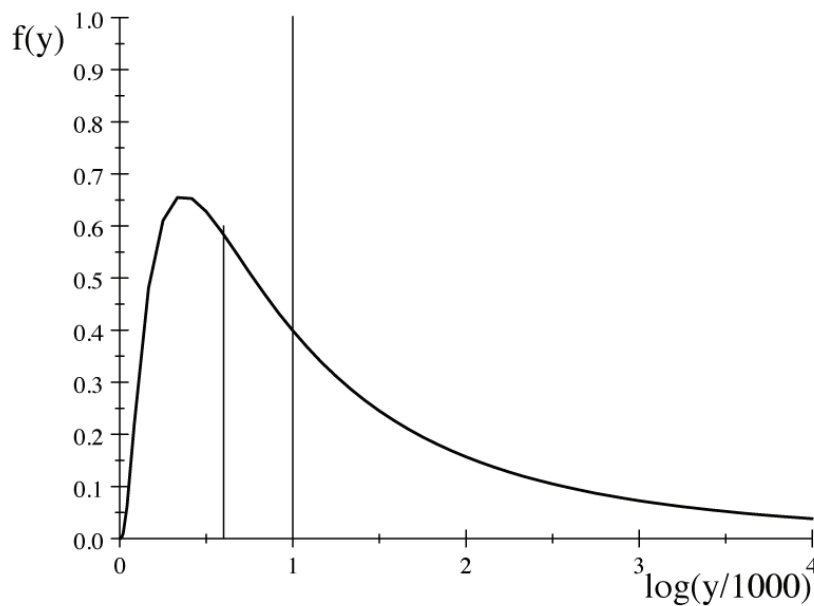
The paper is organized as follows. Basic concepts are introduced first along with strong caveats concerning the quality of the cross-national data on income distributions. Historical patterns of income inequality are summarized next. With these preliminaries, a distinction is made between redistribution of consumption at a particular time and equalization of income earning capacities over time, with a particular emphasis on the technical difficulties of redistributing productive assets. Following this purely economic considerations, the discussion moves to political factors that may block redistributions. Specifically, I argue that economic inequality inevitably generates political inequality, which in turn reproduces economic inequality.

Preliminaries: Concepts and Data

Figure 1 is a picture of a distribution of income among individuals (or house-holds). The horizontal axis gives the logarithm of income, measured in 1000's (of whatever currency), while the vertical axis gives the density (relative frequency) of recipients with such incomes. This picture is deliberately designed to represent a typical distribution: there is a large mass of people with low incomes and a fat, long tail that represents recipients of high incomes.

The first vertical line shows the median income, while the second line represents the mean. Note that the median is lower than the mean - a pattern observed in all known income distributions - which means that the majority of individuals would benefit from incomes becoming more equal. The ratio of the median to the mean income gives one summary of income inequality: the lower this ratio, the higher the inequality (if the distribution is lognormal this ratio is uniquely related to the variance of the distribution).

Figure 1. Lognormal distribution of incomes



This is not the only way to summarize the extent of inequality associated with a particular distribution. The Gini index is a popular statistic, measuring the average difference of incomes among all pairs of recipients. Perhaps most intuitive statistic is the ratio of the incomes received by the top 20 percent to the income of the bottom 20 percent of income recipients, which will be written below as Q5/Q1. There are several other measures, but these will suffice here.

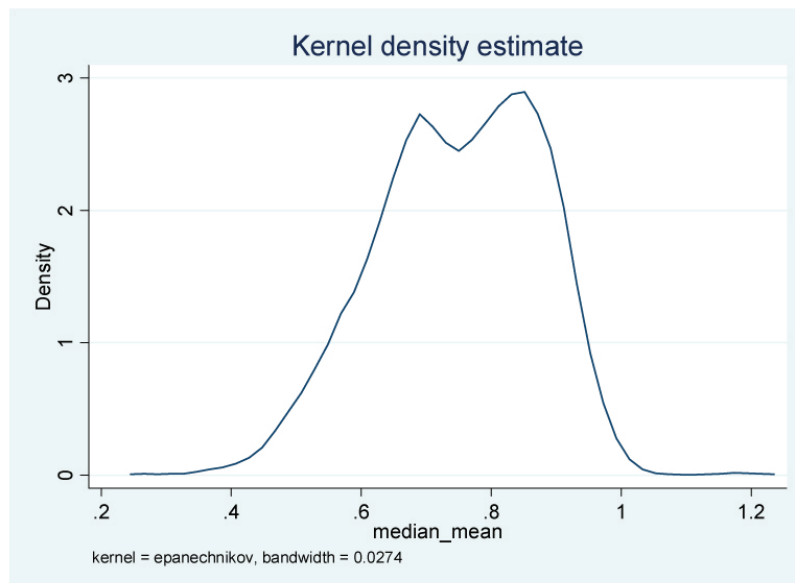
Now, before illustrating these statistics and making cross-national and over-time comparisons, a strong warning is required about the quality and the comparability of the available data. Even in large household surveys, the few very large and the many very small incomes escape the sampling frame. The probability that a billionaire would be included in the sample is almost zero, while many poor people cannot be found. As a result, it is estimated that the income reported in household surveys covers between 60 and 80 percent of income derived from national accounts, which means that even large surveys underestimate the extent of inequality (Córtes 2000, 246-51; Cornia, Atkinson, and Kliski 2004, 31).

International and over time comparisons present an even greater problem because of different definitions and methods used. Some data concern individuals while other concern households some report incomes, other expenses, while still other consumption. Most data are based on national household surveys but some do not provide complete territorial coverage and some are based on tax rolls. Finally, the coverage of particular countries is very unequal: the number of annual observations per countries varies from 1 to 45. Given these differences, perhaps it would be prudent just to give up international comparisons based on such data sets (Atkinson and Brandolini 2001). But the lure is irresistible, so all I can do is to warn the reader against believing too much any of the numbers that follow.

Below I use two compilations of cross-national over-time data. One, to which I refer as “WDI+,” is based on the most recent edition of World Bank’s World Development Indicators (originally collected by Deininger and Squire 1996) and is augmented by whatever numbers could be found anywhere to extend the coverage. Hence, this series is highly heterogeneous with all the issues listed above. The second data set is taken from SWIID (Salt 2011), which is an attempt to address the issues of heterogeneity by constructing homogeneous series using a complex algorithm of multiple imputation. Whether this attempt is successful is doubtful.²

With these caveats, here is the distribution of the median/mean ratios based on WDI+.³

Figure 2. Distribution of the ratios of the median to the mean across countries and time



For future reference, note that this distribution has two peaks. The ratio of 0.7 means that a distribution is highly unequal, while the ratio of 0.9 indicates that it is quite equal.

To provide intuition about numbers, here are some illustrative values for selected

countries and dates, organized from the most equal to the most unequal distribution observed in the WDI+ data set (all the numbers concern gross incomes, m/μ stands for median/mean):

Table 1. Some illustrative statistics of income inequality

Country	Year	Gini	m/μ	Q5/Q1
Bulgaria	1976	17.8	0.99	2.5
Poland	1982	20.9	0.93	2.8
	2002	34.9	0.82	5.5
Denmark	1997	24.7	0.91	4.3
Sweden	1976	28.1	0.96	3.6
US	1968	33.4	0.89	7.1
	2000	40.8	0.78	8.4
	2009	47.0	0.76	14.7
Argentina	1961	42.0	0.66	7.5
	2002	52.5	0.62	18.0
	2009	45.8	0.72	12.3
Brazil	1978	56.0	0.55	24.7
	1989	62.3	0.45	30.8
	2009	53.9	0.60	17.4
Namibia	1993	74.3	0.27	58.9

Bulgaria in 1976 had the most equal distribution observed, Namibia in 1993 most unequal. Note for future reference the rapid increase of inequality in Poland and the United States.

Analyzing historical patterns of income distribution lends itself to several generalizations:

(1) Income distributions appear to be stable over time. The strongest evidence, albeit for a relatively short period, comes from Li, Squire, and Zhu (1997), who report that about 90 percent of total variance in the Gini coefficients is explained by the variation across countries, while few countries show any time trends. Earned incomes show almost no variation during the twentieth century (Piketty 2003). Hence, inequality and equality persist over time. Top income shares (those of the top

1 percent of recipients), however, have been highly volatile over the long run, with significant consequences for overall inequality (Atkinson, Piketty and Saenz 2011).⁴

(2) Increases in inequality appear to be much more rapid than its declines. Particularly after 1982, some increases of inequality have been dramatic. In Poland, where distribution was quite egalitarian under communism, the ratio of the median to the mean income was 0.82 in 1986, while in Mexico in 1989 it was 0.59. By 1995 this ratio in Poland was 0.62, almost the same as in highly unequal Mexico. In the United States, income inequality hovered around a constant level until about 1970 and then increased sharply (Bartels 2008, 35).

(3) It seems that no country rapidly equalized market incomes without some kind of cataclysm: destruction of large property as a result of foreign occupation (Japanese in Korea, Soviet in Eastern Europe), revolutions (Soviet Union), wars, or massive emigration of the poor (Norway, Sweden). The top income shares were particularly effected by the two world wars and the depression of 1929 (Atkinson, Piketty and Saenz 2011).

In sum, it may well be that income inequality tends to increase as a result of the operation of markets - which would constitute a “Newtonian” law of income distribution - unless governments actively counteract this tendency and then it simply persists, unless some cataclysmic events intervene.

Redistribution

Changing distributions

Consider first a change of income distribution:

Figure 3. Two distributions

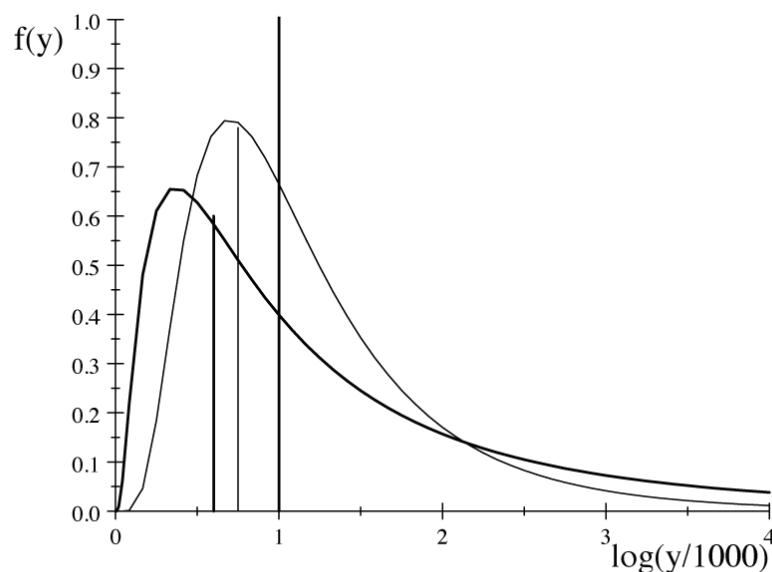


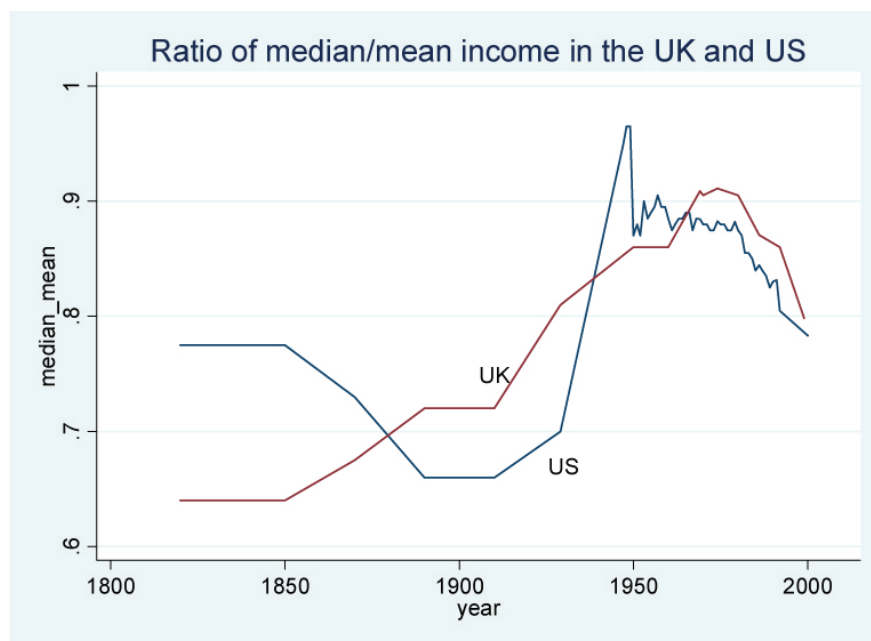
Figure 3 shows two distributions, where the one represented by the thin line is more equal (lower variance, higher ratio of median to mean, thinner tail) than the thick one. If the distribution changes from thin to thick, it becomes more unequal if from thick to thin, more equal. But is every change of distribution a “redistribution”?

Distributions can change because of changing market conditions, for example, increasing or falling demand for some skills. They can change as an unintended by-product of some policies, such as regulation of monopolies (Peltzman 1976). They can be affected by

the “cataclysms” discussed above. Or the change can result from deliberate redistributive policies. Isolating the effect of all these potential factors is difficult, as attested by the controversies over the relative impact of changing demand for skills, technological change, or fiscal policies.

Just as an illustration of this difficulty, consider long-term patterns of income distribution, as characterized by the median/mean ratio in the United Kingdom and the United States. The United States seems to have had a much more equal distribution in early 19th century but a massive emigration of the poor, mainly from Ireland, reduced the inequality in the U.K. while the massive immigration of unskilled workers to the U.S. increased it. The two world wars and the economic crisis of 1929 had a powerful impact on equalizing the distributions in both countries. The equality persisted in the aftermath of World War II but was quickly eroded under the impact of neo-liberalism in both countries.

Figure 4. Income inequality in the UK and the US



I have no idea whether this is the correct story but it serves to show that different factors can be at play at different times and that telling them apart is not an easy task. To put it differently, one should not assume that equalization is necessarily an effect of redistribution.

Redistribution of current consumption

The central and complicated issue is whether redistribution of consumption has the effect of equalizing income earning potentials. Almost the entire literature in political

economy focuses on the redistribution of current consumption through taxes and transfers (“the fisc”).⁵ The story goes as follows: Individuals who work or own capital assets receive “gross,” “market,” “factor,” or “pre-fisc” incomes. These incomes are taxed and then transferred in the form of private income or public services. After the transfers, individuals receive “net” or “post-fisc” incomes or consume equally valued public goods. The rate at which incomes are taxed and transferred is the “rate of redistribution.”⁶

Redistribution of current consumption is often an urgent task, necessary to protect people from destitution. It is costly - it bears administrative expenses and may affect incentives to invest - but these costs are minor. The *Mexican Progressa*, the Brazilian *Bolsa Família*, the Argentine universal child subsidies and old-age pensions made a big difference in the lives of millions of people at a negligible cost.⁷

Just calculate: if the ratio of the incomes of the top to the bottom quintile is 26 (in Brazil in 1989 the share of Q5 was 0.652 and of Q1 0.025), taxing the incomes of the top 20 percent of recipients at an additional 4 percent would double the incomes of the bottom 20 percent. Even if this tax would generate inefficiency, the marginal effect would be minor and the welfare consequences enormous.

Yet what is the impact of current redistribution on the future inequality of income-earning potentials? Note that unless current redistribution increases the capacities of the poor to earn incomes, it must be repeated again, year after year, as in Marx’s concept of “simple reproduction.” This is why this question is crucial.

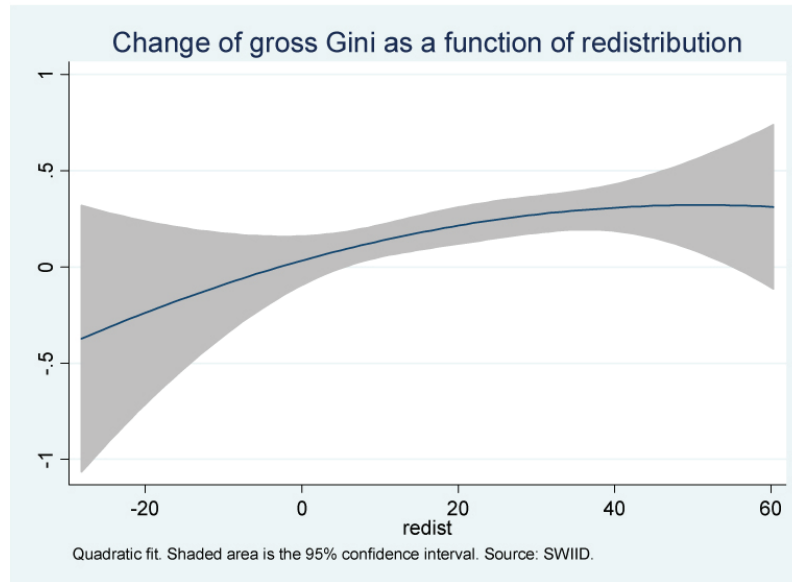
In principle, the answer should be simple to obtain: we could analyze statistically the impact of current income transfers or of current social policies on the future distribution of gross incomes. But given the poor quality and the scarcity of data, not much credence can be given to such results. Hence, we can only speculate.

One may expect that redistributive programs that consist exclusively of transfers to households of money or in kind differ in their effects from programs that imitate the *Mexican Progressa* by also including access to health and educational services. Consider first transfers to poorer individuals or households. Even when these transfers are in the form of money, hence potentially allowing saving and investment, there are good reasons to think that they are entirely consumed.⁸ Hence, as the result the rich consume (or invest) less, the poor consume more, but nothing else changes, so that the inequality of income-earning potentials remains the same the next year. With a reminder about all the caveats concerning the data, it appears that if anything, a pure redistribution of current consumption during a particular year increases the inequality of gross incomes as measured by the Gini coefficients.⁹

I am not quite willing to believe this result and I cannot think of a plausible mechanism that would generate it.¹⁰ But the conservative interpretation of this pattern is

that redistribution of current consumption has no effect on the distribution of future gross incomes, which is sufficient to support the theoretical claim.

Figure 5. Redistribution of consumption and change of Gini coefficients of gross income



Social policies that include access to health services, education, and sometimes housing present more complicated issues. It may well be that having better health makes someone able to work 48 hours per week instead of 30 or that having completed ten years of education makes someone more productive than having completed six. But, first, the magnitude of these policies may be insufficient to pull people out of poverty and, second, the effect of these increased productive capacities on income depends on the general economic situation. Banarjee and Duflo (2011) provide evidence that the rate of return to investment is very high when the amount of investment is very small, but it is low when investment is somewhat larger, to become high (and declining) again when investment is large. This implies that even if the productive capacities of the poor increase somewhat, the rate of return does not warrant further investment, so that poverty remains to be a trap. In turn, there is evidence that while the effect of *Oportunidades* was to increase the human capital of children in comparison to their parents, the kids do not find employment given the depressed market conditions. Moreover, note that if everyone increases their potential, the general equilibrium effect may be that wages remain the same: one of the big puzzles of development economics is that individual rates of return to education are high but aggregate levels of education do not affect aggregate growth rates.

Hence, while some social policies may have productivity enhancing effects¹¹, the scale of these policies is most likely insufficient and their effects depend on the general

state of the economy, in particular on the demand for the particular assets and skills. Instead of expecting that equalization of income-earning potentials would result as a by-product of redistributing consumption, the inequality of income-earning potentials must be attacked directly.

Thinking about redistribution cannot be limited to a focus on taxes and transfers. All policies pursued by governments affect income distribution. While it may make sense to think of “market,” “pre-fisc” incomes, there is no such thing as “pre-government” incomes. Incomes are earned in markets but markets are constructed by the state (Przeworski 2003). All policies affect the distributions of income. Consider a few examples: In some countries in order to practice as a nurse one must complete two years of post-secondary education and in other countries none. Clearly, nurses will have higher incomes if they must be credentialed. Taxi medallions are a monopoly created by, typically, local governments: the current price of a medallion in New York City is \$750,000. Again the medallions transfer incomes from users to owners of taxis (and finance local governments). These are just minor examples but the same is true of more consequential policies: regulation of natural monopolies, regulation of labor markets, laws regarding consumer protection, environmental regulations, (...), the list is endless. Even when the state does not enter directly into private transactions, the terms of these transactions depend on public policies. Consider the example, due to Stiglitz (1994), of buying car insurance against theft. Consumers pay premiums and if theft transpires receive benefits. But the amount of premiums and benefits - the terms of this private transaction between individuals and insurance companies - depend on the probability that the insured event would occur and this probability depends in turn on the number of policemen the government puts on the street. The state is present in all private transactions.

Not only all policies affect distributions of incomes but some policies concentrate incomes while other policies equalize them, and probably all governments pursue such policies simultaneously. This is why the net effect of public policies on redistribution of income is impossible to determine. The counterfactual cannot be an economy in which there is no government: this is a figment of the imagination of some economists. Moreover, partial equilibrium effects - effects of particular policies in the presence of other policies taken as fixed - are difficult to unravel.

Redistribution of capacities to earn incomes

What policies, then, would have the effect of equalizing income earning potentials, the capacities to earn incomes? Because incomes are generated by efforts applied to productive assets - whether land, physical capital, education, or skills - to equalize the capacities to

earn incomes, we must think in terms of distribution of these assets.

But what assets can be equalized in modern societies? When the idea of equal property first appeared productive assets meant land. Land is relatively easy to redistribute. It is enough to take it from some and give it to others. Hence, agrarian reforms were frequent in history of the world: there were at least 175 land reforms entailing redistribution between 1946 and 2000 alone. But today the distribution of land plays a relatively minor role in generating income inequality. In turn, other assets resist such a simple operation:

(1) Communists redistributed industrial capital by placing it in the hands of the state and promising that uninvested profits would be equally distributed to households. Although this system generated a fair degree of equality, for reasons that cannot be discussed here, it turned out to be dynamically inefficient: it inhibited innovation and technical progress.

(2) Alternatively, one could redistribute titles to property in the form of shares. But this form of redistribution has problems of its own. One is, that as the Czech privatization experience shows, they could be and likely would be quickly reconcentrated. People who are otherwise poorer would sell them to those who are wealthier.

(3) Many countries equalized human capital by investing in education. Not only is this process slow, but moreover people exposed to the same educational system acquire different income earning capacities as a function of their social and economic background.

(4) Finally, income earning capacities can be generated by policies that are narrowly targeted on increasing the productivity of the poor (“pro-poor growth”), such as relaxing credit constraints, training for specific skills, subsidizing the necessary infrastructure, focusing on diseases to which poor people are most vulnerable, etc.¹² Such policies, however, require a high level of administrative competence to diagnose the needs and to target the policies. Moreover, they can be easily used for clientelist purposes.

Finally, even if productive assets were equalized, perfect equality cannot be sustained in a market economy. Suppose productive assets had been equalized. But individuals have different and unobservable abilities to transform productive assets into incomes. Moreover, they are subject to vicissitudes of luck. Assume that particular individuals (or projects they undertake) are subject to slightly different rates of return: some lose at the rate of -0.02 per annum and some gain at the rate 0.02. After twenty-five years, the individual who generates a 2 percent return will be 2.7 times wealthier than the individual who loses 2 percent per year, and after fifty years (say from the age of 18 to 68) this multiple will be 7.4.¹⁵ Hence, even if productive assets were to be equalized, inequality would creep back in.¹⁴

None of these difficulties imply that governments are unable to counteract the unequal distribution of wealth and the consequences of this inequality for the distribution of current consumption. Benhabib, Bisin, and Zou (2011) show analytically that capital and inheritance taxes have a powerful effect on reducing top incomes, while Atkinson, Piketty,

and Saenz (2011) provide historical evidence that progressive incomes taxes prevented the reemergence of grand fortunes after they were destroyed in the 1914-1945 period.

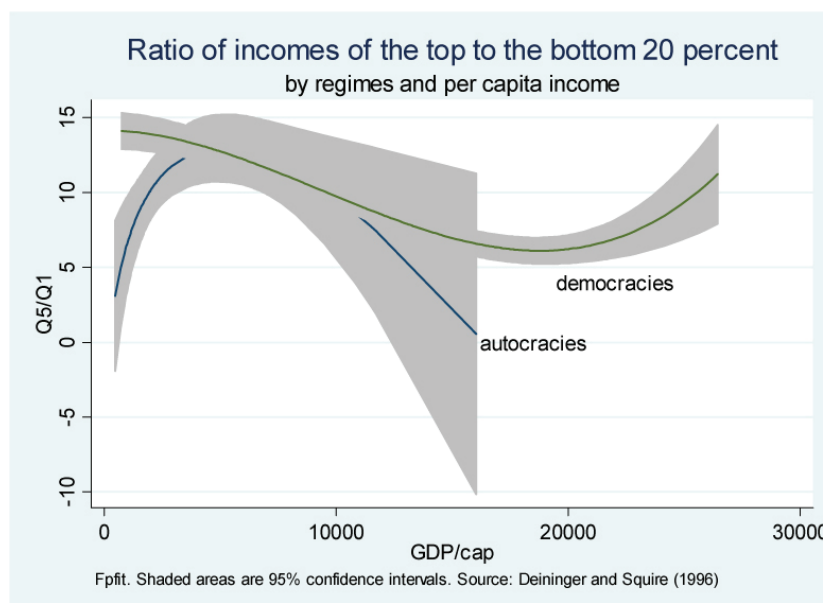
Yet equalizing productive assets seems to be difficult for purely technological and administrative, not just political or economic, reasons. It may well be that when and where they did occur, reductions of inequality of gross incomes were due to the gradual removal of barriers to access by the poor to the use of productive resources they already commanded rather than to distribution of productive assets (Przeworski 2012b). These barriers historically included attachment to land, monopolies and monopsonies, guilds, access to professions and occupations, access to education, protection of particular technologies, and access to credit. Banerjee and Duflo (2011) report that the cost of credit continues to be much higher for the poor around the world. Hence, some policies of “market liberalization”, which acquired a deservedly bad reputation as the result of the failure of neoliberal policies, may in fact have equalizing effects on the access of the poor to productive resources.

Political Economy of Redistribution

Democracy and redistribution

Let me begin with a fact, as always to be taken with some dose of skepticism because of the quality of the data: income distributions (of gross income as measured by the quintile ratio) do not seem to be more equal under democracy than under other regimes.¹⁵

Figure 6. Inequality under different regimes



Where the gray areas in this figure overlap, inequality is not statistically different under the two regimes. Note that the low inequality in wealthier autocracies is due exclusively to Singapore, while the increase of inequality in developed democracies is due to the United States and Switzerland. Statistical analyses that control for non-random selection of regimes confirm that the two regimes do not differ on the average (Przeworski 2011)

Now, this fact is surprising because one can expect that democracy, via political equality, must lead to economic equality. Indeed, at some moment, political and economic equality became connected by a syllogism: Universal suffrage, combined with majority rule, grants political power to the majority. And because the majority is always poor, it will confiscate the riches. The syllogism was perhaps first enunciated by Henry Ireton in the franchise debate at Putney in 1647: “It [universal male suffrage] may come to destroy property thus. You may have such men chosen, or at least the major part of them, as have no local or permanent interest. Why may not these men vote against all property?” (quoted in Sharp 1998, 113-14). It was echoed by a French conservative polemicist, J. Mallet du Pan, who insisted in 1796 that legal equality must lead to equality of wealth: “Do you wish a republic of equals amid the inequalities which the public services, inheritances, marriage, industry and commerce have introduced into society? You will have to overthrow property” (quoted in Palmer 1964, 230). James Madison warned that “the danger to the holders of property can not be disguised, if they are undefended against a majority without property.”¹⁶ Conservatives agreed with socialists¹⁷ that democracy, specifically universal suffrage, must undermine property. The Scottish philosopher James Mackintosh predicted in 1818 that “if the laborious classes gain franchise, a permanent animosity between opinion and property must be the consequence” (Collini, Winch and Burrow 1983, 98). David Ricardo was prepared to extend suffrage only to “that part of them which cannot be supposed to have an interest in overturning the right to property.” (Collini, Winch and Burrow 1983, 107). Thomas Macaulay (1900, 263) in the 1842 speech on the Chartists vividly summarized the danger presented by universal suffrage:

The essence of the Charter is universal suffrage. If you withhold that, it matters not very much what else you grant. If you grant that, it matters not at all what else you withhold. If you grant that, the country is lost... My firm conviction is that, in our country, universal suffrage is incompatible, not only with this or that form of government, and with everything for the sake of which government exists that it is incompatible with property and that it is consequently incompatible with civilization.

Nine years later, from the other extreme of the political spectrum, Karl Marx (1952 [1851], 62) expressed the same conviction that private property and universal suffrage are incompatible:

The classes whose social slavery the constitution is to perpetuate, proletariat, peasantry, petty bourgeoisie, it puts in possession of political power through universal suffrage. And from the class whose old social power it sanctions, the bourgeoisie, it withdraws the political guarantees of this power. It forces the political rule of the bourgeoisie into democratic conditions, which at every moment jeopardize the very foundations of bourgeois society. From the ones it demands that they should not go forward from political to social emancipation from the others they should not go back from social to political restoration.

According to Marx, democracy inevitably “unchains the class struggle”: The poor use democracy to expropriate the riches the rich are threatened and subvert democracy, by “abdicating” political power to the permanently organized armed forces. The combination of democracy and capitalism is thus an inherently unstable form of organization of society, “only the political form of revolution of bourgeois society and not its conservative form of life” (Marx 1934 [1852], 18), “only a spasmodic, exceptional state of things (...) impossible as the normal form of society” (Marx 1971 [1872], 198).

And yet democracy turned out to be compatible not only with private property of productive assets but also with a fair dose of income inequality. Contrary to all the predictions, universal suffrage did not result in confiscation of property, not even in equalization of incomes. Why not?

Because the issue is burning, explanations abound.¹⁸ I can only list generic varieties:

(1) One class of explanations maintains that for a variety of reasons the poor do not want to equalize property, incomes, or even opportunities. The reasons come in several variants:

(1.1) False consciousness due to a lack of understanding of the distinction between productive and non-productive property.

(1.2) Ideological domination due to the ownership of the media by the propertied (Anderson 1977).

(1.3) Divisions among the poor due to religion or race (Roemer 2001; Frank 2004).

(1.4) Expectations of the poor that they would become rich (Benabou and Efe 2001).

(1.5) Fear of losing social status (Corneo and Gruner 2000).

(1.6) Poor information about the effects of particular policies even among people holding egalitarian norms (Bartels 2008).

(1.7) The belief that inequality is just because it is a consequence of efforts, rather than of luck (Piketty 1995).

(2) Another variety of explanations claims that even if a majority holds egalitarian norms, formal political rights are ineffective against private property. Some distinctions are again relevant:

(2.1) Wealthy people occupy positions of political power, which they use to successfully

defend themselves from redistribution (Miliband 1970; Lindblom 1977). The “power elite” is the same as the economic elite.

(2.2) The democratic institutions are in fact not majoritarian but super-majoritarian: more than a simple majority is required to alter the status quo. Unless the two houses of the legislature are identically elected, bicameralism effectively generates a super-majority rule (Przeworski 2010).¹⁹ Executive veto power provides another countermajoritarian device. Non-majoritarian institutions, such as constitutional courts or independent central banks, are not supposed to follow simple majorities.

(2.3) Political projects of radical redistribution may meet violent opposition, including military interventions (Przeworski 2012a). It is not easy to explain why the military would intervene in defense of an egalitarian status quo but the instances in which they did - Chile in 1973 is a prominent example - are familiar to everyone.

(2.4) Independently of their class composition, governments of all partisan stripes must anticipate the trade-off between redistribution and growth. Redistributing productive property or even incomes is costly to the poor. Confronting the perspective of losing their property or not being able to enjoy its fruits, property owners save and invest less, thus reducing future wealth and future income of everyone. This “structural dependence on capital” imposes a limit on redistribution even on those governments that want to equalize incomes (Przeworski and Wallerstein 1988).

None of these explanations remains unscathed when exposed to counter-arguments and to evidence. Personally, I am not taken by the claim that the poor would not want to live better, even if it were at the expense of the rich.²⁰ I am more inclined to believe that the constraints on redistribution are structural, both institutional and economic.

Economic inequality, political inequality, economic inequality

One reason income distributions persist may be that economic inequality generates political inequality, which in turn reproduces economic inequality.²¹

Decisions made by governments affect the welfare of particular groups and individuals. Hence, it is only natural that those whose well-being would be influenced by these decisions seek to influence them. Indeed, the essence of democracy is that citizens exert influence over governments by freely exercising their equal rights to participate in elections, public speech, peaceful demonstrations, and other forms of political activity. But in any market society, the resources which the participants can bring to the competition for political influence are unequal. Democracy is a mechanism that treats all participants equally. But when unequal individuals are treated equally, their influence over collective decisions is

unequal. Imagine a game of basketball. There are two teams, perfectly universalistic rules, and an impartial referee to administer them. But one team consists of players who are 2 meters tall and the other of people who barely exceed 1.6 meter. The outcome of the game is predetermined. The rules of the game treat everyone equally, but this only means that the outcome of the game depends on the resources participants bring to it. Equality of rights is not sufficient to sustain the equality of political influence in economically unequal societies.

This observation is almost as old as democracy itself. Already in 1844 Marx characterized the duality between universalistic rules and unequal resources as follows:

The state abolishes, in its own way, distinctions of birth, social rank, education, occupation, when it declares that birth, social rank, education, occupation, are non-political distinctions, when it proclaims, without regard to these distinctions, that every member of the nation is an equal participant in national sovereignty (...) Nevertheless the state allows private property, education, occupation to act in their way - i.e., as private property, as education, as occupation, and to exert the influence of their special nature.

This duality was repeatedly diagnosed ever since. The idea that political equality is not possible without social and economic equality was the cornerstone of Social Democracy. Jean Jaures (1971, 71) thought that “The triumph of socialism will not be a break with the French Revolution but the fulfillment of the French Revolution in new economic conditions,” while Eduard Bernstein (1961) saw in socialism simply “democracy brought to its logical conclusion.” Yet economic and social inequality persist and their impact on political inequality continues to be a burning issue of democracy.

Tracing the impact of economic resources on democratic politics and the resulting policy outcomes is not a simple task for several reasons:

(1) The point of departure must be that this impact is to some extent inherent in the capitalist economic system in which the decisions affecting the entire society, primarily those concerning investment and employment, are a prerogative of private owners of productive resources. The democratic process, even when it operates perfectly, is constrained by these private decisions.

(2) Socioeconomic inequality may cause political inequality without any expenditures of money or other costly efforts by wealthy individuals or groups if either poverty or inequality directly affect political participation of lower income groups. Except for the United States, and to a lesser extent France and Switzerland, the rates of electoral participation do not differ much by income and education (see Przeworski 2010, 93-94 for a summary of findings). Yet Salt (2006) found that among the countries for which data on inequality are available from Luxembourg Income Studies, greater inequality depresses political interest, the frequency of political discussions, and electoral participation of all

but the most affluent income quintile. Hence, economic inequality may be sufficient to generate political inequality without any actions by special interest groups.

(3) The impact of money on politics cannot be reduced to “corruption.” True, corruption scandals abound: suitcases filled in cash are found in the prime minister’s office, government contracts are awarded to firms co-owned by government ministers, public officials exit politics to cushy jobs in private companies they favored, insider trades are rampant, political parties are found to have bank accounts in Switzerland, local governments operate systematic bribe schedules on contractors, the list goes on and on. Moreover, such scandals are by no means limited to less developed countries or to young democracies: these examples are drawn from Germany, Spain, France, Italy, United States, and Belgium. But reducing the political role of money to instances of “corruption” is deeply misleading. Conceptualized as “corruption,” the influence of money becomes something anomalous, out-of-ordinary. We are told that when special interests bribe legislators or bureaucrats, democracy is corrupted. And then nothing needs to be said when special interests make legal political contributions. In order to exist and to participate in elections, political parties need money. Because election results matter for the private interests, they understandably seek to befriend parties and influence results of elections. The logic of political competition is inexorable. That the same acts are legal in some countries and illegal in other systems - some U.S. political financing practices would constitute corruption in several democracies - is in the end of secondary importance. The influence of money on politics is a structural feature of democracy in economically unequal societies.

(4) The information about the uses of money in politics is scant. To some extent this lack of knowledge is due to the very nature of the phenomenon: legally or not, money infiltrates politics in ways that are intended to be obscure. A general conclusion of surveys conducted in twenty-two countries by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (Bryan and Baer 2005, 3) is that “Little is known about the details of money in political parties or in campaigns. Political party financing patterns are extremely opaque [...]”. With regard to Latin America, Zovatto (2003, 10) comments that “information about finances of political parties is scarce because the culture of transparency and the obligation of these forces to give accounts to the State and the civil society has been in general absent from the political-partisan scene of the region.”. Information about political contributions is available only for a recent period in a handful of countries. Information about lobbying expenditures exists only in the United States.

(5) Even when the information is available, the causal impact on money on the electoral process, on legislative outcomes, and on bureaucratic and regulatory decisions is difficult to identify because the direction of causality is often unclear. Estimates of these effects vary broadly across different studies, perhaps due to their different methodological designs.

(6) Interest group activities include influencing and mobilizing the electorate, financing electoral campaigns, lobbying legislators and the executive branch, and using the judicial system. Schematically, one may think that money biases political outcomes in favor of the donors if (1) political contributions affect the platforms offered by parties in elections, (2) campaign contributions affect the outcomes of elections, (3) political contributions or lobbying efforts affect legislative decisions, (4) political contributions, lobbying efforts, or outright bribes influence executive or regulatory decisions.

Even if methodological problems, in particular determining the directions of causality, are formidable, there is widespread statistical evidence as well as conclusions from case studies in several countries to the effect that (1) in elections, money is more productive for challengers than for incumbents, it matters most in close races, and has a significant effect in open races (those in which there is no incumbent), (2) lobbies have a powerful effect on legislation, (3) special interests influence regulatory decisions and their implementation (See Przeworski 2011 for an overview of evidence). Money has endless ways to infiltrate politics. When limits are imposed on political advertising by candidates, advertising is conducted by “independent” groups in favor of positions that the candidates are known to stand for. When corporations are prohibited from contributing to candidates, their employees are urged to do it as individuals. When regulation caps contributions to political parties, special interest groups spend more money trying to persuade voters directly (Hogan 2005).

It should not be taken as obvious, however, that the impact of money on democratic politics must have the effect of preserving or increasing in equality. Most competition for political influence is competition among interest groups (Becker 1983) and the particular interests may benefit from policies that have equalizing effects: construction companies want governments to build schools or public housing, pharmaceutical companies want governments to finance access to medicines. Moreover, companies that cannot compete because of barriers to entry and other market rigidities want to remove protection of various types of monopolies. Hence, some special interests lobby for policies that have equalizing effects. But they share the interest in keeping unions weak, wages low, and redistribution of consumption low.

The relation between money and politics can be to some extent mitigated so that the impact of economic inequality on political inequality varies across countries. Various regulatory schemes have been proposed and various are in use but we have no systematic knowledge of their effects. Perhaps instead of legal regulation, more effective are mechanisms by which poor people can pool their resources in order to counterbalance the influence of the rich. Unions provided this mechanism in the past and still do in some countries: income inequality is lower in countries which continue to have encompassing unions (Scheve and Stasavage 2009)²² Non-governmental organizations now play some of this role and, as

the 2008 Obama campaign has shown, perhaps the internet will provide an alternative mechanism. But perfect political equality is impossible in economically unequal societies. Something is wrong when a plurality of citizens in a democracy answer the question about which institutions have most power in their country with “banks.”²³ Perhaps the most plausible explanation of the persistence of inequality is the feedback from political to economic inequality. High economic inequality generates high political inequality, disproportionate political influence of the rich perpetuates the inequality.²⁴

Conclusions

As I warned, this paper offers no answers. With so many possible reasons it is difficult to identify a single one. Having to anticipate the decisions of private owners of productive resources is a structural feature of capitalist societies but the extent to which this structural dependence binds is not clear. Equalizing income earning potentials appears to be difficult for purely technical reasons discussed above. Which policies would increase the earning capacity of the poor is not obvious²⁵ and few states have the administrative capacity to implement them. I agree with Banerjee and Duflo (2011) that until we know which policies would work it makes no sense to introduce politics: the question of political economy is “Why are policies that would work not pursued?” or “What political factors would lead to policies that work?”. But political factors may also play an important role. Specifically, there are grounds to think that there is a vicious circle from economic to political and back to economic inequality.

Redistribution of current consumption is an urgent need in societies in which some people are not able to earn incomes sufficient to protect them from destitution. Indeed, as the recent experience of Argentina and Brazil shows, social policies that subsidize consumption of the poor may have a powerful impact on reducing poverty. But redistribution of consumption has no discernible impact on the distribution of income earning potentials.

We need to reformulate the agenda of research concerning the distribution of income. The almost exclusive concentration on the redistribution through taxes and transfers is misguided both intellectually and politically. What we need to understand is how distributions of earning capacities change over time, why does inequality of earning potentials persist over long periods of time. We need to focus not on “redistribution” but on equalization. And such a focus calls for examination of all public policies, not just the deliberately redistributive ones, for their impact of the distributions of future incomes. “Pro-poor growth” (UNDP), “development with equity” (CEPAL) are the correct slogans: we need to think of development policies that focus on increasing the earning potentials of the poor.

Such policies may combine removal of some barriers to access, selective industrial policies, and targeted policies oriented specifically at the productivity of the poor. Along with Rodrik (2008), I do not believe that there are universal recipes, blueprints to be applied everywhere. Also following Rodrik, I believe that to be successful, policy formulation should entail “self-discovery”: experimentation that entails trials and errors, with the understanding that errors are inevitable. What my interlocutor, who sparked these reflections, should have asked himself is what did his community need most urgently to escape the grip of poverty. And the answer would have probably included *Bolsa Família* but also access to clean water, a better primary school, security on the streets, public transportation to place where jobs were, a local branch of a bank, and jobs, jobs, jobs. But it should have also included political institutions that are responsive to such needs, mechanisms which make governments attentive to such needs.

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Notes

- 1 Demands for a redistribution of land were made intermittently in Latin America, most notably in Mexico by Hidalgo and Morelos in Mexico in 1810 and Artigas in Uruguay (then Banda Oriental) in 1813.
- 2 Particularly suspicious are high Gini coefficients of gross incomes reported for the OECD, including the Scandinavian, countries. Although this data set claims to be based on the high-quality Luxembourg Income Studies (LIS), the Ginis of gross income reported in SWIID are on the average seven points higher than the corresponding numbers in LIS.
- 3 There are four observations in which the ratio of the median to the mean has the value above 1. These observations are clearly mistakes.
- 4 These data are based on tax returns, so the volatility is not due to sampling errors. Moreover, top income shares show long-term trends: they peak before World War I, experience a deep decline between the two world wars, and in some countries climb steeply in the recent period.

- 5 The central issue in this literature is whether it is true that a higher inequality of gross incomes leads to more redistribution, as the median voter model (Meltzer and Richards 1981) implies. Redistribution is measured either as a difference between Gini coefficients of gross and net incomes of individuals or households or by social spending. The findings diverge, depending on the samples, periods, and estimators. I decided not to delve into this topic because I am too skeptical about the data.
- 6 The data issue which emerges in assessing the rate of redistribution is the treatment of old-age pensions. They are typically considered to constitute delayed wages and as such they are included in gross income. The pension systems in most countries, however, already entail some, varying, degree of redistribution.
- 7 On the equalizing effects of the Argentine *Asignación Universal por Hijo*, see Gasparini and Cruces (2010), and of the old-age pensions *Repetto* and *Potenza Dal Masetto* (2011).
- 8 Bertola (1993) shows analytically that if the utility function is concave and the production function is linear in capital, individuals who have no capital endowments consume the entire wage and transfer incomes. The data confirm this result.
- 9 Redistribution is measured in Figure 5 as the difference between Gini coefficients of gross and net income divided by the coefficient of gross income, which the “rate of redistribution” as defined above. With fixed country effects Gini coefficients of gross income increase when there is large upward redistribution through the fisc but also when the redistribution is larger than 10.
- 10 The only explanation that occurs to me is that redistribution is financed primarily by taxation of the middle class, while the rich escape it, and in response the middle class reduces savings, thus future incomes.
- 11 A spectacular example is provided by Banerjee and Duflo (2011): Kenyan children who have been dewormed for two years at the cost of 1.36 USD PPP earned 20 percent more as adults, 3,269 USD PPP over a lifetime.
- 12 Note that even if poverty is widespread, growth-oriented policies may still need to be narrowly targeted if different groups of the poor face different constraints.
- 13 The assumption that the annual rates of return are correlated for each individual over time may reflect the fact that people differ in unobserved traits that affect their capacity to use productive assets.
- 14 For different versions of this argument see Mookherjee and Ray (2003) and Benhabib, Bisin, and Zhu (2011).
- 15 There is also historical evidence that the advent of democracy did not increase redistributive social spending in 40 countries between 1880 and 1930 (Ansell and Samuels 2010).
- 16 Note written at some time between 1821 and 1829 (Ketcham 1986, 152).
- 17 According to Rosanvallon (2004), this particular word appeared in France in 1834.
- 18 Several of these explanations appear in Bartels’ (2008) book where the story is much more complex and nuanced than this schematic list would suggest. See also Harms and Zink (2003) for a survey of different explanations.

- 19 Cuttrone and McCarthy (2006, 184) conclude that “If the median legislators in the two chambers differ in their preferences, then no status quo that lies between them can be defeated by two separate majority votes.” Iaryczower, Katz, and Saiegh (2009) show that to pass both houses of the US Congress a bill requires the supermajority of 74.4 percent.
- 20 Note, moreover, that the rich may actually support redistribution when inequality has strong negative externalities on their welfare. In an analysis of 330 surveys in approximately 50 countries between 1985 and 2008, Dion (2010) shows that the slope of the relation between household income and support for redistribution varies across countries depending on the extant degree of inequality, the extent of already effectuated redistribution, and several cultural factors.
- 21 An alternative causal channel is that inequality induces conflict and/or weak institutions, which in turn promote inequality. A vast literature along these lines is summarized and tested with regard to Latin America by Gasparini and Molina (2006). As they emphasize, however, the causal chains are murky and next-to- impossible to test empirically with the available data.
- 22 Note that Scheve and Stasavage (2009) reject wage compression as the causal channel through which union membership affects inequality.
- 23 See Centro de Estudios Sociologicos (CIS), Madrid, Barómetro Noviembre 2010, Estudio no. 2.853. The question was “De las siguientes instituciones o colectivos, cuáles cree Ud. que tienen mas poder en España?.” Banks were mentioned as most powerful by 31.6 percent of respondents, the government by 26.4 percent, large firms by 15.1 percent.
- 24 For a dynamic process which generates two equilibria - one with low inequality and high redistribution and one with high inequality and low redistribution – see Benabou (2000).
- 25 The book by Banerjee and Duflo (2011) undermines most of traditional thinking and is truly eye-opening.

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Actors, Interests and Strategies of Brazilian Foreign Policy on Biofuels

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This article aims to examine how the entry of biofuels into Brazil's international agenda came about and which actors and interests have influenced the formulation of the Brazilian foreign policy on biofuels. To this end, the article will be developed in two stages: (1) an analysis of the factors that explain how biofuels came to fit into Brazilian foreign policy; (2) an analysis of domestic and international actors and interests that impact the international strategy adopted by Brazil on biofuels. To conclude, some final considerations will be presented.

Keywords: Biofuels; Brazil; Policies; Regimes; Environment.

Introduction

The search by countries for energy security and the increase of international interest in environmental issues, particularly concerning climate change, have favoured an increase in the world production of biofuels in the last few years. In the period 2000-2009, ethanol and biodiesel production grew from 17.7 billion to 86.7 billion litres (Sorda, Banse and Kemfert 2010). In spite of the difference in expert opinions on the less polluting nature of biofuels – since their impact on soil degradation, deforestation and therefore as a threat to biodiversity are all discussed, it is well-known that fossil fuels are even greater pollutants and comprise the main source of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere, as well as being a non-renewable energy source.

The international system's favouring of renewable energy sources and of those with a low environmental impact has therefore motivated producing countries to invest in the sector. The international system's favouring of renewable energy sources and of those with a low environmental impact has therefore motivated producing countries to invest in the sector. In

2010, the United States, the world's biggest biofuel producer, launched the new Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS2), which seeks to give continuity to the country's biofuel policy from the Energy Independence and Security Act (2007), whose aim it is to increase conventional biofuel production and invest in the development of second-generation biofuels, which, in the case of the US, is cellulose-based.

Brazil is currently the world's second biggest biofuels and ethanol producer. Together, Brazil and the United States produce more than 80% of the world's ethanol.¹

The Brazilian programme, however, is internationally recognized for its pioneering nature, for its advanced level of development and for producing the most competitive and efficient ethanol of its generation. In spite of the fact that Brazil has 40 years' know-how in the field of renewable fuels, its leadership and drive in promoting these resources internationally are recent and derive both from favourable internal and international conjunctures, and from the interest of actors linked to the sector.

The search for renewable sources is geared towards environmental protection and energy supply on a global scale, but the interests of domestic groups – and even foreign ones – have impacted on the formulation of the country's strategic policy. Thus, the entry of biofuels into Brazil's foreign policy has also happened as a result of these interests being catered for. As Putnam (1993)² points out, success in negotiating international policy lies in the government's capacity to not only meet international pressure, but also the domestic demands of interest groups of influence. It is this combination of interactions that determines diplomatic action in the international system. Given these approaches, domestic structure (institutions, leaderships and society) impacts on foreign policy decisions inasmuch as it determines the agenda's priority issues, the development of objectives and the manner of interpreting the external actions by other States (Amorim Neto 2012).

This perspective can be seen in how the subject of energy production is situated within Brazilian foreign policy. When domestic bioenergy production managed to stabilize and large-scale production was guaranteed after years of attempts by interested groups, it then became situated within a favourable international conjuncture and biofuels started being seen as goods that were also tradable in the global market, which increased the number of actors interested in the sector.

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Biofuels in Brazilian Foreign Policy

Brazil's drive to promote biofuels internationally is recent and derives from foreign and domestic factors. The presence of these products among Brazilian exports occurred when production stabilized internally – which meant the supply became reliable – and because of the increasing international demand for alternative energy sources. It must be stressed that while there was a movement towards greater environmental awareness at this point in time, with global warming as an important reason for the search for new types of energy, on the other hand, there was also economic uncertainty caused by fluctuations in oil prices.

This matter was not new to Brazil; however, it was characterized by steps forward and back until biofuels were incorporated into the national energy mix and later into foreign policy. The idea of using sugar as raw matter for producing fuel began from 1905 to 1920, due to the already problematic oil supply crisis, which stimulated research involving alcohol fuel. At this time, some pioneering experiments were carried out in Brazil, mixing alcohol with ether and petrol and testing the first spark-ignition engines (Menezes 1980). In an attempt to drive forward the research that came out of this, the Vargas government established Decree n^o 19.717 (20/02/1931), which made it compulsory to mix 5% of alcohol to the imported petrol consumed in the country.³ In 1938, this resolution was also extended to petrol produced on Brazilian territory. It must be added that because of the petrol supply problems during the Second World War, from 1942 to 1946 the amount of alcohol mixed in with petrol was raised to 42% (Silva Santos 1998). However, this policy of adding increasingly more alcohol to nationally produced petrol ceased in the 1950s and 1960s⁴ with the end of the war and a return to a normal oil supply.

The interest in alcohol fuel returned in the 1970s because of the crises resulting from the oil shocks. The Brazilian government sought longer-term alternatives to free itself from this dependence and, in 1975, created the National Alcohol Programme (Pro-Álcool),⁵ with the aim of promoting a definitive incorporation of ethanol into the national energy mix. The programme was not only a matter of re-editing the policy of mixing alcohol in with petrol, but aimed at the exclusive use of ethanol as a propellant. In the programme's second phase (1979-1985) more substantial incentive policies were implemented: market reserve, producer subsidies, keeping prices for consumers low and incentives for the production of alcohol-fuelled automobiles.⁶

However, at the end of the 1980s, with the oil price drop and the sugar price rise in the international market, interest in oil substitutes and in the programme declined, mainly due to the costs of keeping alcohol production subsidies, as there was a worsening of the Brazilian economic crisis during this period. With the absence of these incentives, the *usineiros* (sugar plantation/mill owners and sugar-alcohol industry high-ranking employees)

abandoned fuel production and resumed sugar production with the international market in mind (Rodrigues; Ortiz 2006). The interruption in the supply caused an internal problem: the marginalization of alcohol-fuelled automobiles and a crisis of confidence.

The resumption – with credibility – of the idea of alcohol-fuelled Brazilian cars only occurred with the advent of cars with flex-fuel engines in the early 2000s. The international context was also favourable: replacing fossil energy with renewable ones was being discussed worldwide and the market price of sugar dropped. The most latent preoccupation was whether supply could be guaranteed in case of an international rise in the price of sugar, which could potentially divert the production, as had previously occurred. Bi-fuel engine⁷ technology was the solution to this. Still in the Fernando Henrique Cardoso government, lower Tax on Manufactured Products (Imposto sobre Produtos Industrializados (IPI)) rates were set for alcohol-fuelled or flex-fuel⁸ vehicles. According to data from the Associação Nacional dos Fabricantes de Veículos Automotores (National Association of Motor Vehicle Manufacturers), in 2003, the year in which cars with flex technology were launched, internal sales of this type of car amounted to 3.7%. In 2004, sales rose to 21.6%, in 2005 to 50.2% and in 2006 to 78.1%, reaching 85.6% in 2007.⁹

Flex-fuel technology had therefore allowed a rise in the internal consumption of both ethanol and petrol with added anhydrous alcohol, which justified the increase in sugarcane production from 325 million tonnes in 2000 to 458 million in 2006.¹⁰ The increase in production was caused not only by the internal demand, but also by the international market. In 2005, the US government launched the Energy Policy Act, which created aims for the compulsory use of renewable fuels and facilitated the importation of Brazilian ethanol, as the US corn (maize) ethanol industry was not yet consolidated. The impact was considerable. From 2008-2009, ethanol exports reached a record volume of 4.7 billion litres.¹¹

This context marked the arrival of the issue of biofuels in Brazilian foreign policy. President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva's government, in particular, inaugurated a period of dynamicity and international sector growth. At the time of the presidential re-election in 2006, the president of União da Agroindústria Canavieira (UNICA ([Sugarcane Agroindustry Union]), Eduardo Pereira de Carvalho, recognized that the sector was going through “an exceptional moment”, which would contribute to the election. The representing organization of entrepreneurs of the sugar-alcohol sector considered Lula “the sector's poster boy”.¹²

During his first term of office, themes such as the fight against hunger and the fight for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council were emphasised. There was also a “toughening” of the negotiations with the US on the FTAA proposal, the priority of the theme of Latin American Integration and the increase in relations with Southern countries (Vigevani and Cepaluni 2007). In the second term, representatives of senior chancellery posts remained,¹³ but there was a reformulation of the agenda's priorities. From 2007, the

Brazilian request for a permanent seat in the Security Council and the fight against hunger waned and gave way to the incorporation of new issues, such as that of biofuels, which gained prominence in the country's international agenda.¹⁴

But what reasons might explain Brazil's persistence in defending and internationally promoting ethanol, if the country became self-sufficient with regard to oil from 2006? As Kohlepp (2010) points out, it is not just a matter of commitment to global environmental demands. For him, Brazil wants to occupy a strategic position by means of a product that is coming to be an alternative source of energy. In the 1990s, Nitsch drew attention to the fact that the Pro-Álcool did not make energetic sense due to the low cost of oil at that moment, and that it only survived because of government incentives.¹⁵ To him, Brazil's Pro-Álcool policy went beyond the interest of specific sectors; it was a question of congeniality and goodwill, of national pride, of wanting to show that dependence on oil had been overcome and, nowadays, of wanting to act as an international leader. For this, Brazil still needs to tend to current demands, as was made evident in the G-8 summit, when president of the European Commission José Durão Barroso requested guarantees from president Lula that biofuel is actually sustainable (Abramovay 2008). The main criticisms of the Brazilian programmes are: the threat of destruction of nature reserves, diversion of food production areas for the production of ethanol¹⁶ and, especially, the sustainability of planting and producing.

These issues have made the government think about different directions for biodiesel and about ways in which to establish ethanol as a product of greater international acceptance. Interest in biodiesel also occurred in the context of the energy crisis of the 1970s, and with the aim of further reducing oil consumption and diversifying the national energy mix. However, the product's production and disposal costs did not allow the project to follow through at the time, since Pro-Álcool was already consuming the State's attention and subsidies. The programme resumed in 2002 due to an increase in demand and world production (particularly European), and to the interest in strengthening family agriculture (Leite and Leal 2007).

In 2003, the government created an Interministerial Work Group charged with developing studies on the use of vegetable oil for energy. The work group's partnership with business associations made possible the creation of the Programa Nacional de Produção e Uso de Biodiesel (PNPB (National Programme for Biodiesel Production and Use)), later consolidated by Law n^o 11.097/05, which made the introduction of biodiesel in the national energy mix possible. The commercialization of biodiesel in the international market was a PNPB issue, which demonstrated the interest of introducing biofuels into the Brazilian foreign policy agenda¹⁷ at that time. Since then, tax and financial benefits aimed at stimulating investments in the sector and guaranteeing the participation of family agriculture in the production chain have been granted.

The two main national biofuel projects are therefore at different stages and result from different processes. The alcohol fuel project is transitioning from a subsidizing paradigm, based on state regulation mechanisms, to a technological paradigm, made favourable by the sector's deregulation process from 1996. Incentives by means of subsidies have been substituted by financial incentives for technological modernization.¹⁸ Producers began to seek improvements in the technical efficiency of production and greater coordination in the sector after almost 40 years' experience (Paulillo et al. 2007).

In contrast, biodiesel is an incipient project, with investments and economic viability studies still in process. As a result, production costs are still high, making national biodiesel not very competitive in the international market.¹⁹ However, differently from previous times, there is now a state effort to leverage the project. Sector incentives follow the subsidizing paradigm, e.g. tax exemption concessions and funding for the construction of industrial units, but with a focus on regional development and social inclusion. The biodiesel production project still seeks to avoid monoculture and to encourage the participation of small farmers. In this spirit, in order to participate at auctions at which Petrobras buys biodiesel in advance, participating companies must present a social responsibility seal of approval required by the government, which is granted provided these companies confirm that part of the raw matter purchased by them has come from family agriculture (Abramovay and Magalhães 2007).

The idea of a social responsibility seal is also aimed at the international market, which has demanded sustainability guarantees from biofuel as stated above. In 2007, Brazil became a member of the International Biofuels Forum with the aim of discussing international norms for these products, seeking infrastructure and logistics solutions and establishing a programme of action for its use in other countries. Petrobras also invested in a pilot-project, in Rio Grande do Sul, of decentralized alcohol production integrated with food production, in which family farmers participate. Further, the government is also discussing the implementation of a socio-environmental seal for ethanol. However, the success of government initiatives also depends on the perception of domestic actors, such the *usineiros*, regarding modernization and the sustainable development of ethanol. A group of São Paulo industries, members of UNICA, set up a partnership with the Instituto Ethos, with the aim of monitoring its social responsibility indicators (Ortiz 2006). Cases of sector mechanization to avoid the practice of setting fire to plantations and to guarantee ethanol as a clean energy have also been observed: "In 80% of plantation areas, this procedure (fire) is still employed, which frequently causes illnesses of the respiratory tract and enormous CO₂ emissions, as well as spreading soot, the cleaning of which uses up an enormous amount of water." (Kohlhepp 2010, 239).

Another problem lies in the international biofuels market. There is a small number of

producing countries – production is concentrated in Brazil and the USA – that are also great consumers and therefore use production more for their internal market than for export. This prevents the product's trade from becoming more dynamic. The absence of an international regulated market that might, above all, make possible a global standardization of bioenergy products, also makes the global commercialization of biofuels difficult. Standardized rules would make commercial transactions easier as they would avoid countries setting different standards for buying the product, which results in an increase in production costs, does not favour competition and, as a result, hinders the entry of new producing countries and an increase in trade.

In 2012, the Brazilian government launched the Plano Estratégico do Setor Sucroalcooleiro (Strategic Plan for the Sugar-alcohol Sector), which aims to remedy some of these deficiencies, particularly as far as the external supply is concerned. The plan's incentive measures is aimed at: training agriculturalists to use new production techniques and existing technologies, renewal of plantation areas geared towards recuperating productivity, expanding the processing capacity of mills and production areas, and developing cellulosic ethanol production techniques. The plan is clearly aimed at increasing ethanol production and its energy efficiency. It is a policy of sector support, whose production was stagnated due to the economic crisis that began in 2009 – the time when there was a drop in foreign investments –, and the recent agricultural crisis caused by environmental problems and ageing of the sugarcane plantations. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, the actions do not only seek to serve the national market, but also the potential of the foreign market for ethanol.²⁰

Thus, we note a greater consolidation of the Brazilian biofuels programme, which allowed its incorporation into the country's international agenda. As they entered into its exports, biofuels widened Brazil's participation in the network of international institutions and directed the government's internal actions. During this process, factors in the conjuncture that favoured it can be identified, such as the energy crisis, concern for the environment and the national programme's stabilization. The next step is to further the analysis of the actors and interests that were present in this process. In the next section, we will seek to examine how several groups contributed (or not) to placing biofuels among the objectives of Brazilian foreign policy.

Brazilian Bioenergy Policy: Focus on Actors and Interests

The international community's interest in biofuels is justified by the following: the successive proofs of the unstable geopolitics of oil, the harmful effects of its price fluctuations and the growing concern with environmental matters. As we have already mentioned, the

possibility of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases is a relevant issue in arguing for the use of biofuels. However, the inclusion of biofuels in the international market involves the interests of several actors. Among the international groups that most impact the actions of Brazilian foreign policy are the scientific community, international institutions, countries that produce and consume biofuels and oil-producing countries.

Regarding the environmental argument, the scientific community and international institutions are crucial actors influencing political actions by States. Studies and scientific statements by researchers of the international community serve both to legitimize political postures and to undermine them. According to Haas (1992b, 3), “an epistemic community is a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area.”. Epistemic communities begin to acquire importance from the moment they are incorporated into the political game to elucidate the intricate questions that require technical knowledge in order to be duly understood. International governance increasingly involves complex themes that motivate foreign policymakers to base their decisions on technical foundations deriving from these communities, making the implementation of strategies favourable to them easier.

Thus, among the cases that outline the influence of said communities is the biofuels issue, impacted on by studies on food security, environmental protection and climate change. Such studies tend to foster an apocalyptic logic that has a bearing on the whole of humanity and generates pressure both by countries and international institutions, and by the civil societies of states, in the sense that their representatives act for the benefit of their respective security. It is an international regime based on practical association, in which two or more nation-States converge in the interpretation of what must be avoided and not on what must be attained together (purposive association) – that is, each party constrains itself in order to constrain the other (Nardin 1984, 9). However, this type of regime only emerges when governments share some epistemic criteria concerning *why* and *how* they must cooperate.

Epistemic communities are therefore vital to Brazil’s strategy of internationally promoting ethanol. In the global market, ethanol is seen as the most viable renewable fuel for substituting petrol in the short term, or for being added to it. Studies show that Brazilian ethanol, particularly that produced from sugarcane, produces 91% less CO₂ than oil, while ethanol produced from corn produces only 18% less, which has a positive impact on the international market (Goldemberg; Guardabassi 2009). As we previously saw, Brazil is attempting to adapt to environmental demands from the international market by launching ideas such as the socio-environmental label, incentive plans for using new technologies and for developing a new generation of biofuels and, finally, the creation of an International Biofuels Forum as an information exchange channel.

However, as Abromovay (2008) states, Brazilian ethanol can be considered a challenger in the international market, and will therefore have to face increasingly restricting barriers. This situation worsens with agricultural protectionism. The absence of international regulation makes the product subject to tariff barriers. The World Trade Organization (WTO) treats ethanol as an agricultural product, which makes it subject to the taxes and subsidies on this kind of product. There are also the different environmental laws and technical specifications required by each country for trading in this commodity. Brazil has been adapting to these demands and, *pari passu*, trying to modify them according to its own interests. In the WTO, it is fighting to have ethanol classed as an environmental product (Hira 2011), but there is resistance, especially on the part of producing – and even consuming – countries.

In the last few years, the biggest importers of Brazilian-produced ethanol have been the European Union and the United States. The USA is the world's biggest energy producer and consumer, and is investing in the production of corn ethanol. In 2005, the US government's Energy Policy Act set as a compulsory aim the use of 7.5 billion gallons of renewable fuels by 2012, mostly deriving from ethanol (Masiero and Lopes 2008). In 2007, there was a renewal in energy policy objectives with the Energy Independence and Security Act, which resulted in an update of the Renewable Fuel Standard (RF2/2010). The proposal's aim is to reach 36 billion gallons of renewable fuels by 2022, with special attention devoted to the new generation of cellulosic biofuel originating from waste, pulp and straw. However, US demand for fuel is greater than the internal production of ethanol, which requires the product to be imported, Brazil being its greatest supplier. The agreements of understanding between the two countries are centred on the question of fuel supply in between corn and sugarcane harvests: the aim is to keep the price of ethanol lower than that of petrol in both countries' internal markets. However, divergences regarding the subsidies granted to producers remained and made the entry of Brazilian ethanol difficult until an apparent and transitory change of policy occurred in 2011.

After 30 years' protectionism, the US Congress did not extend the legislation in force that guaranteed subsidies for internal producers and tariffs on imported ethanol. As a consequence of this, Brazil has an expectation that there will be a substantial increase in ethanol exports to the USA, although this is not a definitive measure.²¹ The cut in subsidies seeks to reduce the country's debt, although it must be emphasised that the lobbying carried out by Brazil in the US Congress by means of the Agência Brasileira de Promoção de Exportações e Investimentos (Apex-UNICA (Brazilian Trade and Investments Promotion Agency and UNICA)) partnership took place in 2008 with the aim of promoting the image of Brazilian ethanol in the world. With this objective, two UNICA representation offices opened outside Brazil: in Washington and Brussels. Representation in Washington seems to have gained great advances. The European market, however, has presented greater obstacles.

The EU's engagement with the environmental issue has propelled investments in the energy field and justified the internal market's protection barriers. Production of ethanol fuel went from 528 to 1731 million litres in the period 2004-2007. In 2007, France reached the top position with 539 million litres per year, compared with Germany's 394 and Spain's 348 million litres. In these countries, production is mainly from beet, cereals and excess from wine production. In 2008, the EU published a goal plan to fight global warming that expects a 20% reduction in the emission of greenhouse gases. To this end, it was established that by 2020 one fifth of the energy produced by it must be generated from renewable sources and 10% of the transport system must use biofuels.

In spite of investments, there is a projection that the volume of ethanol produced within the EU will not be sufficient to supply the internal market, which may leverage Brazil's supply to the region.²² In the meantime, companies of the food and automobile industries, oil lobbyists and European biofuel producers are making the product's import into the country difficult (Kohlhepp 2010).

As well as biofuel producing and consuming countries, oil producers have also been considered in Brazil's strategic actions. The aim is to raise these countries' awareness of the advantages of producing biofuels not only because of the environmental arguments, but due to the very question of energy security, since oil is an exhaustible resource.²³ The importance of these actors for Brazilian foreign policy is due to more than one reason: firstly, because of the weight that the support of this highly capitalized group would lend to the development of the bioenergy sector; secondly, the global oil market is an obstacle to biofuels. It is the most consumed energy resource, with an already consolidated and organized market with a large-scale production and still plentiful supplies, while biofuels programmes are still comparatively incipient (Hira 2011).

In the domestic sphere, a few actors also stand out. Pro-Álcool included the immediate interests of the State, of the *usineiros*, and of agricultural machinery and automobile industrialists. The sugar-alcohol and industrial sectors were the ones that mainly benefitted from the programme. The *usineiros*, in particular, sought to modernize their industrial parks and diversify their products in the market so as to reduce the damage from the sugar industry's constant crises. New distilleries were built with State credit being made easier, service stations selling subsidized alcohol were set up and there were tax incentives for putting alcohol-fuelled cars on the market.

Indeed, one of the endogenous interest groups with a preponderant influencing role in Brazilian energy policy is that of the *usineiros*. Their interests are represented mainly in sectoral business organizations such as Cooperativa dos Produtores de Açúcar e Álcool de São Paulo (Coopersucar (Sugar and Alcohol Producers of the State of São Paulo)) and UNICA. As we pointed out, UNICA is an actor with direct participation in the implementation of

the country's international actions by means of a partnership with Apex-Brasil.

Since the Brazilian foreign policy on biofuels could only be made viable with an internal stabilization of production, our aim is to examine the performance of the groups involved in this process. As we seek to analyse the sugar-alcohol sector's capacity to influence the formulation of public policies and national foreign policy, we must highlight that there were two distinct periods in the *usineiros*-government relationship. The first one was the period from the 1930s until the redemocratization process in the late 1980s, when there was a centralized politico-institutional structure and a decision-making arena concentrated on the Executive, which enabled the activities of the larger representation groups or of those that had direct access to the president or the government's higher ranks. In the second period, post-1988, there was a decentralization process that widened the decision-making arena and the action by other agents (governors, mayors, deputies, senators) in policy formulation. Such institutional changes diversified the groups that had access to the decision-making process (Barros and Moraes 2002).

Thus, at the time the Pro-Álcool was inaugurated, it was the big landowners who had greater power of influence over public policies. From the democratic opening onwards, although their influence weighed less, new regional groups also acquired the ability to act.²⁴ It was in this context that president Fernando Collor de Mello managed to unite the sector's great interest groups.²⁵ The president's political and family origins, which were linked to the sugar-alcohol sector of the state of Alagoas explained the support given to the *usineiros*. In 1986, when he was state governor, there were a number of policies that favoured the sector, among them tax subsidies for a 10 year period.²⁶

During his presidential administration, Collor de Mello promoted a process of deregulation of the sugar-alcohol sector, which pleased some of the *usineiros* who believed that such measures would correct distortions in the market. The general context was marked by the lack of interest in subsidy policies and by the appliance of practices with neoliberal tendencies in face of the State's serious economic and tax crisis. Companies with smaller technological capacity ceased their activities or were incorporated into greater units, which had the capacity and practice of redirecting part of the production to the sugar market during periods of highs in international prices (Paulillo et al 2007, 541). This was the period of transition from a phase of strong state regulation to a phase of the sector's greater liberalization. The Instituto do Açúcar e do Álcool (Sugar and Alcohol Institute) ceased its activities in 1990, the government stopped intervening in the relations between mills and suppliers and stopped dictating the rules of the sugar and alcohol markets. There are currently no government subsidies for ethanol production, but the sector's integration with Petrobras and financing from the Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social (BNDES (National Bank for Economic and Social Development)) have remained (Abramovay 2008, 4-5).

However, the *usineiros*/State relations continued and were made evident in the 1994 presidential elections. The Partido dos Trabalhadores' (PT (Workers' Party)) government programme continued to include land reform and to fend off support from the *usineiros* and big landowners. Copersucar donated \$1 million to Fernando Henrique Cardoso's campaign, who, in contrast, once in power, granted subsidies of over US\$ 1 billion to the *usineiros* via Petrobras. Still during his administration, in 1996, the Frente Parlamentar Sucro-Alcooleira (Parliamentary Sugar-alcohol Front), which advocated a return to Pro-Álcool, was created. At this point, a change in the PT's position towards *usineiros* took place, so that in the 2000 municipal elections, 24 out of the 38 PT mayors elected in the state of São Paulo committed during their campaign to support Pro-Álcool.

However, there were differences among parliamentarians about reactivating the programme. The image of Pro-Álcool remained negative in national popular opinion, which hindered more vigorous political actions in its defence. But as the price of sugarcane in the international market was low, the *usineiros* insisted that the government resume alcohol production incentives. In order to appease pressure for a greater consumption of the billions of litres of alcohol that the mills produced, in 1998 the government granted a US\$ 400 million subsidy to enable the *usineiros* to stock the alcohol, thus forcing an increase in the market price. The government also stipulated that the percentage of ethylic anhydrous alcohol mixed in with petrol, compulsory at 22% in all the Brazilian territory, be raised to up to 24%. In the following year, the volume of the mixture rose to 26%.²⁷

Such favouring guaranteed Fernando Henrique Cardoso the *usineiro* sector's support in his re-election, in spite of the change of posture of candidate Luis Inácio Lula da Silva towards the Pro-Álcool. The participation of the *usineiros* in the legislative elections to the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate was also considerable. There was support to the campaigns of deputies and senators who committed to revive Pro-Álcool.

In the 2002 elections, the entrepreneurs of the *usineiro* sector and the Partido dos Trabalhadores grew slightly closer. The ex-mayor of Ribeirão Preto, in the state of São Paulo, Antonio Palocci, who had a close relationship with the region's *usineiros*, left the mayorship to coordinate Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's campaign. Palocci managed to establish a close relationship between the leadership of the PT and the sugar-alcohol sector. Lula, in his turn, was emphatic in his treatment of Pro-Álcool:

We have made a commitment to activate Pro-Álcool in this country. We do not want to let go of a less polluting renewable energy source that generates lots of jobs. We are proposing, along with the *Sindicato dos Metalúrgicos* (Steel Workers' Union), a goal plan that contains the renewal of the automotive fleet and the activation of the alcohol-fuelled car programme. (Silva 2002)

Final Considerations

Given what has been presented, it is clear that biofuels have significant advantages for the countries that produce them, as well as consisting in soft power, inasmuch as they permit a greater political and economic visibility of States. There is a tendency to seek renewable energy sources that might guarantee environmental and energy security for the international system. In Brazil's case, the chosen energy raw matter was sugarcane. It was already produced in the internal market on a large scale, the sector's revenue was significant for the balance of trade, the soil and climate conditions are favourable, it is technically more viable than other sources, there are strong interested internal groups and it has conquered international acceptance.

The difficulties encountered throughout the project have not allowed it to be buried, mainly due to the actions by domestic sectors that were in constant contact with the decision-makers and executors of the country's policy. A panoramic view of the history of national energy shows that, most of the time, the *usineiros* were side by side with the political powers that be. It was like this during the military period (a fact that decisively contributed to the birth of Pro-Álcool) and then in the redemocratization process. They had a role in Collor de Mello's election, they were on Fernando Henrique Cardoso's side in the two elections he won and repeated this strategy when they gave Lula da Silva their support in the 2002 and 2006 elections.

In the sphere of national foreign policy, the aim is to make Brazil a reference in the supply of ethanol. To meet the global supply, it is not sufficient to develop the sugar-alcohol sector at a national level. It is necessary to invest in diffusing technology so that other countries may become producers. Thus, entrepreneurial and state actions on biofuels have been promoted throughout the whole world. It is not uncommon for Brazilian diplomatic missions to present themselves in parliaments aiming to divulge the idea of biofuels and presenting Brazil as a trustworthy partner. There are also experiences of technology exchanges, with research in the United States, Japan, African countries, European countries and Latin America.

On the other hand, the position of groups (non-governmental, national and international), whose actions still hinder the advancement of biofuels in the international market must be understood.

Finally, we can conclude that the way in which these issues are dealt with in Brazilian foreign policy results from the dovetailing of, on one side, an endogenous level of negotiation historically marked by the strong presence of the *usineiro* sector, by the pro-development political will of some governments and by Brazil's strategic interest in being present in the international system; with, on the other, an exogenous level of relations where environmental

issues and subsequently issues of renewable energy result from diffuse – but still incisive – action by epistemic communities on a global level and from the interest of States.

Translated by Priscila Moura

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Notes

- 1 Cai barreira ao etanol brasileiro nos Estados Unidos, *GI*, 24th November, 2011.
- 2 On two-level games, see Robert D. Putnam (1993).
- 3 This measure can also be understood as a solution to the sugar crisis and the period's economic recession.
- 4 In the early 1970s, the mixture was only 2.9% alcohol in the whole country and 7% in the city of São Paulo.
- 5 The programme was also benefitted from the drops in sugar prices in the international market.
- 6 Car assembly plants agreed to produce alcohol-fuelled automobiles with the Brazilian government's guarantee that it would provide fuel and keep prices lower than those of petrol.
- 7 They take any mixture of hydrated alcohol and petrol with anhydrous alcohol (adequate for mixing with petrol).
- 8 The IPI for vehicles between 1000 and 2000cc with alcohol or flex engines was 11%, while for petrol-fuelled cars it was 13%.
- 9 Data available at <http://www.anfavea.com.br/Index.html> (accessed March 3, 2012).
- 10 Data available at http://www.udop.com.br/download/estatistica/publicacoes/balanco_nacional_cana_agroenergia.pdf (accessed June 22, 2010).
- 11 Governo segura exportação de etanol, *O Estado de São Paulo*, March 1st, 2012.
- 12 The government took the biofuel issue to international meetings and argued for the opening of protectionist markets to Brazilian ethanol. In a speech delivered in Jamaica, during the closure of a seminar on biofuels, Lula classed the *usineiros* as “important international figures” and criticized the manner in which past administrations dealt with the sugar-alcohol sector. Usineiro é personalidade, diz Lula, *O Globo*, August 10, 2007.
- 13 Minister of External Relations Celso Amorim and secretary-general of the Ministry of External Relations Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães.
- 14 We believe that the biofuels issue occupied a distinct place in Brazilian diplomatic actions from the second administration. Throughout 2005, the issue was not much referred to in the diplomatic arena. 2006 was marked by specific situations, but a more significant volume of actions and the theme's presence in the country's international agenda can be seen from 2007 onwards.
- 15 At the end of the 1980s, the production cost of petrol was almost three times lower than that of alcohol. See Manfred Nitsch (1991, 135).

- 16 This criticism was mostly directed at ethanol, since biodiesel involves oilseed cultivation, which is also used for food production.
- 17 Available at <http://www.biodiesel.gov.br/docs/cartilha.pdf> (accessed June 22, 2010).
- 18 The legislation still guaranteed a market reserve for alcohol when it made the addition of 20-25% alcohol to internally produced petrol compulsory.
- 19 The EU has produced biodiesel on a large scale since 1992 and is the world's main producer and consumer.
- 20 Governo lança plano para aumentar oferta de álcool combustível, *Rede Brasil Atual*, February 24, 2012.
- 21 It was decided that voting on the Farm Bill will resume at the end of 2012.
- 22 Available at: http://www.mme.gov.br/mme/galerias/arquivos/publicacoes/pde_2008_2017/PDE2008-2017_VOL2_CompletoM.pdf (accessed June 20, 2010).
- 23 Presidente da UNICA: países árabes, que enxergam longe, sabem que o petróleo não será a energia do futuro, *Unica*, March 2nd, 2012.
- 24 Due to the ascension in parliament of the decision-making process, the regional sugar-alcohol sectors (of states and municipalities) also began to act as agents of pressure.
- 25 The big *usineiros* feared the land reform of candidate Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.
- 26 At that time, state tax on sugar mills was 56%. After the agreement signed by Fernando Collor, this figure fell to 4%.
- 27 Provisional Measure 1.662/98.
- 28 Resolution nº 37/07 of the Conselho Interministerial do Açúcar e do Alcool (CIMA, Interministerial Council for Sugar and Alcohol) set the volume of alcohol added to petrol at 25%.
- 29 In 2006, the bank made R\$ 1.9 billion available for the sector. In 2007, it was *circa* R\$ 3.5 billion.
- 30 Municipal Complementary Law n. 5.206/2006.
- 31 Ministry of Agrarian Development, Ministry of Mining and Energy, Petrobras, Embrapa (Brazilian Agricultural Research Agency).

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Empirical Determinants of Government Efficiency: A Study Based on Objective Indicators

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This paper is concerned with two things: finding an objective and easily quantifiable measure of government efficiency and testing possible determinants of government quality. As measures of government efficiency, we used ratios of infant mortality rate to health expenditures as a percentage of GDP, and ratios of drop out and illiteracy rates to education expenditures as a percentage of GDP. We assume that government efficiency in providing health and education services depends on economic, political and cultural factors.

Keywords: Government quality; Public goods provision; Efficiency; Political determinants; Cultural determinants; Economic determinants.

Introduction

A consensus has nowadays emerged that the efficiency of governments has an impact on a country's economic performance. High quality of public institutions – and of governments, more generally – is viewed as necessary in order to ensure that policies have a positive and lasting effect on income (Tanzi and Davoodi 2000). Assuming the relative importance of good government, this paper addresses two related issues of great interest: how can government efficiency be measured and why do some countries have better governments than others?

It is essential to start by defining what government efficiency is. In La Porta et al (1999), good government stands for “good-for-capitalistic development”. In accordance with this perspective, the authors propose several measures of performance: a good government

protects property rights, intervenes little and taxes lightly; it has a small dimension and a well-functioning bureaucracy free of corruption; it is politically free and sustained by a democracy; it provides public goods of high quality and, finally, it is efficient.

Some of these aspects generate controversy as they clearly have an ideological content, as for instance, low taxes and little intervention.

As for corruption and limitations to political freedom, it can be argued that more than being proxies of good governing, they determine the existence of good or bad public institutions, which in turn may be able to provide better or worse services. The same reasoning can be applied to bureaucratic systems: a well-functioning bureaucracy can be seen as a proxy or as a cause of good government. Like Brixiová and Bulir (2001), we will consider bureaucracy as a possible determinant of government quality: “Bureaucratically organized systems tend to be less efficient...”.

Contrary to other measures of government quality, the provision of public goods of superior quality is quite consensual. However, assessing public goods quality can be as challenging as measuring government quality itself.

We are seeking to improve on the existing measures of government efficiency, which can be of a qualitative nature or supported by subjective responses to survey questions, such as those carried out by the International Country Risk Guide (2003).

In this paper, we will use the term good government to signify a government that provides services in essential sectors like health and education in an efficient way, i.e., where the relation between output indicators and the amount of resources necessary to achieve them is high. Our measures compare government output in a given sector with the amount of resources/money necessary to provide that output.¹

Health and education are two of the most important sectors of government provision (St. Aubyn and Afonso 2004). According to the World Development Indicators, average health expenditure (public and private) in the 1990s was around 5.5% of GDP in the United States and United Kingdom, almost 7% in Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Norway and Switzerland, and above 7% in Germany, France and Sweden. The data on education is as striking. In the USA and the UK more than 5% of GDP was spent in education; in Canada and Finland this number was almost 7%, and in Denmark, Norway and Sweden it was well above 7%. In addition, in these two sectors there are ample quantifiable measures of output as well as information on sectorial public spending.² So as measures of government efficiency, we used the ratios of infant mortality rate to health expenditures as a percentage of GDP, and the ratios of drop out and illiteracy rates to education expenditures as a percentage of GDP. We believe that one of our contributions to the literature has been to provide new quantifiable measures of government efficiency; different but related to the qualitative measures used thus far.

As for the determinants of government efficiency, we believe there are structural factors that affect beliefs and behaviour and that lend inertia to any institutional change. At the same time, institutions tend to be created or transformed when the benefits of innovation are patently greater than the costs of inertia. Whereas determinants such as major religion and the origins of the legal system may mostly relate to very long-term determinants of government efficiency, variables such as wealth and openness alter the trade-off between the benefits and costs of institutional change and test the policy and structural variables that affect government efficiency. Here, we will test the importance of the determinants of government grouped as economic, political and cultural factors.

Regarding economic factors, like La Porta et al. (1999), we can claim that institutions are created whenever the benefits of their existence are greater than the costs of their creation. Wealth and development would make this trade-off in favor of good governance, not only because development would make good institutions affordable but also because it would make them more reliable. St. Aubyn and Afonso (2004) suggest that different levels of GDP per capita or educational attainment by the adult population (which could serve as a proxy for the level of development) could be decisive in explaining differences in government efficiency across countries.³ We will consider a set of indicators that represent characteristics that differentiate the way in which societies are shaped in their level of development, in particular, concentration of urban population and population age composition. The former can be related to proximity to the decision makers. If the population, in general, is located in or around cities, where the number (and sometimes the quality) of hospitals and schools is higher, will this interfere with the efficiency with which the government is able to render its services? Gaviria and Stein (2000) establish a link between the growth rate of urban concentration and the ability of central authorities to provide adequate public services, although Ades and Glaeser (1995) defend a clear link between political factors and urban concentration. The second indicator tells us that the age structure of the population is often seen as a sign of development. Fougère and Mérette (1999) establish an empirical relation between ageing population and growth. There is also literature that addresses the effects of the inverted demographic pyramid and public spending in education or health (see Cattaneo and Wolter (2009) and Getzen (1991)).

In terms of political factors, the theory of political determinants of institutions states that those in power will shape policies and institutions so as to allow them to remain in power and transfer resources toward themselves (La Porta et al (1999)). Some groups and societies allow rent-seeking behaviour in a more generalized way than others. When this kind of behaviour becomes pervasive and/or the groups in power care more about their own interests than common interest, worse governance is the most likely outcome. In La Porta et al. (1997), ethnic heterogeneity is used as a proxy for these political factors: if there

are several groups with different interests, the eagerness to stay in power will be greater. Governments become more interventionist and less efficient and the quality of public goods drops.⁴ A member of a certain group will use its power to generate benefits for the members of the group. Bush and Muthoo (2003) refer to the fact that reluctance in changing inefficient institutions into more efficient ones has also to do with the existence of different groups with different bargaining powers. Alesina and La Ferrara (2004) refer to links between inefficient policies and ethnic diversity. They claim: “Conflicts of preferences, racism, prejudices often lead to policies which are suboptimal from the point of view of a society as a whole”.

Social polarization is also related to the existence of groups with different and often opposing interests. Once again, when polarization is significant, there tends to be worse governments. Keefer and Knack (2002) state that this factor alone can diminish the ability of a government to respond to a crisis, as well as the stability of its decisions. Inequality in income distribution is one of the main causes of social polarization.

The rent-seeking behaviour described above distorts the way in which institutions work, making them more prone to corruption, excessive bureaucracy, etc. Mauro (2002) argues that corruption lowers investment (public or private) distorting it (in a worse way than taxes (Sheleifer and Vishny (1993)) in such a way that will surely affect efficiency. Aziz and Ul Haque (1998) consider that weak and inefficient governments are typically built around rent-seeking elites. Gupta et al. (2000) provide evidence that reducing corruption increases efficiency, or at least improves the quality of the outputs measured by infant mortality and primary school dropout rates. Tanzi and Davoodi (2000) state that corruption may have negative impacts in terms of public spending on education and health. If we assume that the amount spent by a given government is the “correct” one, if corrupt agents reduce it, this will necessarily generate inefficiencies. Also regarding corruption and efficiency, Tanzi and Davoodi (1997) show evidence that corruption may increase public investment, but it also diminishes productivity.

In a related issue, there is also literature that deals with excessive bureaucracy and inefficiencies of the public sector. Rauch (1995) makes reference to the public provision of inputs that are complementary to the private sector. This provision tends to decrease in countries with a non-professional state bureaucracy. Also referring to bureaucracy, Brixiová and Bulir (2001) state that systems with excessive bureaucracy tend to generate less efficient institutions.⁵

We will use some variables related to diversity and others to distortions in the normal functioning of institutions as proxies of political theories of institutional performance.

Finally, regarding cultural factors, theories supporting cultural determinants of institutions rely on the fact that societies have beliefs that induce collective actions and make certain kinds of behaviour more probable. When these beliefs are strongly persistent they

tend to be related to culture (La Porta et al. (1999)). Excessive intolerance or lack of self-confidence can make it impossible for a society to have good institutions and consequently good governments. La Porta et. al (1997) state that “trust determines the performance of a society’s institutions”. Knack and Zac (2001) show that trust varies substantially among countries. Barro and McClay (2002) discuss the role of religion in a country’s institutional development. Religion can be seen as a proxy of cultural characteristics since it strongly influences individual and social actions. The authors establish a link between religion and corruption, showing some evidence that Protestant countries are less corrupt than Catholic ones. In La Porta et al (1997), it is found that there is a negative association between trust and the dominance of the main religion. It could be argued that if different groups with different power hinder government quality, then the existence of several religious groups would have a negative impact on government quality. We believe that both arguments put forward concerning religious diversity may be true. However, in agreement with the related literature, we believe that the positive effect of religious diversity (which will lead to greater trust and tolerance) may surpass the negative impact (presence of different social groups with different and colliding interests). Nevertheless, the effect of religious fractionalization on government efficiency remains to be seen. We will also test if the dominance of one particular religion is relevant to government performance.

Another possibility to account for cultural diversity among countries is their legal system. The legal system adopted by a country can be very closely related to the habits and practices of its inhabitants (La Porta et al 1997). As per the literature, we will consider five possible legal origins: Socialist, Scandinavian, English civil law, French civil law and German legal tradition.

This paper is structured as follows: in section 2 we will present the data and indicators that assess government quality, as well as the variables representative of each group of determinants described above. In section 3 we present and discuss the regression results, exploring the data in order to find a meaningful relationship between efficiency and its determinants. Finally, in section 4, we draw our conclusions.

Data

Definitions and sources

The analysis presented in this paper uses a set of variables covering up to 208 countries. The definition and sources of all the variables are summarized in Table 4, appendix A. For all variables, we used five year averages (1970 to 1974; 1975 to 1980 etc.).

Dependent variables

In this paper, we are aiming to build quantifiable and objective measures of government

performance. We selected Education, one of the fundamental sectors in almost any country around the world, and use two measures of output (dropout rate and illiteracy rate). We confirm our results by also testing a health sector indicator (infant mortality).⁶ Our main focus is efficiency in the use of government resources, which means that more than being concerned with output, we are interested in its relation with the amount of resources spent to deliver it. For that purpose we do not use output per se, but ratios of each of the output variables to public spending in the corresponding sector. We selected the following measures of government performance

$$\frac{\text{infant mortality rate}}{\text{Public health expenditures as a percentage of GDP}}$$

$$\frac{\text{dropout rate}}{\text{Public education expenditures as a percentage of GDP}}$$

$$\frac{\text{iliteracy rate}}{\text{Public education expenditures as a percentage of GDP}}$$

Note that, for all measures, if we increase the numerator for the same denominator we have a worse situation, which means that a higher value means worse performance. However, if we increase the denominator while maintaining the numerator (for example, if we increase health expenditures and infant mortality rate remains the same), the ratio decreases and we are also worse off. Because we cannot have different readings for the same variation of the measure, we decided to redefine our ratios in the following way:

$$\frac{100 - \text{infant mortality rate}}{\text{Public health expenditures as a percentage of GDP}}$$

$$\frac{100 - \text{dropout rate}}{\text{Public education expenditures as a percentage of GDP}}$$

$$\frac{100 - \text{iliteracy rate}}{\text{Public education expenditures as a percentage of GDP}}$$

The three indicators of government efficiency divide a positive output measure by the expenditure incurred. Thus, an increase in the value of any of the indicators can be interpreted as an increase in government efficiency. It means that governments are able to deliver more for a lower cost.

Although there is no doubt that the input measures in the denominator are measures of public sector inputs, it could be argued that the output measures in the numerator depend at least as much on private investment. Thus, these output measures would only partly be the consequence of governmental activities. To overcome this doubt we correlated each of our indicators with public and private spending in both the health and education sectors. We found that, while having positive correlations with both variables, the correlation with public spending was at least five times higher than with private spending. This leads us to conclude that those are much more dependent on public rather than private investment.

We analysed the relation between the subjective measures of efficiency used in the literature such as the political rights index, corruption index or bureaucracy index (La Porta et al 1997) and found that there were positive correlations, but far from 1. We believe that although we might be talking about similar realities our variables are, in fact, capturing new information.⁷

Regressors

As independent economic variables we have used per capita GDP, the percentage of urban population, the age structure of the population, the sector structure of employment, openness to trade and to foreign direct investment, and the share of government expenditure in GDP.

As for political determinants, we used an ethnic fractionalization index and a Gini index to account for the number of different groups. To assess the degree of distortion induced in the normal functioning of institutions we used the following two indexes: political freedom and law and order tradition. It is more likely that law and order distortions associated to high corruption and excessive bureaucracy will lead to less investment (public or private) and to the channelling of investment towards the interests of certain groups, as in Sheleifer and Vishny (1993). The relationship between public and private sectors will also be damaged by the prevalence of distortions in the political process, as shown in Rauch (1995). The absence of political or civil liberties themselves can also damage government efficiency. As noted by Tavares and Wacziarg (2001), “Democracy may also influence the “quality of governance”: rulers with discretionary power tend to set up distortionary policies that benefit a small set of insiders at the expense of the general population (...). The exercise of power is potentially more arbitrary in autocratic regimes that lack the public scrutiny of policy makers”. As for cultural determinants, we have used religious fractionalization, the main religion in the country and the origins of a country’s legal system.

Tables 1.1 to 1.6 present the main regression results. We start by verifying our intuition that income is positively related to government efficiency, patent in the positive and significant coefficient for income per capita. A second issue was the relation between

government size and government efficiency: is there a trade-off between the two or, on the contrary, do countries that can “afford” larger governments also tend to have more efficient governments? We found that general expenditures are positively and significantly associated with government performance, independent of the relation of either one to income per capita. Though the literature is ambiguous about the relationship between size and government efficiency, our data using objective indicators of efficiency delivered a strong result. We then added political and cultural indicators to determine their relevance in explaining differing government performance. We were also able to verify that urban population is statistically relevant and positively associated with government efficiency. This means that rather than being a proxy for the level of underdevelopment, urban concentration makes it easier to provide good quality services. The age structure of the population does not have a consistent effect on government efficiency. As for employment structure, an interesting result emerged: the more agriculturally oriented a society is, the less efficient its government will be, but the percentage of employment in services is also detrimental to government efficiency. While gross foreign direct investment has no relevance in explaining government efficiency, openness to trade does matter and has a positive effect on all indices considered. In the literature, there is evidence of a link between these indicators and efficiency using the subjective indicators of government performance. The authors in Larrain and Tavares (2007) conclude that both foreign direct investment and openness have a positive effect on corruption (meaning less corruption).

As per the literature, we expected that larger differences between groups within a society – be them income inequality or ethnic differences – would lead to social polarization and government inefficiency. While the introduction of the Gini income inequality and the ethnic fractionalization indices did not alter results on income per capita and government size, the results for the former are not consistent, although ethnic fractionalization had a statistically significant negative impact on infant mortality. In the second set of political variables we observed that increases in the law and order index and in political rights are associated with increases in government performance. However, the latter is only statistically relevant in the first regression.

Cultural traditions that favour trust and confidence, that protect the individual against the State and that limit the power of politicians should improve government efficiency. According to La Porta (1997), there is a negative association between trust and the dominance of a strong religion. Hence, religious fractionalization may lead to higher government efficiency if societies are able to overcome differences. A related issue has to do with the influence of the country’s main religious confession in government efficiency. In accordance with La Porta (1999) and Barro and McClay (2002), we expect Protestant countries to have more efficient governments than Catholic or Muslim ones. Our results

allow us to conclude that religious fractionalization has, in fact, a positive effect on government efficiency, the case being stronger in the education sector. Religious dummies for the main religious denomination in the country do not have relevance in determining government performance, and the same is true for the country's legal system.

Table 1.1. Regression results for Irpse

Irpse	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Const.	-0.559	52.5	39.39	54.63	58.35	62.14
GDPpc	11.486***	4.446*	5.298*	4.333*	4.031*	2.813*
Gge		0.178*	0.240*	0.174*	0.179*	0.119*
Gini			0.152***			
EF				-2.497		
PRI					-0.868*	
LOI						1.674*
R2	11.1	28.2	42.2	28.6	30.3	36.3
n. obs.	560	418	217	413	405	262

Table 1.2. Regression results for Irpse

Irpse	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
Const.	49.8	59.6	53.6	85.9	53.3
GDPpc	4.592*	2.783*	4.028*	1.602**	4.494*
Gge	0.166*	0.177*	0.163*	0.134*	0.122*
RF	5.044**				
UP		0.111**			
(0,15)			0.013		
(65,...)			0.407		
EA				-2.054*	
ES				-0.069	
T					0.009
GDFI					0.166***
R2	29.1	29.6	28.9	40.2	36.4
n. obs.	415	418	418	221	360

Table 1.3. Regression results for dorpsse

dorpsse	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Const.	63.49	62.34	46.74	60.59	64.87	59.55
GDPpc	3.619*	3.016*	3.979*	3.146*	2.785*	3.079*
Gge		0.212*	0.269*	0.213*	0.214*	0.179*
Gini			0.131			
EF				1.724		
PRI					-0.221	
LOI						0.634
R2	22.1	28.6	33.5	28.7	28.4	33.7
n. obs.	459	380	220	380	374	215

Table 1.4. Regression results for dorpse

dorpse	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
Const.	61.04	60.233	66.35	77.88	59.97
GDPpc	0.343*	3.549*	3.329*	3.138*	3.109*
Gge	0.207*	0.214*	0.219*	0.146*	0.186*
RF	2.987***				
UP		-0.047			
(0,15)			-0.113		
(65,...)			-0.247		
EA				-0.143*	
ES				-0.225*	
T					0.027*
GDFI					0.076
R2	28.9	28.8	28.9	55.9	30.3
n. obs.	380	380	375	191	328

Table 1.5. Regression results for mrihepu

mrihepu	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Const.	-41.66	-31.58	44.88	-4.773	-16.52	-28.63
GDPpc	15.232*	12.463*	5.951*	10.841*	11.201*	11.855*
Gge		0.407*	0.259**	0.297**	0.417*	0.362**
Gini			-0.355**			
EF				-26.390		
PRI					-1.486	
LOI						0.470
R2	42.5	47.0	43.8	49.8	47.3	48.3
n. obs.	328	231	149	227	222	190

Table 1.6. Regression results for mrihepu

Irpse mrihepu	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
Const.	-32.09	-21.42	81.56	89.82	-44.13
GDPpc	12.525*	9.207*	8.416*	6.212*	13.265*
Gge	0.395*	0.451*	0.677*	0.199***	0.244**
RF	0.688				
UP		0.255*			
(0,15)			-2.059*		
(65,...)			-3.272*		
EA				-1.039*	
ES				-0.770*	
T					0.138*
GDFI					-0.073
R2	47.7	48.4	52.3	55.9	29.6
n. obs.	229	231	223	194	215

*Significant at 1%; **significant at 5%; ***significant at 10%

Endogeneity issues

The main question of this paper is whether a country's economic, political or cultural conditions explain differences in government performance. We are aware that this is a difficult task because most of the variables considered may, in turn, be influenced by government quality (this being particularly true in the case of economic factors). There is some literature on the tight link between institutions and development or wealth, and most of them address endogeneity issues. In particular, the seminal article of Acemoglu et al. (2001) tries to establish that income today is determined by a proxy for institutional quality and other non-economic variables. The authors address the problem of the possible endogeneity of institutional quality: good institutions can foster wealth but richer countries can afford institutions of higher quality. The problem is apparently solved by using settler mortality as an instrumental variable. There were some criticisms of the work of Acemoglu et al. (2001), namely a paper by Albouy (2004). This issue is complex and probably the biggest weakness of research concerning institutional quality and GDP (or other measures of wealth).

In order to be able to trust our results, we wanted to confirm if we had major endogeneity issues with our variables.

We used the Hausman test for endogeneity that can briefly be explained as follows:

Suppose that we are running the regression:

$$y_{1i} = \beta_1 + \beta_2 X_{2i} + \dots + \beta_k X_k + \delta y_{2i} + \mu_i \quad (1)$$

We suspect that y_2 may be endogenous (we assume that all X_i are exogenous). To perform the test, we first regressed y_2 against all the variables X in the previous model and a set of instrumental variables Z .

$$y_{2i} = \beta_1 + \beta_2 X_{2i} + \dots + \beta_k X_k + \alpha_1 Z_{1i} + \dots + \alpha_j Z_j + v_i \quad (2)$$

If y_2 is exogenous, then $E(\mu_i, v_i) = 0$. This would mean that $E(y_{1i}, v_i) = 0$. We can run the regression:

$$y_{1i} = \beta_1 + \beta_2 X_{2i} + \dots + \beta_k X_k + \delta y_{2i} + \rho \hat{v}_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (3)$$

And test the hypothesis: $H_0: \rho = 0$. Under H_0 y_2 is exogenous.

So, the first thing we have to do is to find instrumental variables for all the variables we want to test.

Previously, we concluded that loggdppc was one of the main determinants of government efficiency variability around the world. As per the literature, we were particularly concerned with the possible endogeneity of this variable. We chose latitude as an instrumental for loggdppc ⁸ and ran the Hausman test.⁹ In Table 2 v1 are the estimation residuals of (1).

Table 2

	Irpse	Dorpse	Mrihepu
v1 (coefficient)	1.859	3.118	26.158
t-stat	0.31	0.50	3.56
P > t	0.756	0.618	0.000

We can see from the results that *loggdpce* seems to be exogenous to the model (at least when we are talking about education).

Because of the nature of the variable we were also interested in testing the endogeneity of general expenditures. We used as instruments for government expenditures both the electoral rule (Majorit) and the political regime (Pres). The link between electoral institutions and the size and composition of public expenditures can be seen in Milesi-Ferrati et al. (2002). Persson (2002) concludes that political institutions (such as electoral rules and political regimes) do shape economic policy and are consequently linked to the size of public expenditures.¹⁰ In Table 3 *u1* are the estimation residuals of *hausman1*. The conclusions are not as reassuring as the one we drew from *loggdpce*, although at 5% we can say that the variable is exogenous in terms of the education regressions.

Table 3

	Irpse	dorpse	Mrihepu
u1 (coefficient)	0.322	0.218	0.827
t-stat	1.98	1.57	2.58
P > t	0.057	0.12	0.011

Conclusion

We examined the relationship between indicators of government efficiency in the health and education sector and several of its aggregate determinants. We have confirmed our initial intuition that income is positively related to government efficiency, made clear by the positive and significant coefficient of income per capita in all regressions. We also verified that general expenditures are positively and significantly related to government performance. We can therefore conclude that the most consistent and robust determinants of government efficiency are the level of income per capita, with richer countries displaying higher government efficiency, and government size, with increases in the amount spent by general government as a share of GDP positively related to efficiency.

Urban population is statistically relevant and positively associated with government efficiency. This means that a higher share of the population in urban areas makes it easier to provide good public services.

The age structure of the population does not have a consistent effect on government efficiency. On the other hand, agriculturally oriented societies lead to less efficient governments. The data also indicates that a high percentage of employment in services does not foster government quality.

In terms of openness, we conclude that while direct foreign investment has no relevance in explaining government efficiency, openness to trade does matter and is good for efficiency.

We also found evidence that the existence of different groups in society has some bearing in government performance, while political rights and law and order affect government performance in a positive manner.

As for cultural factors, only religious fractionalization seems to matter, with the main religious denomination irrelevant for government efficiency.

We can conclude that there is a wide range of factors contributing to differences in government efficiency across the world. We have economic, political and cultural variables that are all relevant to government efficiency. However, the data points to income per capita and government size being particularly important.

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Notes

- 1 Virtually any specific service can be provided and financed by the state and/or the private sector so government efficiency needs to take into account the source of the financing.
- 2 St. Aubyn and Afonso (2004) use essentially the same measures but their concern is to evaluate the performance of those sectors. As the authors point out, “We intend to measure inefficiency and not so much explain it”. In this paper we are attempting not so much to explain inefficiencies in the health or education systems per se, but inefficiencies in the government provision of public services (using education and health as examples).
- 3 There are other variables that could indicate the level of development. In Evans et al (2001), references are made to geographical location as an important factor in explaining the poor performance of some governments.
- 4 This fact is also referred to in Barro and McClay (2002), in Mauro (1995) and Alesina et al. (1999).

- 5 In Aziz and Ul Haque (1998) the authors sustain this idea when they say that: “Africa has stagnated because its governments are weak and inefficient and oftentimes made up of narrow rent-seeking elites”.
- 6 As we mentioned previously, these are the two sectors that consistently consume a bigger cut of the government budget.
- 7 It could be argued that a government might be extremely efficient but because previous governments were very inefficient, it would be difficult to increase our output indicators. One way to overcome this issue is to consider variation of output measures. We believe that by considering averages we tackle this issue, if not completely, at least to a considerable extent. If a country has a very bad government followed by a very efficient one, it will come out as having a moderate quality government.
- 8 In Hall et al. (1999) the authors conclude that there is a strong link between output per worker and social infrastructure using latitude as an instrument.
- 9 To run the Hausman test we chose the variables that were more consistently significant in the previous analysis.
- 10 For more on the relationship between political institutions and public spending see also Persson and Tabellini (1999).

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Appendix A

Table 4.

Name	Description	Source
Dor	Dropout rate	Barro-Lee Data Set
pse		
dorpse	Public education expenditures, % gdp	
Dor/pse	WDI 2000	
EA	Employment agriculture, % total employment	WDI 2000
ES	Employment services, % total employment	WDI 2000
EF	Index ethnic fractionalization	Alesina et al. (2003)
Gge	Central government expenditures, % GDP	WDI 2000
Gini	Gini index	WDI 2000
GFDI	Gross foreign direct investment, % GDP	WDI 2000
hepu	Public Health expenditures, % GDP	WDI 2000
ir		
irpse	Illiteracy rate, adult (above 15)	
Ir/pse	WDI 2000	
GDPpc	GDP constant prices 1995 US\$, per capita	WDI 2000
LOI	Law and order index	Freedom House (2003)
mri		
mrihepu	Infant mortality rate	
Mri/hepu	WDI 2000	
(0,15)	Population [0, 15[% total population	WDI 2000
(65,...)	Population 65, % total population	WDI 2000
PRI	Political rights index	Freedom House (2003)
Religious fractionalization RF	Religious fractionalization index	La Porta et al. (1999)
T	Exports + Imports, % gdp	WDI 2000
UP	Urban Population, % total population	WDI 2000

Trust and Political Information: Attitudinal Change in Participants in the Youth Parliament in Brazil

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This article analyses the impact of socializing experiences on the political attitudes of youngsters. More specifically, our goal is to evaluate the impact of the Youth Parliament program on youngsters' confidence levels in the Minas Gerais State Assembly (MGSA). The analysis focuses on the cognitive foundations of attitudes and results show a substantial increase in confidence levels in MGSA, an increase associated with the acquisition of information on the institution. It is asserted that the increase in confidence in MGSA represents an attitudinal "gain". The study design involves quasi-experimental research on a non-random sample. We conducted two rounds of interviews in 2008, prior and subsequent to the program, with 335 participants (167 in the treatment group; and 168 in the control group).

Keywords: Political attitudes; Political knowledge; Political socialization; Civic education.

Introduction

This article assesses the impact of the Youth Parliament on political attitudes of its participants, focusing on their confidence in the Minas Gerais State Assembly in Brazil. We examine whether changes in attitudes have a cognitive basis, that is, whether they are related to changes in political knowledge.

The Youth Parliament project is sponsored by Minas Gerais's State Assembly (MGSA) and the Catholic University of Minas Gerais for public and private school

students from Belo Horizonte. Students from these schools participate in a series of activities (lectures, workshops, roundtables, legislative activities etc) during one semester. At the end of the program, students convene on the house floor to vote on a series of proposals, which are subsequently sent as a bill to MGSA. The project aims to enhance high school students' civic education "through activities that lead them to better understand the organization of powers, especially the Legislative, and prepare them for political participation as citizens".¹

The Youth Parliament (YP) is part of a broader initiative in institutional development promoted by MGSA. Since the early 1990s, the state assembly has been conducting an ambitious project of institutional innovation, which in addition to modernizing their structure and increasing their technical staff's level of professionalism, aims to foster local communities' participation in the legislative process and improve access to the institution. For this purpose, the project includes debates, seminars and forums that eventually lead to the introduction of a bill in the MGSA.

As we shall see, young people's perceptions in regards to MGSA have changed, and their confidence in same has increased, both as a result of participation in the YP. In the absence of direct evidence, we suggest that the institutional environment of the innovative MGSA has contributed to this change, particularly in a positive direction.

We argue that this increased confidence in the MGSA has a cognitive basis because it is associated with information gained through frequent contact with the state legislature, its employees, and representatives, as well as through participation in workshops on civic education and legislative activities. The existence of a cognitive basis for attitudinal change depends on whether the YP provides any cognitive gains to participants and whether those gains can be associated with an increase in confidence in the MGSA.

Our research design follows the logic of quasi-experimental research (Campbell and Stanley 1979). In 2008, a non-random sample of 670 participants² completed two rounds of interviews³, 335 before and 335 after the program. We interviewed 167 YP participants and 168 non-participants. The 2008 session of the YP, with the theme "youth and violence," included seven participating schools. In the selection of the control group, we sought to ensure symmetry between the school types and between different family background factors. Thus, seven schools with the same socioeconomic and cultural profiles as the schools of participating students (public, private and military) were selected. Likewise, students from our control group were selected on the basis of similar characteristics, such as gender, age, grade, social class and parental education.

This article consists of three parts. First, we present studies in civic education and political sociology and examine their contribution to the understanding of the gains acquired through political socialization. Second, we analyze the initial attitudes and

changes of attitude among young people in an attempt to assess the impact of the Youth Parliament on young people's confidence in the MGSA. Finally, we verify whether the program provides information gains and whether they are associated with increased confidence in the MGSA.

Political Socialization and Civic Education

This paper discusses two streams in the literature on political socialization. One stream is in the field of political sociology and involves the core idea that attitudes, knowledge and political skills are acquired through socialization (Andolina, Jenkins, Zukin and Keeter 2003; Galston 2001; Jennings and Markus 1984; Sears and Funk 1999; Sears and Valentino 1997). The classical view is that the formation of core political attitudes occurs in childhood, under the predominant influence of the family, and remains stable over the years. Recent studies (Jennings and Markus 1984; Jennings and Niemi 1974; Sears and Valentino 1997) have questioned this view, suggesting that 1) important socialization processes occur after childhood, 2) other agents, depending on the context, are as significant as the family and 3) many attitudes and beliefs formed in childhood are malleable and therefore subject to change throughout life (Sapiro 2004).

A second tradition investigates the role of civic education in the development of competent citizens (Campbell 2008; Finkel 2003; Finkel and Ernst 2005; Finkel et al. 2000; Finkel and Smith 2011; Galston 2001; Niemi and Junn 1998; Slomczynski and Shabad 1998). These studies are generally related to projects and programs for civic education in fledgling democracies and countries undergoing democratic transitions. Researchers in this area are interested in determining whether these programs, when successful, can make citizens more informed about politics, more likely to engage in political activities, and more democratic in their attitudes.

In a manner similar to the literature on political sociology, our research emphasizes the importance of socializing experiences in an individual's political development after childhood. In addition, and similarly to prior research on civic education, our research investigates programs designed to better inform citizens, and foster political activism, attitudes, and values consistent with democratic regimes.

The central concept of our study involves socialization "gains." This concept has been used in studies that attribute importance to "events" in an individual's political trajectory, especially among youngsters. For example, Jennings and Markus' (1984) panel study (1965, 1973 and 1982) of high school students and their parents concluded that flexibility and openness to change in attitudes of young people are related to their limited experience with the world of politics. This inexperience makes young people more vulnerable than

adults to the influence of social (such as war or economic crises) or personal events (such as migration and marriage). In another study, Sears and Valentino's (1997) findings on the significant effect voting for the first time has on young people's attitudes and knowledge shows the importance of their first contact with politics. Sears and Valentino suggested that young voters have more to gain in terms of knowledge acquisition and crystallization of political attitudes than do adults who have voted several times. The authors argued that voting is a socialization experience that reduces the gap between those with a greater stock of information and more stable attitudes towards politics and those with virtually no information.

The notion of "gains" is also present in the area of civic education. The quality of democracy is assumed to depend on citizens' ability to act according to democratic principles (Galston 2001). This requires knowledge of those principles and their basic rules of operation, as well as participation, and political tolerance (Finkel 2003; Finkel and Ernst 2005; Finkel et al. 2000). Gains are found when civic programs are able to develop political behavior that is appropriate in democratic regimes.

More importantly, gains do not occur evenly across every dimension of political behavior. While most studies conclude that individuals who participate in civic education programs become more active and better informed citizens, those studies are not as optimistic in regards to the effects this participation may have on political attitudes.

If we consider the distinction between different political objects (Almond and Verba 1989; Dalton 2004; Easton 1965; Norris 1999), we find that specific objects, such as trust in political institutions, are more malleable than abstract principles, such as political tolerance and adherence to democracy. Thus, changes in institutional trust may occur at the same pace or even faster than cognitive change and political participation.

To better understand the socialization gains in political attitudes, we must establish criteria for discussing two complex issues: the direction of the expected change (either positive or negative) and its basis.

It is not easy to determine the direction of change in institutional confidence as a result of civic programs, unlike identifying knowledge acquisition and political participation. In the debate on political trust, some authors have called attention to the importance of trust for the stability of democracy or specific policies (Almond and Verba 1989; Offe 1999; Warren 1999), whereas others have proposed the need for some mistrust to ensure responsiveness to societal demands (Inglehart 1999; Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Norris 1999). How can we tell if a particular event or program produces attitudinal gains for the participants? Finkel et al. (2000, 1855) argue that it is only possible to speak of "gains" when change in political trust happens as a result of its association with democratic attitudes or the acquisition of relevant information.

To summarize: if civic education has positive effects on institutional trust, we expect those effects to operate through the individuals' rejection of previous anti-democratic regimes and through a positive spill-over effect from increased efficacy, interpersonal trust, and other supportive democratic values. If civic education has negative effects on trust, we expect the effects to operate through increased awareness of poor system performance, through an increased sense of the unresponsiveness of local political elites, and through a heightened perception of the gaps between democratic ideals and current political practices.

In this paper, we adopt a similar approach in dealing with attitudinal gains. We consider gains have occurred whenever a change in attitudes toward political actors and institutions is founded on acquired information. Therefore, attitudinal changes represent socialization gains when they are accompanied by informational gains. Conversely, changes in attitudes are not considered gains if they are based on purely emotional ties. The normative reference standard is the citizen who, through relevant information, is able to judge political institutions and, as a consequence thereof, to increase or decrease the degree of trust they have placed in them (Norris 1999).⁴

One can consider that the Youth Parliament program has generated gains if participants' attitudinal changes have a basis in information on the MGSA acquired during the program. The data produced by our research do not allow us to examine this question directly because YP participants were not asked to associate their level of confidence in the state assembly with any political information they may have acquired about it. In anticipation of one of our conclusions, we found young people who participated in the YP to have achieved attitudinal gains because, during the program, they acquired both knowledge in politics and confidence in the MGSA. While we cannot conclude that there is a causal relationship between these changes, they stem from the same process of political socialization. Teenagers who are more informed of MGSA processes, actors, and activities come to rely more on the institution.

Our expectation is that the Youth Parliament's dynamics, including its political content and activities related to legislative practices that are coordinated by the MGSA's staff, positively affect young people's confidence in the institution. The YP enables them to acknowledge the MGSA and get involved in its institutional development project (Anastasia 2001). This is especially true of project initiatives in increasing the MGSA's outreach to society.

Initial Conditions and Changes in Time

An examination of the level of young people's political confidence in the MGSA prior to the YP reveals that it was not distributed evenly among high school students in Belo Horizonte who participated in our study. In confirmation of a widely accepted

thesis (Finkel and Ernst 2005; Ichilov 2007; Slomczynski and Shabad 1998), school and family environments are primarily responsible for these attitudinal differences. Individual characteristics, such as political efficacy and the degree of knowledge of politics, tell us nothing about differences in confidence in the MGSA among young people.⁵

Table1. Dependent variable: Trust in MGSA(binary)

	B	Std Error	Exp(B)
Treatment group	0.127	0.254	1.135
Parents' education	-0.653	0.232	0.520***
Parents' participation	0.092	0.132	1.097
Military school (0 = Public school)	0.232	0.446	1.261
Middle-class school (0 = Public school)	0.747	0.522	2.111
Elite school (0 = Public school)	1.386	0.604	3.997**
Political efficacy	0.415	0.260	1.515
Exposure to information in the media	0.057	0.047	1.059
Sex (0 = woman)	0.430	0.259	1.537*
Constant	-1.805	0.538	0.164***
N			284
Nagelkerke R2			0.082
Overall percentage			59,7%
Chi-square			18.001

*** Statistically significant 0.01 / ** statistically significant 0.05 / * statistically significant 0.10

However, this consideration of initial attitudes does not inform us in regards to the subject of our study: change eventually caused by the YP. A first way to explore this question is a graphical analysis of the curve of change over time for the groups that were studied.

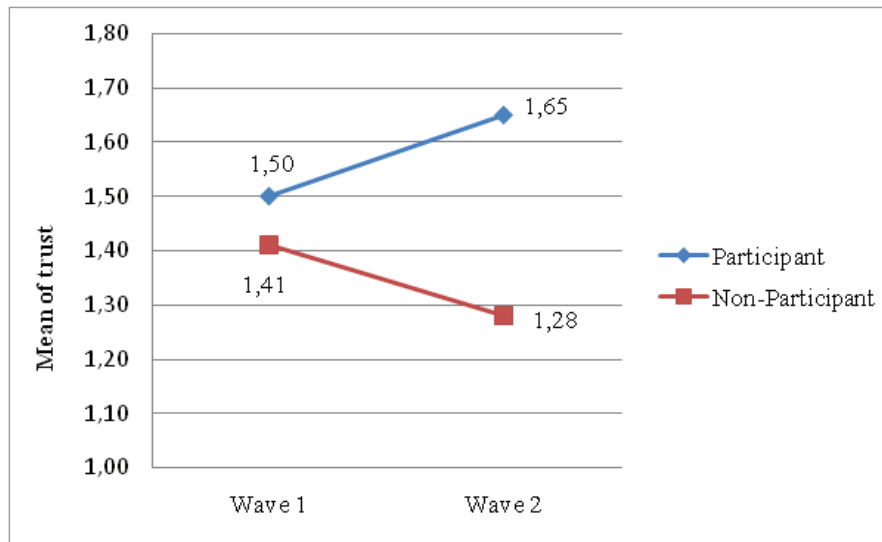
Figure 1 provides a clear picture of change. There is a decrease in trust among young people who did not attend the YP and an increase in trust among the participants. If we consider that students who did not participate in the YP showed a decline in confidence in the MGSA, the YP's effects become more apparent: not only does the program help to prevent this decline; it also increases participants' confidence.⁶

There is clearly a growing confidence among YP participants in the MGSA. We ask if this increase is attributable solely to participation in the Youth Parliament. To answer the question, we used a regression model with a variable indicating time (before and after the YP), and another, differentiating the treatment group and the control group. The interaction between these two variables shows the effects of the Youth Parliament. Because other factors may interfere with attitude changes during the program, we included in the model a set of controls associated with socioeconomic conditions and individual attributes.

We organized the data to analyze changes both on an individual level and in the context of program implementation in school.⁷ On an individual level, we classified the students into a treatment group and a control group. We created two categories: 0 = no participation and 1 = YP participant.⁸ For contextual analysis, the classification criterion

was the success the program showed in each school. Two types of information were used as a proxy for success: the number of times students in each school engaged in debate and the average percentage of aggregate attendance in Youth Parliament workshops at each school. The volume of talk indicates whether the YP was a dynamic experience. In the second case, the average aggregate attendance indicates whether the experience, as a whole, was motivating. The scale of success included the following categories: 0 = no participation, 1 = participant in a school in which the YP was not successful (neither dynamic nor motivating), 2 = participant in a school in which the YP was successful (dynamic or motivating), 3 = participant in a school in which the YP was very successful (dynamic and motivating).

Graph 1. Trust in MGSA



	Wave 1	Wave 2
Participant	1,50	1,65
Non-participant	1,41	1,28

Our two-level model of analysis aims to demonstrate the advantage of using explanatory models of change triggered by political socialization experiences. These models include distinctions in terms of participation in the program and its context.⁹

Table 2 shows the effect of the YP on the individual level of analysis. The data are unequivocal: participation in the program increased confidence in the MGSA. Even when we control for family and school environments and for individual characteristics, such as political efficacy and exposure to political information in the media, participants in the Youth Parliament were more than twice as likely to trust the MGSA than were students who did not participate in the program.

Table 2. Dependent variable: Trust in MGSA(binary)

	B	Std Error	Exp(B)
Time	-0.432	0.235	0.649*
Treatment group	0.152	0.246	1.165
Treatment group * Time	0.928	0.350	2.530***
Parents' education	-0.134	0.159	0.874
Parents' participation	-0.030	0.093	0.970
Military school (0 = Public school)	-0.150	0.315	0.860
Middle-class school (0 = Public school)	0.119	0.363	1.127
Elite school (0 = Public school)	0.404	0.417	1.498
Political efficacy	0.134	0.181	1.144
Exposure to information in the media	0.053	0.034	1.055
Sex (0 = woman)	0.269	0.182	1.309
Constant	-0.991	0.385	0.371***
N			570
Nagelkerke R2			0.070
Overall percentage			60,9%
Chi-square			30.680

*** Statistically significant 0.01 / ** statistically significant 0.05 / * statistically significant 0.10

Table 3. Dependent variable: Trust in MGSA(binary)

	B	Std Error	Exp(B)
Time	-0.432	0.235	0.649*
Treatment group in school not successful	0.002	0.383	1.002
Treatment group in school not successful * Time	0.705	0.518	2.024
Treatment group in school successful	0.352	0.311	1.421
Participant in school successful * Time	0.860	0.433	2.363***
Treatment group in school very successful	-0.258	0.516	0.773
Treatment group in school very successful * Time	1.573	0.676	4.821***
Parents' education	-0.103	0.162	0.902
Parents' participation	-0.026	0.093	0.974
Military school (0 = Public school)	-0.039	0.343	0.962
Middle-class school (0 = Public school)	0.068	0.368	1.070
Elite school (0 = Public school)	0.443	0.421	1.557
Political efficacy	0.133	0.182	1.143
Exposure to information in the media	0.054	0.034	1.056
Sex (0 = woman)	0.263	0.183	1.301
Constant	-1.020	0.388	0.361***
N			570
Nagelkerke R2			0.077
Overall Percentage			60,7%
Chi-square			33.628

*** sStatistically significant 0.01 / ** statistically significant 0.05 / * statistically significant 0.10

Program effects were found to also depend on the program's success in schools. The program showed significant effects on participants in schools in which, according to our criteria, it was considered successful. These effects were much larger when the program was entirely successful. In this case, the students' trust in the assembly was almost five times higher than trust displayed by students in the control group.

In summary, the impact of the YP on students' attitudes depends on an individual factor – participation in the program – and on a contextual factor associated with the quality of the program in the school.

The Cognitive Basis of Attitudinal Change

How should the increase in confidence in MGSA found in young people who participated in the Youth Parliament be interpreted? We consider two possible interpretations. First, the change in attitude could have occurred spontaneously as a result of the bond formed with the institution, its employees, and representatives. In this case, the sudden increase in confidence and positive attitudes toward the state assembly would be tied to a purely emotional basis.

The other possible reason – which we argue to be the case – is that confidence in the MGSA occurs in an environment of constant information flow regarding the legislative process, the institution, its function and activities, and its interaction with the community. This does not mean that high school students acquired, in only a few months, deep and detailed knowledge of issues that even most educated citizens lack. Even so, their attitudinal change is expected to be accompanied by cognitive changes, albeit modest ones.

Our research provides data that allow us to address the cognitive foundations of attitudinal changes. At first we tested a political information index. This model leads to the inevitable conclusion that the Youth Parliament did not provide cognitive gains.¹⁰ Young people who participated in the program “learned” next to nothing of prominent political leaders, party ideologies, or even about acronyms that stand for political and social organizations. This is not surprising because the YP does not prepare young people for a test of their general knowledge of politics. A significant portion of the program's content involves broader issues, such as concepts of citizenship, democracy, and political participation.

However, it is not the case that the YP taught participants only abstract concepts. Upon completion of the program, participants were able to name a greater number of state representatives. The YP also proved efficient in transmitting information about events created by the MGSA to stimulate dialogue and the participation of organized sectors of civil society in the legislative process.

Table 4. Dependent variables: Mentions of deputies and events in the MGSA

	Deputies			Legislative events		
	B	Std Error	Exp(B)	B	Std Error	Exp(B)
1 = Medium level of knowledge	-3.447	0.651	1.134	-0.712	0.395	1.290
Intercept	0.126	0.418	2.969***	0.255	0.246	1.570*
Time	1.088	0.387	1.361	0.451	0.269	0.953
Treatment group	0.308	0.529	1.035	-0.048	0.391	1.032
Treatment group * Time	0.035	0.244	1.088	0.031	0.172	1.114
Parents' education	0.084	0.131	1.024	0.108	0.108	1.091
Parents' participation	0.024	0.513	0.629	0.087	0.327	0.845
Military school (0 = Public school)	-0.464	0.606	1.577	-0.168	0.384	0.571
Middle-class school (0 = Public school)	0.455	0.640	0.639*	-0.560	0.447	0.809
Elite school (0 = Public school)	-0.448	0.258	1.174***	-0.212	0.194	1.079**
Political efficacy	0.160	0.054		0.076	0.036	
Exposure to information in the media						
2 = High level of knowledge	-5,431	1.055	0.314	-3.148	0.619	1.171
Intercept	-1.160	0.842	2.593*	0.158	0.331	1.088
Time	0.953	0.555	7.268**	0.084	0.356	3.008**
Treatment group	1.983	0.950	1.262	1.101	0.486	1.525*
Treatment group * Time	0.233	0.365	1.411*	0.422	0.234	1.534***
Parents' education	0.344	0.181	0.322	0.428	0.124	1.892
Parents' participation	-1.134	0.814	0.528	0.638	0.506	1.065
Military school (0 = Public school)	-0.638	0.867	0.345	0.063	0.570	0.594
Middle class school (0 = Public school)	-1.063	0.975	0.438***	-0.520	0.640	1.244
Elite school (0 = Public school)	-0.826	0.376	1.537***	0.219	0.250	1.270***
Political efficacy	0.430	0.097		0.239	0.050	
Exposure to information in the media						
N			570			570
Nagelkerke R2			0.186			0.186
Chi-square			104.77			104.77
Reference category: no knowledge						

*** Statistically significant 0.01 / ** statistically significant 0.05 / * statistically significant 0.10

The YP provided an excellent education on legislative procedures, especially the ones students were in contact with during the program. As an example, students who participated in the YP were fifteen times more likely to be familiar with markup procedure (by means of which bills are amended during debate), even after controlling for variables of family and school environments.¹¹ The Youth Parliament also contributed to informing its participants of issues in local politics. One indication of this knowledge is that participants knew the names of more mayoral candidates in Belo Horizonte city in the 2008 elections than the control group.

These data suggest that the increase in confidence in and knowledge of the MGSA and related issues occurred during the same period and resulted from the same political

socialization experience. The simultaneity and common origin of cognitive and attitudinal changes does not necessarily mean that these two phenomena are linked. However, they suggest that the program had double effects. Even if young participants failed to use knowledge acquired during the program, or the knowledge contributed to supporting (or even reducing) their previous trust in the state legislature, YP participants were prepared to form their attitudes on more solid cognitive bases.

A set of questions about the participants' perceptions of the MGSA contributed to the analysis of the relationship between attitudinal and cognitive changes. We asked the participants if they considered the MGSA transparent, dynamic, independent and open to the participation of civil society. As opposed to expressions of pure confidence in the MGSA, these questions have a clear evaluative component that depends on respondents' existing information regarding the institution. For this reason, each question offers the alternative "I don't know".

Table 5. Image of the MGSA (data in %)

	Openness				Dynamism				
	Wave 1		Wave 2		Wave 1		Wave 2		
	T	C	T	C	T	C	T	C	
It is open	56.3	39.3	79.6	47.0	It is dynamic	26.5	22.6	41.0	21.4
It is not open	12.0	21.4	6.0	17.9	It is not dynamic	35.5	31.0	26.5	32.7
Don't know	31.7	39.3	24.8	35.1	Don't know	38.0	46.4	32.5	45.8
	Transparency				Independence				
	Wave 1		Wave 2		Wave 1		Wave 2		
	T	C	T	C	T	C	T	C	
It is transparent	32.3	24.4	48.5	25.7	It is independent	38.9	31.0	51.8	38.9
It is not transparent	41.9	42.9	34.1	41.9	It is not independent	15.6	22.6	15.1	24.0
Don't know	25.7	32.7	17.4	32.3	Don't know	45.5	46.4	33.1	37.1

T = treatment group / C = control group

We can see a significant shift of responses to positive attitudes among the YP participants.¹² If this were simply an indication of a migration of negative to positive attitudes, there would be no novelty in relation to what we already know about the increase in confidence in the MGSA. The additional information supplied by the data is the migration of "I don't know" responses to favorable opinions of the MGSA. After participating in the program, high school students became more favorable toward the MGSA and more confident in their opinion thereof.

Therefore, we know that young people who participated in the program changed their attitudes in the same direction, learned about politics, and began to feel more secure in regards to their evaluation of the MGSA. However, can we conclude that the increase in confidence in MGSA represents attitudinal “gains”? There are strong indications that these changes were, in fact, gains, but any measure of certainty that increased confidence in the MGSA has a cognitive basis would require the identification of a direct association between attitudes and cognition.

To answer this question, we used the method of “difference in difference.” The variables used were derived by subtracting the values at time 1 (before the YP) from values at time 2 (after the YP took place) for each of the two groups (treatment and control). The result of this transaction represents a change in the variable values over time for each group.

The answer, although modest, is positive. We find a positive correlation between knowledge of MGSA-related events and trust in the institution. The same is not true for knowledge regarding Minas Gerais’ state representatives. However, this does not mean that the knowledge gains and attitudinal gains are independent processes. This point is emphatically supported by the association between perceptions of the assembly and knowledge items. A comparison between the group that participated in the program and the control group shows that the attitudes of the former have stronger cognitive bases. First, there is a clear association between the increase of knowledge about the representatives and the increase in the MGSA’s positive image. The correlation between knowledge acquisition regarding legislative events and an increase in positive evaluations of the state assembly is even more significant. The control group gave no indication of an association between cognitive and attitudinal change.

Table 6. Correlations between attitudes and knowledge

	Non-participants		Participants	
	Name of deputies	Knowledge of events	Name of deputies	Knowledge of events
Trust in MGSA	-0.049	0.005	0.058	0.159**
Evaluation of MGSA	0.124	0.088	0.168*	0.245***

*** Statistically significant 0.01 / ** statistically significant 0.05

Thus, it can be said that the political socialization that took place during the program not only resulted in an increase in knowledge and confidence in MGSA but also that many participants who changed their attitudes acquired information that established consistent attitudes regarding the MGSA. This does not mean that a “gain” in confidence is devoid of any affective component; it means that this gain cannot be accounted for solely by that component.¹⁵

One question remains: are there grounds, in political reality, for these attitudinal gains? Why does learning about the MGSA increase respondents' level of confidence? The data from our study do not provide a direct answer to this question. We know, however, that what makes the Minas Gerais State Assembly unique among Brazilian subnational legislatures is the new institutional setting that emerged in the early 1990s. In an atmosphere of institutional innovation (Anastasia 2001), the MGSA modernized its structure and administration, increased staff professionalism, and became more democratic in its organization, by outreaching to the community and establishing an ongoing dialogue and participation in the legislative process. The Youth Parliament is an offshoot of this new context, and participants have witnessed and experienced this reality.

Concluding Remarks

The research results presented in this article are straight forward. In as little as a few months, the students who attended the Youth Parliament activities showed increased confidence in the Minas Gerais Legislative Assembly. That confidence increased even further when the program in the school was found to be dynamic and motivating. Thus, attitudinal changes can occur at the same pace as (or an even faster than) changes in political knowledge and participation.

Furthermore, after attending the program, youngsters became more aware of legislative procedures and the state representatives, more knowledgeable in regards to the MGSA and more willing to obtain information from the media about the state assembly. They did not necessarily gain a great deal of knowledge of politics. Far from leaving the program with an encyclopedic knowledge (Lupia 1994) of the topic, students' cognitive gains were found to be limited and fragmented; however, these gains were more than enough to broaden their understanding of politics and, particularly, of the MGSA. Knowing the names of Minas Gerais' state representatives and mayoral candidates, events organized by the MGSA, and legislative procedures seems to say little on the formation of politically competent citizens. However, one may be demanding too much in expecting high school students who took part in a dozen meetings in a three-month program to show even more significant gains.

Besides, we assume that it is possible to relate the limited knowledge items of our questionnaire to a wider repertoire of knowledge. It is reasonable to expect that students who can name representatives also have more knowledge of their activities than those who cannot. Likewise, students who are able to identify the activities promoted by the MGSA are more likely to have more information about the institution than those who do not.

In short, we found that participation in the Youth Parliament did lead to attitudinal gains. Let us keep in mind, however, that public confidence in political institutions is

not intrinsically valuable to democracy. In this article, “gains” mean that the increased confidence in the MGSA has cognitive bases, which is a desirable outcome.

It is important to note that gains from the YP presented in this article are specifically related to the state legislature and not to other institutions or political actors. This distinction works as an antidote to the common and undesirable effect of “contamination” (Parker 1977; Rennó and Gramacho 2010) in perceptions of political institutions and actors. We would not be surprised if new evidence revealed that the shield that prevents positive attitude changes towards the MGSA from extending to state deputies and other political institutions is built by cognitive gains provided by the YP program.

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Notes

1. Available at <http://www2.almg.gov.br/hotsites/parlamentojovem/oqueE.html>. Accessed 12 April, 2011.
2. The project was designed to include 351 interviews in the pretest and 351 in the post-test, for a total of 702 interviews. However, we were only able to interview 335 students in the post-test. Thus, we decided to exclude from the analysis cases missing in the post-test.
3. The first round was conducted between February and April 2008, and the second round was conducted between June and November 2008.
4. Since the 1990s, there has been a fruitful debate on trust (or mistrust) in political institutions and its effect on democracy (Dalton 2004; Inglehart 1999; Pharr and Putnam 2000; Norris 1999). This debate calls into question the assumption of the classical theory of political culture, which suggests that confidence in political institutions fosters the stability of the democratic regime.
5. Regarding trust in the MGSA, there was no difference between the treatment group and the control group prior to the experience of the YP, which confirms the reliability of pairing both groups. On a scale of 0 to 3, the average confidence of the control group was 1.41, whereas for the participants it was 1.50. This difference is not statistically significant (0.289).
6. A test of means indicates that the differences shown in the chart are statistically significant. The difference between time 1 and time 2 was -0.12 for non-participants (significance 0.06) and 0.19 for participants (significance 0.008).
7. Because there were only 14 schools, we decided not to use multilevel regression models. The dependence of observations within each school was corrected by using the robust cluster in Stata.

8. The total number of workshops (including those that occurred at school and at the MGSA) ranged from ten to twelve, depending on the school. The total number of meetings in school ranged from seven to ten.
9. Ideally, this model would integrate the individual factor (including the degree of exposure of individuals to the program) and the contextual factor (the success of the YP at school). However, because of the limited number of observations in our database, it was not possible to create an integrated model with variables that included both levels of analysis.
10. The construction of the information index that we tested appears in the appendix of this article. We used a linear regression model in which the variable of political information was the dependent variable and the variables of time, treatment and their interaction were independent. The coefficients were not statistically significant.
11. We used a logistic regression model with the following controls: parental education, parental political participation, school type, subjective efficacy, media exposure and sex. The significance level was 0.001.
12. The questions were as follows. 1) In your opinion, is the Minas Gerais State Assembly closed to the participation of society or open to the participation of society?; 2) In your opinion, is the Minas Gerais State Assembly a transparent institution that informs people about its acts or an institution that is not transparent and does not show the public what happens there?; 3) In your opinion, is the Minas Gerais State Assembly an institution without initiative that simply fulfills its duties or a dynamic and innovative institution?; 4) In your opinion, does the Minas Gerais State Assembly lack freedom of choice and yield to the will of the governor, or is it an independent institution that acts according to its own will? All questions offered the possible answer “don’t know.”
13. However, our research has no data with which to test this hypothesis.

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Appendix

Parents' education. A construct was created by factor analysis (principal axis). It generated a variable of parents' education, which combined the years of schooling of the respondent's father and mother. The two original variables were measured in terms of a complete or incomplete educational degree. To turn these variables into continuous variables, following the strategy of Bills and Haller (1984), we assigned the following values to the years of schooling: 0 (never attended school), 2 (1st to 4th grade of basic education, incomplete), 4 (1st to 4th grade of basic education, complete), 6 (5th to 8th grade of basic education, incomplete), 8 (5th to 8th grade of basic education, complete), 9.5 (1 to 3 years of secondary education, incomplete), 11 (1 to 3 years of secondary education, complete), 13 (incomplete higher education), 15 (college degree), 16 (graduate education, incomplete) and 17 (graduate degree).

Parents' political participation. A construct was created using factor analysis (principal axis). It generated a variable of parents' political participation, which combined the political participation of the respondent's father and mother. The original individual values for the political participation of the father and mother were the sum of the number of associations, parties, and trade unions with which they were engaged.

Types of schools. One of the variables in our database sought to capture the school environment in a single indicator. The categories were defined as follows: public school, public military school, middle-class private school and elite private school. We created dummy variables from the four categories. The criteria used for the classification of schools as elite and middle class were tuition and geographic location. No middle-class school tuition was higher than R\$ 520, whereas the fees of elite schools ranged from R\$ 642 to R\$ 738. Elite schools, in addition to being publicly recognized as the "best schools," were located in the most valued neighborhoods of Belo Horizonte city. In the case of public schools and the military (also public), the classification represents their formal identity.

Subjective political efficacy. We provided the statement, "Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like you cannot really understand what is happening." The answer was given on a Likert scale of five points, with the following options: strongly agree, partly agree, neither agree nor disagree, partly disagree and strongly disagree. We created a binary variable, excluding the middle option, so that each of the new categories included all of the attitudes expressed in one of two directions (agreeing or disagreeing).

Exposure to information in the media. We asked how often the interviewee was exposed to political information through mass media, specifically through three types of media: a) TV and radio, b) newspapers and magazines and c) the Internet. Each of the three

types of media was given a rating for exposure (0 = never, 1 = rarely, 2 = a few times a month, 3 = a few times a week, 4 = daily). The final variable was the sum of the answers to three questions.

Factual knowledge. We constructed an index of respondents' political information by factor analysis (principal axis) from four different sets of questions about political affairs. The four sets were classified as follows. 1) Knowledge of leading politicians' offices and political parties: the questions were open and asked respondents to state the party and office held by four leading politicians in Brazil: Aécio Neves, Fernando Pimentel, José Serra, and Martha Suplicy. There was also a question about the office and country of Hugo Chavez. The questions were coded according to four levels of accuracy (3 = full accuracy, 2 = incomplete accuracy, missing some information either about the name of the office or its state level, 1 = stated the politician's previous office, 0 = error or no response). The final index for the set of variables was the result of the factor analysis (principal axis). Cronbach's alpha was 0.867, and all variable loads were satisfactory. 2) Number of parties that the respondent was able to name: this set of variables was a list of the parties the interviewee knew. For every Brazilian party named correctly, the interviewee earned a point, while a non-response or error was worth zero. The index was constructed by the sum of the scores and ranged from 0 to 11. 3) Knowledge of the meaning of abbreviations for political and social organizations: respondents were asked to state the meaning of TRE (Regional Electoral Tribunal), ONU (United Nations), UNE (National Union of Students) and MST (Landless Workers' Movement). The questions were open and were post-coded into three levels (2 = full meaning; 1 = partial meaning, restricted its general subject, 0 = error or no response). The index was constructed by factor analysis (principal axis). The Cronbach's alpha was 0.597, and all variable loads were satisfactory. 4) Knowledge of the ideological position of parties: the respondent was asked to state whether each of four Brazilian parties (DEM, PCdoB, PSTU and PP) were left or right. Each correct answer was worth 1 point. The index was the sum of correct answers.

Trust in Minas Gerais State Assembly. The question asked was, "Regarding Minas Gerais State Assembly, you (1) never trust it, (2) trust it sometimes, (3) trust it most of the time or (4) always trust it." A binary variable was created, with "never trust" and "trust sometimes" = 0 and "trust most of the time" and "always trust" = 1.

Knowledge of the names of deputies. The following question was asked: "Could you tell me the name of any deputy of the Minas Gerais State Assembly?" Two points were awarded for the representative's full name, and one point was awarded for an incomplete name. This scale was then categorized for the multinomial model, with 0 = 0, 1 = 2, and 3 = all others.

Knowledge of Minas Gerais State Assembly forums for civil society. The question asked was, “The Minas Gerais Legislative offers many possibilities for participation to the population. Could you name any of them?” In case of no spontaneous response, the interviewee was asked if he knew of the following: a) legislative seminars, b) technical forums, c) public hearings or d) commission of popular participation. The variable was then constructed from the spontaneous and forced responses. Each spontaneous response was assigned two points. Each forced response was assigned one point. The responses were added to create a scale from zero to four. This scale was then categorized for the multinomial model, with 0 = 0, 1 = 1, and 2 = all others.

“Markup.” The question asked was, “Markup is a legislative procedure. A bill is subject to markup a) when the representative wants to express full support for its content, b) when the subject was superficially addressed, c) to promote change to the bill, d) to block a vote or e) you don’t know.” The correct answer (c) was assigned the value 1, and all other answers were assigned the value 0.

Knowledge of the candidates for mayor in the 2008 elections. The following question was asked: “Who are the mayoral candidates in Belo Horizonte’s 2008 election whose names you remember?”.

Women in Motion: Female Representation in the Rio Grande do Sul State Legislative Assembly

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This article seeks to further the debate on the political participation of women in the framework of a democratic political regime. Foremost, it analyzes women's representation as elected legislators in Brazilian state legislatures. Accordingly, the article draws on the contributions made thus far by some women authors – linked to a theoretical framework that, as the article unfolds, is presented as the feminist theory – as regards the critique of the model of democracy prevailing in Western societies. Next, we present and discuss an array of data on women's inclusion in the Legislative Assembly of the State of Rio Grande do Sul, encompassing all female state representatives elected since 1951, when the first gaúcha, as those born in the state like to call themselves, woman legislator took office. The findings in this article seek to advance knowledge of the history of women's political parliamentary participation, given the scarcity of information on the theme in the context of the aforementioned state legislature, as well as pointing out the main features of female participation in the Rio Grande do Sul State Legislature.

Keywords: Democracy; Feminist theorists; Women's political participation; Legislative branch.

Introduction

The present article aims to contribute to the study of women's participation in political representation bodies, focused on the particular view of the feminist critique of democracy as a regime that reproduces sexual inequalities, among other forms of

discrimination. For this purpose, we present an array of reflections which are backed by research conducted in the Rio Grande do Sul State Assembly, based on which some aspects of women's parliamentary participation are perceptible that merit the attention of those interested in the theme.

In the early twentieth century few national States guaranteed political rights to women. With the exception of some federative states of the United States, only New Zealand (1883) and Australia (1901) allowed women to vote (Therborn 2006). Yet, little by little other national states started to allow women to enjoy the right to vote. In Brazil, even though the 1891 Constitution set forth that every literate citizen was entitled to vote, women were only granted the right to vote in 1932, mostly as a result of the struggle of the suffragette movement, which had emerged in the country in the previous decades.

Despite breakthroughs in terms of electoral rights for women, which have been endorsed by all Western democracies, problems still abound regarding women's political representation, as research studies underscore the fact that women are underrepresented in the main local, regional, and local political structures (Álvares 2008; Araújo 2001; Avelar 2001; CEPAL 2007; Htun 2001; Pinto 2010; Prá 1996; Reis 2010; Tabak 2002, among others). Moreover, low percentages in terms of women participation in the body of political representatives eventually contributes "(...) to perpetuate the conditions for keeping them away, thus reaffirming the public sphere – and the political, in particular – as male territory" (Miguel 2010, 28).

In an attempt to contribute to the broader debate on women's political inclusion in Western societies, this article draws on two analytical dimensions. Firstly, we focus on elements surrounding the discussion about democracy by building on some women theorists' critique of liberal democracy. Secondly, we present data still little disseminated about women representation in the Rio Grande do Sul state legislature in order to illustrate the problem of sexual inequality in the field of legislative politics.

Building on the assumption that women are discriminated against in national parliamentary bodies in several countries, a fact that has been widely demonstrated by the specialized literature, we intend to show how this relation occurs in social spaces that have already been sufficiently investigated, namely the regional legislative level. Based on a research problem driven by an empirical curiosity regarding how sexual inequality is replicated in the various parliamentary spaces, we have found an array of data that illustrate women representation, or rather, women representation deficits in the Rio Grande do Sul state legislature.

In itself the information gathered does not suffice to explain the causal determinants of women's political underrepresentation, an inquiry transcending the purposes of this text, yet it provides a wealth of support material to deepen inquiry into these issues.

Furthermore, the data point to differences regarding the election of parliamentarians in the diverse representation bodies, furthering the understanding of the problem as a process where the national parliament is just the tip of a chain reaction that is already present in subnational political arenas. In order to develop this analysis the text is subdivided into three parts. In the first part we approach the main critiques feminist authors make of liberal democracy, assigning special emphasis to the debate on the exclusion of women from the world of politics not only as a result of the institutional organization of modern political life – to which they propose political representation alternatives –, but also stemming from the strengthening of barriers between the public and the private spheres, a phenomenon regarded by many feminist authors as at the core of gender inequality.

In the second part of the text, we make a brief presentation of the national debate on the inclusion of women into politics, highlighting political representation breakthroughs accomplished by the women's movements struggles. In particular, we present data related to women's political representation in Brazil, together with the related available data for the regional and international contexts. Lastly, in the third part of the text we delve into the political participation of women in the Rio Grande do Sul State Legislature, a theme about which we will present an array of elements that are part of the profile of the female state representatives who took office over the 1951-2011 period.

The Feminist Critique of Liberal Democracy

Throughout the 20th century a number of critiques were made of the liberal model of representative democracy, understood as a model of democracy developed within the framework of the capitalist society, in which economic market rules contribute to shape the relations between the citizens and the State, plus influencing political representation indicators.¹

In many western societies, liberal democracy has produced a quasi-insoluble tension between the expansion of individual political liberties and the inequalities spawned within the framework of the capitalist economic market, a fact that has prompted the opening up of significant spaces for debating alternative democratization models, a discussion generally held in terms of a reaction to disparities triggered by the hegemonic political model.

There is no little criticism against the current concept of liberal democracy, including among authors who embrace the liberal paradigm, notably with regard to the problem of political representation, ranging from the fact that elections are the single form of expression of people's sovereignty, to the influence of money power on electoral campaigns and political corruption, to the reported decreasing electoral turnout, and so forth (Loureiro 2009). Still, not all questions regarding the problems of democracy, and subsequently of political

representation, are restricted to the electoral-political realm, as there exist many different approaches to democracy that are focused on different social spheres.

From a radical perspective, a most innovative approach has been advanced by a number of the so-categorized feminist theorists, thinkers whose epistemological core challenges democracy from the prism of gender differences and the sexual exploitation of women (Pateman 1989; Phillips 1993; Mansbridge 1996; Almeida and Martins 2010). Though modern feminist thought is not homogeneous, the fact that some of the questions present in the, indeed controversial, feminist debate depart from the more usual critique of the traditional model of democracy is remarkable. As argued by Anne Phillips,

(...) Liberal democracy, by contrast, does not even inspire us. The prolonged exclusion of women from the most basic right to vote turned out to be the merest tip of the iceberg: a discouraging hint at deeper structures that keep women politically unequal. Whatever its claims in other fields of endeavor, liberal democracy has not served women well. (Phillips 1993, 103)

The main feature of the feminist critique of democracy lies in the fact that these authors analyze the problem of democracy from the prism of diverse projects of society, and not only of political institutions.² That is, these are thinkers who argue that women's political inclusion presupposes deconstructing women's submission to the male world in the various social fields (Bourdieu 1999). That which we may call the feminists' *broad critique of liberal democracy* is underpinned mostly on challenging the separation between public space and private space (Groppi 1995), a phenomenon that gains momentum with the development of the association between liberalism and patriarchalism,

In theory, liberalism and patriarchalism stand irrevocably opposed to each other. Liberalism is an individualist, egalitarian, conventionalist doctrine; patriarchalism claims that hierarchical relations of subordination necessarily follow from the natural characteristics of men and women. In fact, the two doctrines were successfully reconciled through the answer given by the contract theorists in the seventeenth century to the subversive question of who counted as free and equal individuals. (Pateman 1989, 120)

As pointed out by several women authors, the public/private separation is intended to justify men's supremacy in key social control arenas, relegating women to activities that would require sensibility and agility, such as caring for their children or performing household chores. Thus, many of the universal and rational values embedded in an idealized public sphere are based on qualities typically associated with male behavior, whereas those characteristics purportedly associated with the female world, like subjectivity and emotions, are trapped in the realm of the private sphere (Brison 2003; Young 1989).

In the meantime the private sphere is being depoliticized. With the public/private separation incorporated into the everyday of great part of the society, there is a tendency to obscure “(...) the fact that great part of the *people’s* real experience, provided they live in societies structured by gender relations, actually depends on their sex.” (Okin 2008, 309-10). Thus, an illusion is created that the private sphere of life, pervaded with personal issues, is not part of the field of politics, dismissing evidence that the everyday life of women is also conditioned by public issues, by laws regulating the right over their body, as in the case of abortion, legislating the condition of wife or creating homemaking rules (Pateman 1983).

The making of civil society, by way of the social contract, placed sexual inequality at the heart of the liberal society insofar as women were relegated to the condition of wives, mothers and homemakers, thus limiting their actions to the private realm. In the sense advanced by Pateman (1993), the social contract was not just a tool for social organization, since it inexorably brought attached a sexual contract and a slavery contract. Liberal democracy, or contemporary democracy theory as Pateman prefers to call it, has not only denied women political participation, but has also led its advocates to deny the need to develop consistent social bases for sustaining democracy, thereby overlooking the problem of citizen participation in managing democracy (Pateman 1993).

The *apolitical* character of the private sphere, the home regarded as an eminently female engagement sphere, contrasts with the dynamic style of the public sphere, seen as a policymaking niche, with power relations identified as an essentially male playing field, while the political activity *per se* is regarded as a profession conceived and organized for the world of men. Moreover, in way of compensation, women who invade the male space of politics are expected to give up their feminine characteristics, to deny their forms of expression, in short, to behave like men (Perrot 1998; Brison 2003). Feminist authors have strongly criticized the liberal political model as based on a purported universal character of the political institutions engendered by modernity,

Liberalism has contributed toward the shaping of universal citizenship as based on the statement that all are born free and equal; yet it has also reduced citizenship to a mere legal status, indicating the rights individuals hold vis-à-vis the State. (...) Notions such as public accountability, civic activity, and political participation in a community of equals are foreign to a majority of liberal thinkers. (...) The distinction public/private, however central it has been in affirming individual freedom, acted, thereby, as a powerful principle of exclusion (...) played an important role in subordinating women. (Mouffe 1999, 119)

As clarified by the Frankfortian tradition, universalism is a structural legacy of modernity, a heritage linked to mechanisms intended for the domination of the bourgeoisie

(Jay 1974, 409-50), a critique further expanded by the feminist perspective by claiming that universalism also tends to conceal the existence of systems of domination based on differences between sexes, justifying a misguided conception that men and women should be submitted to distinct social roles building on elements that would be part of human nature itself. Hence, liberal universalism justified inequality not only on the basis of biological differences, but also from the prism of the existence of gender inequalities (Scott 1990; Okin 2008; Galeotti 1995).

Hierarchized gender relations also affect the presence of women in political representation spheres and ultimately represent an obstacle to democratizing the public sphere and democracy itself. A number of feminist debates and research studies have demonstrated that the universalist discourse of equality of rights has historically contributed toward the consolidation of forms of citizenship exclusion/inclusion. Hence, “one of the feminist reflections driving studies of the theme is related to an inquiry into the political and symbolical constructions that are instrumental to reinforcing women’s stereotypical non citizenship and the masculine identity of power” (Prá 1997, 11).

Citizenship, from the point of view of the hegemonic democratic model, is conceived of as a patriarchal category, inspired by a male image of political action. Women, upon conquering formal citizenship within the liberal democracies, under the auspices of a patriarchal power structure, are constantly under the threat of losing their gender identity because of their undervalued political role in society (Mouffe 1999; Rossi-Doria 1995; Lipszyc 2009). Hence, the adoption of universal citizenship eventually leads to a consideration of the principle of difference as a characteristic harmful to the collective, favoring the exclusion of any social segment that is not part of what is conventionally deemed as being the citizen’s universal characteristics (Young 1989).

Broadly, the analysis based on the dichotomy private sphere/public sphere may be considered a major contribution by the feminist perspective to the critique of liberal democracy. Its interest lies in its contribution to understanding women political exclusion as a public matter; that is, as caused by concrete social conditions related to the power relations disseminated in society.

In the case of our research of women representatives in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, such dichotomy is instrumental in helping us account for the reasons why an overwhelmingly smaller number of women are elected to parliament, especially if compared with the number of men who rise to public office through the electoral path. That is, it enables us to assume that we would be before an inequality that does not stem from individual deficiencies, and that, therefore, should not be explained solely with reference to economic, political-ideological or organizational matters.

Without a shadow of a doubt this is not a minor political debate, given the importance

of the question of women's political representation in decision-making arenas in a context where no few authors point to the problems of the liberal democratic model while, notably in the realm of feminist thought, efforts are made to devise ways to enhance women's representation in politics.

In a classic work on the concept of political representation, Hanna Pitkin (1985) draws attention to a descriptive conception of representation that is hinged on the idea that a legislature is representative for what it represents by way of its actions and not of its composition. Underlying this understanding of political representation founded on action would be the idea of *acting for*, a conception that values the fact that constituencies are present through the actions rather than through the characteristics of representatives. This might lead, for example, to the belief that a greater number of women in parliament would not necessarily mean advancing women's agenda in the legislature, since this political function could also be performed by men. Hence, men would be able to represent women's interests or those of any social segment without having to give up the identities that distinguish the male world. This argument is much criticized by the feminist theory, which considers the presence of certain social groups, women especially, to be important for these groups to have their claims met and their needs clarified. According to the feminist view, the way a legislature is composed does affect the way it acts.

This is Jane Mansbridge's idea, for instance, when discussing what she designates as *descriptive representation*, that is, representation by individuals identified with underprivileged social groups on account of their characteristics or backgrounds, as would be the case of women or African descendants (Mansbridge 1999, 628). Even though acknowledging that this model is far from ideal, the author holds it that moving forward toward descriptive representation yields several positive outcomes by, for instance, helping less favored groups to overcome political communication barriers. Moreover, this is a way of embedding themes in the public debate that are traditionally invisible on the political agendas of the main legislative bodies, such as those related to specific social groups with less access to economic and cultural goods.

Accordingly, descriptive representation would remove barriers hindering political participation, empower broader social groups, and strengthen the political system's legitimacy,

(...) by making citizens, and particularly underrepresented groups, feel as if they themselves were present in the deliberations (...). Seeing women from the U.S. House of Representatives storming the steps of the Senate, for example, made some women feel actively represented in ways that a photograph of male legislators could never have done. (Mansbridge 1999, 650)

Also addressing the theme of political representation, Iris Young emphasizes that in liberal democracies voters are dispensable after the electoral process on the grounds that,

(...) The institutions and culture of some representative democracies do indeed discourage citizens from participating in political discussion and decision-making. (Young 2000, 126)

Therefore, there would exist an excluding character in representation norms, since the people and the social groups would not feel represented in discussion bodies and decision-making processes. The same author proposes, as an alternative to the problems of the traditional representation model, *representation as relationship*, driven by the belief that, however true it is that a representative cannot represent the thoughts of all at the same time, it is equally correct to acknowledge the possibility of creating relationship arenas to enable constant dialog between representatives and constituents, so that the interests of all may be present. To Iris Young, what is most important is not the building of homogeneities but, rather, the relationship that is established in the face of differences, such that,

Conceptualizing representation in terms of difference means acknowledging and affirming that there is a difference, a separation, between the representative and the constituents. Of course, no person can stand for and speak as a plurality of other persons. The representative function of speaking for should not be confused with an identifying requirement that the representative speak as the constituents would, to try to be present for them in their absence. (Young 2000, 127)

From this prism, political representatives should be committed to strengthening their relation with their constituencies through the various mechanisms intrinsic to representation, such as office accountability, meetings with constituents, direct consultations, or supervision councils. With this proposal the author focuses on the hermetic nature political representation acquires after the elections, underscoring the need to stimulate political integration processes that are hinged on representation of interests, opinions, and perspectives.

As can be inferred from these analyses, the current hegemonic political representation model is quite far from both descriptive representation and representation as relationship, proposals that potentially may broaden the inclusion of politically marginalized groups in the liberal democratic model. Ultimately, the case of the presence/absence of Rio Grande do Sul women legislators, this article's theme, is typical in revealing what occurs when women have to perform political activities in a realm that not only is male-hegemonic, but also underpinned on norms and rules that, as demonstrated by the women authors referred to herein, represent a patriarchal way of viewing politics.

Women`s Political Representation

The beginning of the twentieth century marks women`s slow march into the political action and participation arenas, and toward their attainment of citizenship and electoral suffrage. In the Brazilian case, as the country debuted in World War II in August 1942, women started reorganizing in diverse ways, most notably the Associação das Donas-de-Casa contra a Carestia [Housewives` Association Against the High Cost of Living], which headed a movement that protested against women`s poor living conditions, in addition to, among other demands, claiming for more job opportunities and maternity and child protection.

The coming into power of a string of military dictatorships in Latin America brought women`s citizenship rights, however incipient they had been in the region, to a virtual standstill. In spite of that, it was also during this period, but especially as of the 1970s, that a new wave of mobilizations by the Brazilian feminist movement surged, spearheaded by a group of women exiles. Besides having to stand up to the opposition of their male peers in exile, these groupings had to overcome the internal divergences intrinsic to any social movement, given their position of simultaneously struggling against the military regime and denouncing women`s situation in society in face of the dominant masculine hegemony. Actions standing out during that period included the important engagement of the feminist movement in the struggle for amnesty for political exiles, for democratic freedoms, and for women`s rights (Pinto 2003; Sarti 2004; Tabak 2002).

With the inception of the Brazilian redemocratization process in the 1980s, the feminist movement was marked by a new and different presence of women in the political setting, who were focused on reforming the political parties` law, the 1982 electoral race and, later on, the need for a National Constituent Assembly (Prá 1997). During this period we witness a process whereby the feminist movement becomes increasingly institutionalized and partisan through the creation of many social organizations. After 1985, with the redemocratization, dialog with the State was reestablished, a most important fact because of its impact in terms of the incorporation of various feminist demands by the public sphere, despite their not always having been considered a priority (Avelar 2001; Costa 2005; Prá 1997).

Thus, with the restoration of democratic life in 1985, significant numbers of Brazilian feminist organizations started to debate women`s scarce representation in the institutional-political sphere, protesting against women`s low office holding rates in Brazil`s executive and legislative branches. Another outstanding theme on the post-1985 agenda of the Brazilian and international feminist movement was women`s political participation in the construction of a more just society in terms of gender equity, with consequences not only for feminist scholarly work, but also for the drafting of an array of new government policies (Matos 2010).

Affirmative action or quota policies, aiming to reduce gaps in terms of political representation across sexes, were one of the most significant strategies adopted by national governments, especially in the 1990s. With the search for altering power relations between men and women in the political realm as backdrop, the quota policy was ratified, making a clear statement that the idea of citizenship is not neutral but, rather “[...] built on masculine models and that access to representation takes place in a gender-charged environment, characterized by the – not accidental, but structural – exclusion of women” (CEPAL 2007, 4).

Even today the theme calls for caution when it comes to assessing the results of the quota policy for the political empowerment of women. In special, it is worth underscoring that several related studies have concluded that quotas have affected little the various factors hindering women’s inclusion in representative institutions, such as the organization of the electoral/partisan system, prejudice, procedures for candidate recruiting or the lack of internal support to women candidacies in the political parties (Álvares 2008; Araújo 2001; Araújo 2009; Reis 2010, among others).

In the field of study of political representation, several indicators have shown improvements worldwide. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU 2011), women’s parliamentary representation worldwide averaged 19.2% in March 2011, up from 11.3% in December 1997. The same trend is seen in Brazil’s federal lower house, the Chamber of Deputies, which exhibited a steady rise from 11.7% in 1997 to 19.3% in 2011, and in the Senate, with an impressive rise in women’s representation, from 9.8% in 1997 to the current 18.3%.

In Latin America, Cuba ranks fourth with 43.2% of female representation; Argentina ranks 11th with 38.5% of women representation in the Chamber of Deputies and 35.2% of women in the Senate; Ecuador ranks 20th with 32.3% of women in the National Legislature. Today Brazil occupies the 104th position, with 8.7% of women representation in the Chamber of Deputies, 14.8% in the Senate, 12.9% in State Legislatures, and 12.6% in City Councils (IPU 2011).

However, if in terms of overall indicators some progress has been made with regard to the political inclusion of women, the available data often convey a partial image of the increase in women’s political representation, in that they fail to provide a comparative dimension of the evolution of women/men political inclusion, making it difficult to apprehend the whole dimension of the gap separating the different sexes in terms of political representation. This is a shortcoming that is all the more evident in case studies focused on recent redemocratization experiences, particularly in terms of subnational experiences, as is the case of Rio Grande do Sul.

In Brazil, according to data from multiple sources, from 1932 to 1982 the percentage of women in the Chamber of Deputies increased. Still, over this fifty-year span the number

of women deputies grew slightly in spite of the number of candidacies (Avelar 2002). Over the period there is no significant change in female representation in National Congress, according to data provided by Ângela Borba (1998), except for the presence of two elected senators: one in 1979 and another one in 1982.

A more substantial increase in the presence of women in elective offices starts in the 1980s (Prá and Barbosa 2005). To some authors, the turning point was the 1986 elections, the first post-redemocratization electoral races, in which women participation in legislatures rose (Tabak 1987; Avelar 2001). With the country's redemocratization we see a greater presence of women in the political arena: in 1974 the percentage of women representatives in the Chamber of Deputies was 0.32%; in 1978, 1.09%; in 1982, 1.6% and, in 1986, women in the National Chamber reached 5.33%, representing, respectively, one, four, eight, and finally, twenty-six women federal representatives (Pinto 1994).

Similar data was found regarding the presence of women in Brazilian State Legislatures over the 1946 –1998 period. As underscored by Avelar (2001), in 1946 there were five state representatives; in 1965 this number had risen to eleven; in 1982, to twenty-eight; and, in 1986, to thirty-one women deputies. Since then this number has never ceased to grow. According to the same source, in the 1998 elections 107 women had already been elected state representatives. This means that the ratio of women representatives in state legislative bodies begins to rise in the 1980s and increases more significantly in the 1990s, a phenomenon similar to that observed in the Chamber of Deputies.

Women in the Male Realm: The Rio Grande do Sul State Legislative Assembly

The history of the Rio Grande do Sul State Assembly has been the subject of many studies (Cánepa 2005; Noll and Trindade 2004; Grohman 2001). However, most of this inquiry, which is important as an overall diagnosis of the state's politics, fails to further refine data on the correlation between men and women in that legislature. Thus, the data presented herein aim to contribute with other research in an attempt to fill this gap in the expert literature.

Furthermore, by relating the information collected with the debates on the feminist critique of liberal democracy, we can conclude that the levels of women political exclusion are even more consistent if evaluated from the perspective of the historical background of institutionalized political arenas at the regional level.

Founded in 1835, the Rio Grande do Sul State Assembly is born in the context of the *Revolução Farroupilha* [War of the Ragamuffins] and the fight for regional independence, with good part of the legislature's history marked by conflicts with sectors seeking

autonomous state development. While woman suffrage was approved in 1932 in Brazil, the first Rio Grande do Sul female state representative was only elected in 1950.

The time gap in terms of parliamentary participation by the state's women can be partly accounted for by the then local society's opposition to the right of women to political participation. Though extensive research on the theme is lacking, the uneasiness with which women's vote was met by the state's society becomes apparent in the articles of one of Rio Grande do Sul's leading newspapers of the 1930s, the *Correio do Povo*. Illustrative of this argument is an excerpt from an article written by Othelo Rosa published in that newspaper in March 1931,

(...) we [Brazilians] are still in the infancy of democracy, as even the male electoral mass is incapable of the normal and regular exercise of the right to vote [...] I do not believe in the benefits of this influence as long as we, the citizens, have not the dignity of transforming the electoral voting offices into decent premises, as befits the delicacy and nobility of a lady [...] for any of them there is no more important a mission than being a good wife and a good mother [...] I am against women's vote and would rather my fellow state women, in keeping with the "pot-au-feu" French type of woman, continue to be, in our homes, the supreme example of sweetness, virtue and kindness that has become, for Brazil, a standard of honor and moral grandeur (Karawejczyk 2008, 132).

To a certain extent the prejudice expressed in the state's press in the early days of woman suffrage, described in research studies such as that of Karawejczyk (2008), denotes prejudice in relation to the role assigned to an idealized woman –regionally viewed as a *prenda* –, who in the state's tradition was generally relegated to the care of the farm house and the family, and whose public appearance was not seen with good eyes, thus further strengthening doubts regarding their social inclusion. As Claudia Pereira Dutra explains,

The *prenda* not only defines a female profile, [that] of the submissive, well-behaved and sociable woman established as social memory, but also eclipses the *china* [an easy woman], who, despite appearing in traditionalist texts, in accounts of the past and in song lyrics, is not referred to as a "gaúcha" woman. The *gaúcha* is the *prenda*, the norm-compliant figure shaped to be worshipped and to set the example (Dutra 2002, 118).

This case renders it clear that the space of women as circumscribed to a private and domestic sphere appears as an obstacle against their recognition as relevant social actors in the political contests taking place in the state. As seen earlier, the opposition public sphere/private sphere reappears whenever the focus is on the public visibility of women's actions.

In the Rio Grande do Sul State Assembly, albeit the fluctuations in the indicators, women's political participation increased only in the second half of the 1990s, when the

percentage of women representatives rose from 3.6% in 1991 to 9% in 1995. It is also worth noting that over the period analyzed the Rio Grande do Sul state’s women’s political representation ratio is lower than that of other states of the federation, as is the case of Rio de Janeiro, which, in the 1990 elections, had a 12.9 percentage of women elected to its legislature. In 1994, Rio de Janeiro kept this ratio, yet the state was outpaced by Goiás state, where 14.6% of its Legislative Assembly was composed of women. Other states of the federation showed similar figures in that same year: Pará, with 12.2%, and São Paulo, with 11.7% of women’s representation (Borba 1998).

The composition of the Rio Grande do Sul State Assembly over the 1951–2011 period, adding up both representatives and alternates who took office, shows that the highest percentage of female representation occurs in the present legislature, with seven women (12.7%) making up the state’s women delegation. Over the entire period, if both representatives and alternates are considered, seats in this legislature were taken by a total 5.6% of women. This finding changes if the analysis focuses only on incumbent women representatives, as can be seen in the table below.

Table 1. Distribution by sex of legislators elected to the Rio Grande do Sul State Assembly from 1951 to 2011

Legislature	Women	(%)	Men	(%)	Total deputies
1951-1955	1	1.8	54	98.2	55
1955-1959	1	1.8	54	98.2	55
1959-1963	1	1.8	54	98.2	55
1963-1967	1	1.8	54	98.2	55
1967-1971	2	3.6	53	96.4	55
1971-1975	1	1.8	54	98.2	55
1975-1979	1	1.8	54	98.2	55
1979-1983	1	1.8	54	98.2	55
1983-1987	2	3.6	53	96.4	55
1987-1991	2	3.6	53	96.4	55
1991-1995	2	3.6	53	96.4	55
1995-1999	5	9	50	91	55
1999-2003	5	9	50	91	55
2003-2007	3	5.4	52	94.6	55
2007-2011	5	9	50	91	55
2011-(2015)	7	12.7	48	87.3	55
Total	40	4.5	840	95.5	880

Source: Table prepared by the authors.

According to Table 1, women's representation ratio in the Rio Grande do Sul State Legislature drops from 5.6% to 4.5% of total lawmakers elected. In absolute numbers this means that, out of a total of 880 state representatives elected between 1951 and 2011, only forty were women. Considering, moreover, the number of women representatives reelected, only 29 women ever took a seat in the Rio Grande do Sul State Assembly in the 176 years of the history of this political representation body.

Table 2. Number of legislative terms of women representatives in the Rio Grande do Sul State Assembly from 1951 to 2011

Number of terms of office	Women representatives
6	Suely de Oliveira
5	Jussara Cony
3	Dercy Furtado
2	Ecléa Fernandes
	Cecilia Hypolito
	Luciana Genro
	Maria do Carmo
	Maria Helena Sartori
	Leila Fetter
	Mirian Marroni
	Silvana Covati
	Stella Farias
	Zilá Breitenbach
	Marisa Formolo
1	Zaira Folly
	Maria Iris Pothoff
	Terezinha Irigaray
	Dalila Alves
	Hilda de Souza
	Regina Rossignollo
	Maria Feldman
	Maria do Rosario
	Iara Wortmann
	Gilda Maria Haack
	Adriane Rodrigues
	Floriza dos Santos
	Kelly Moraes
	Stella Farias
	Ana Afonso
	Juliana Brizola

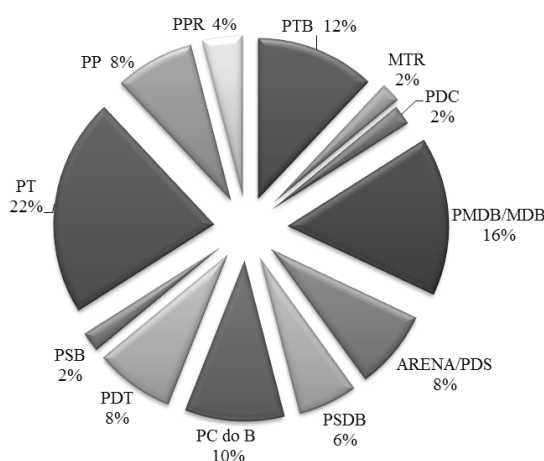
Source: Prepared by the authors.

Therefore, as can be seen in Table 2, most of the state's women lawmakers held office for one or two terms, while women representatives Suely de Oliveira, Jussara Cony and Dercy Furtado stood out with, respectively, six, five and three terms each. This is an interesting theme, for, as pointed by Clara Araújo and José E. A. Alves (2007), reelections could afford a mechanism for affirming women's political participation, considering that presence in the

legislative environment leads to the accumulation of political capital, critical in order to remain in parliamentary life. Undeniably, however, the possibility of reelection benefits not only women but all those who already belong to legislative arenas. Enlarging the scope of the problem, reelection ends up favoring those segments already holding a majority in the legislature, thus a “(...) high percentage of reelected candidates tend to maintain the current gender composition and to hamper parliament renewal” (Araújo and Alves 2007, 548).

Further enlarging the scope of our analysis, the available data also enable us to show the number of terms of office according to the political party. Over the period analyzed there were at least three major partisan groups. In the period spanning from 1951 to 1965, political parties with women in their delegations were the Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro (PTB), the Partido Democrata Cristão (PDC) and the Movimento Trabalhista Renovador (MTR). In late 1965 these parties were banned and a bipartisan system is set in place with the Aliança Renovadora Nacional (ARENA) and the Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (MDB). In 1979 another reform takes place, in which bipartisanship gives place to a multi-partisan system with the following parties: Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (PMDB), Partido Democrático Social (PDS), Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT), Partido Democrático-Trabalhista (PDT), Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro (PTB) and Partido Popular (PP). In addition to these parties, the following parties, only legalized after 1979, also had women delegates: the Partido Comunista do Brasil (PC do B), Partido Progressista Renovador (PPR) and the Partido Socialista Brasileiro (PSB).

Graph 1. Party distribution of women representatives elected to the Rio Grande do Sul State Assembly from 1951 to 2011



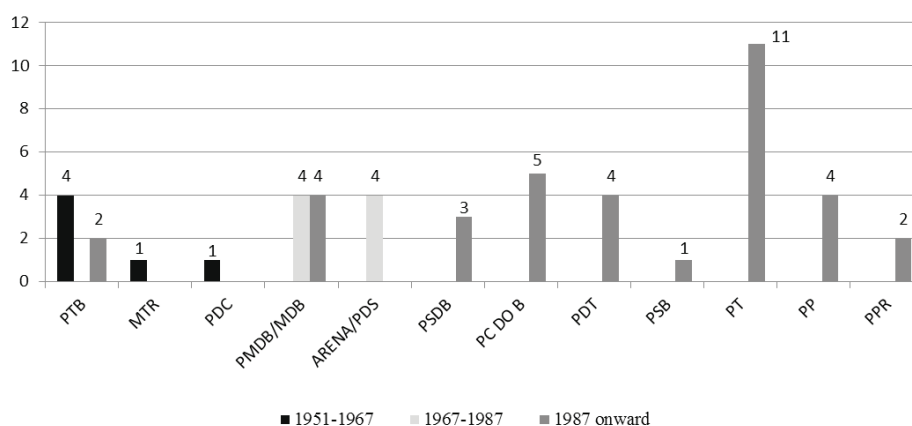
Source: Prepared by the authors.

Analyzing the theme in terms of legislative offices held by women according to the party label by which they were elected (both as representatives and alternates), we can see

that the PT, PMDB/MDB and PTB were the parties with the most women representatives in the Rio Grande do Sul Legislative Assembly in the period spanning from 1951 to 2011 (Graph 1). Also worth underscoring is the fact that the PT was only founded in 1980, that is, nearly thirty years after the first woman representative was elected. In percentages these three parties amount to 50% of the women who became state representatives, with the PT accounting for 22%, the PMDB/MDB for 16%, and the PTB for 12%, a partisan predominance already shown in other studies of state legislatures and even in relation to Brazil's National Congress (Araújo 2001; Alves et al. 2007; Miguel, S. 2001; Miguel 2001; Nóbrega and Lopes s/d; Reis 2010).

This information could be supplemented by grouping women's terms of office by historical periods. In this regard, even if the reference is number of years in office, we can still see a significant growth in women's political representation, in terms of the case studied, taking place as from the 1985 redemocratization (Graph 2).

Graph 2. Distribution of women representatives by political party and period* in the Rio Grande do Sul State Legislative Assembly



*The criterion for classifying a period as democratic or authoritarian is the woman representative's first year in office.

Source: Prepared by the authors.

A possible explanation for these findings can be found in the work of Lucia Avelar (2011), who argues that it is not fortuitous that more women are elected by progressive parties because, with the 1979 electoral reform, leftist parties and their constituencies begin to grow, especially as social movements emerge and civil society organizes, and to call for alternatives to traditional politics. Besides, according to the same author, leftist parties would be more sensitive to the demands of social movements, as is the case of the feminists. It could be further added here that, rather than leftist parties, women representatives have

tended to affiliate with party organizations that, at given moments, embraced an anti-conservative political discourse.

Still, when it comes to the main power structure in the assembly's plenary, few women took a seat from 1951 to 2011 at the Directing Board, the governing body of the Rio Grande do Sul Legislative Assembly, regardless of party adherence. Overall, seven women (2%) took seats in the different arrangements of the house's governing body, with the exclusion of the offices of president, 1st secretary and 4th secretary, which thus far have not been held by any woman, much in the same way as the findings provided by other state- and national-level studies (Araújo 2001; Alves et al. 2007; Miguel, S. 2001; Miguel, L. 2001; Nóbrega and Lopes s/d; Reis 2010).

Lastly, another important element in analyzing the theme of women in the Rio Grande do Sul legislature regards the profession of the lawmakers. As explained by Marengo and Serna (2007), a lawmaker's profession is a source of social stratification, contributing toward the formation of social capital. Moreover, professional status is a driver for the legitimation of power relations that, in their foundations, are anchored on networks that transcend the legislature and are interconnected with the problem of social inequality.

In the case of the Rio Grande do Sul legislature, 73% of the state's women representatives have identified themselves professionally as teachers.³ This finding is most interesting particularly if analyzed from the perspective that considers teaching a main arena for women's empowerment in the twentieth century (Ferreira 2008), as since the 19th century a schoolteacher's career for a woman has been a main bridge for enabling women's passage from the private to the public sphere.

In general, findings like the ones presented herein denote a host of deficiencies that have accompanied women inclusion in the representative system embedded in democratic institutions, as is the case of the Rio Grande do Sul State Assembly. Even agreeing that democracy's main accomplishment throughout the 19th and 20th centuries was the broadening of citizenship by knocking down "(...) one after the other, all those barriers excluding women, people of the wrong religion, the wrong color of skin, or just holding fewer possessions" (Phillips 2001, 278), we can ill afford not to recognize that, in light of the findings of the research specializing in the theme, such breakthroughs have been modest.

Final Considerations

Several authors have reviewed the etymological concept of the word democracy by building on the assumption that, at least over the last millennia, it is identified as government of the people. Still, such definition is rife with problems, among which are the debates related to the notion of people, the form of participation, the concept of government, the way

the government acts, and to obedience and sovereignty (Held 2006; Sartori 1994; Bobbio 2000). What becomes clear in the controversy surrounding these concepts and definitions is the struggle to determine whether democracy means a type of people's power, construed as a form of life in which citizens participate in the political system through societal self-management and self-regulation or, rather, a form whereby a contribution is made to the State's decision-making process that relies on the election of representatives in elections recognized by society (Held 2006).

Despite the divergences, questions like these are virtually embedded in the contemporary debates on the theme of democracy. However, these discussions become increasingly more complex when the problem of participation is focused on gender and when political inclusion becomes entangled in a web of relations seeking the deconstruction of gender gaps. As stressed by Carole Pateman (1993, 340-41),

When the silenced history of political origins is brought to the surface of the political setting, this will never be the same. Nature, sex, masculinity and femininity, the private, marriage and prostitution will turn into political problems; similarly, the well-known patriarchal understanding of labor and citizenship. New anti-patriarchal roads must be trailed to reach democracy, socialism, and freedom.

Even though changes did occur in terms of the parliamentary inclusion of women throughout the 20th century, these are still modest in terms of a consolidated democratic society, where democratic is not in formal, procedural terms, given that the contemporary model of democracy seems to function well in this respect, but rather in terms of gender relations. In other words, in terms of political equity between men and women, as an indicator for assessing how much a society is actually democratic, as proposed by a well-known ECLAC report (CEPAL 2007).

It is worth stressing this point because, if we think about the theme from the point of view of the formal inclusion of women in contemporary democracy, we cannot deny that constitutionally they are considered citizens and have the right to participate in political life, like men, in the arenas provided by the model, especially the electoral. The findings presented throughout this article seem to provide enough information showing that increasingly more women are being elected to the various legislatures.

However, as recalled by Therborn (2006), the question is that, quite often, formal, legal shifts find no expression in social relations, since they find no equivalent in the world of life, where, traditionally, patriarchal practices still outweigh civil rights, thus hampering effective participation in the realm of politics.

In the case in question, the study of the women lawmakers of the Rio Grande do Sul state legislature, our insight is that differences between men and women, even in

the more formal sphere of the democratic realm – the system of legislative institutions –, are still huge. Accordingly, even with all the progress made in the field of political representation, the number of women representatives elected was puny over the period studied; successful women candidacies were monopolized by few political parties, while elected women representatives have been excluded from holding positions in the legislatures' governing bodies.

From the prism of the feminist theory we have drawn on in this article, this inequality could be accounted for by building on the opposition between the masculinized public sphere and the feminized private sphere, that is, the realm of politics seen as an environment of men, who, as the Greeks, the inventors of democracy, had already done, are excused from their private duties for the purpose of performing public activities. However, at the current stage of our research, many doubts still remain that call for answers, most importantly those related to the nature of women's representation in the Rio Grande do Sul legislature, namely, whether there actually is a differentiated political activity legitimating or demonstrating the idea, embedded in the essentialist perspective, that women always represent best the interests of women themselves. And also, that women, even with the passing of time, enter the public arena to continue to play the gender role that is expected from them in a given historical period.

Accordingly, herein we have focused primarily on demonstrating the size of the gap separating men and women in terms of political representation in a state legislature. In a forthcoming text, our proposal will be to investigate, this time by relying mostly on qualitative analysis tools, the content of the bills submitted and speeches delivered by the Rio Grande do Sul women representatives.

Lastly, it is our view that inequality between men and women, also present in parliamentary structures, legitimizes the critique made by feminist theorists that liberal democracy, however significant the women movement's accomplishments may have been, faces huge challenges to incorporate social segments considered subalternate. The depth of the polemic triggered by such perspective lies not only in the claim that political institutions, in spite of the legal breakthroughs, are still exclusive; more importantly, they lie in the fact stressed by feminist theorists that the root of such inequality can be found in the invention of politics itself, in the construction of gender subordination, and the contamination of the various social spaces by patriarchy.

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Notes

- 1 Based mostly on the text by Boaventura de Sousa Santos and Leonardo Avritzer (2002), several authors have opted to use the expression hegemonic model when referring to the characteristics of contemporary democracies. We have opted for using the adjective liberal to modify democracy because we believe it clarifies the present-day ties between democracy and capitalism. Yet, throughout the text we will use both characterizations because we do not consider them to be mutually exclusive.
- 2 An 18th century pioneer in challenging women's exclusion from the public sphere, Mary Wollstonecraft (1998) wrote a most striking critique stating that men/women relations were rooted in unjustified assumptions (natural differences) and unfair institutions (from the matrimonial contract to a complete absence of female representation in the State). To her there exist deep linkages between the public and private spheres, while significant political changes would be made impossible if not preceded by the restructuring of relations between sexes in the family and the home, which would entail mostly a revision of the kind of differentiated education women receive in relation to men (Rossi-Doria 1995). Even though these ideas did not resonate with the thinkers that followed her, her pioneering role in addressing the problem of women exclusion is undeniable from the perspective of the public sphere/private sphere division. In addition to the work of Wollstonecraft, also important in the origin of the modern struggle against women oppression are the pioneer writings of the Marquis of Condorcet, On the admission of women to the rights of citizenship (1790) and the work by Olympe de Gouges, Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen (1791).
- 3 We have no data for our particular case with regard to the proportion of men teachers elected but, just to have an idea, in a comparative study of the Pará and Rio Grande do Sul state legislatures, Igor Grill (2008) showed that, out of a total 200 state representatives whose professional profile was examined, 30 of them had worked as teachers prior to the election, the equivalent to 15% of the representatives. On the national level, Leôncio Martins Rodrigues (2002) found out that teachers accounted for 15.8% of the professions held by the representatives elected to the federal Chamber of Deputies in 1998.

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Electoral Governance in Brazil *

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Electoral governance has increasingly more frequently been the object of study of the comparative politics literature. This article examines the electoral governance institutional model adopted in Brazil and its consequences for political/electoral competition. It is argued herein that Brazil's Electoral Justice System, motivated by the institutional design, has ended up becoming one of the main actors of the country's recent democratic consolidation, being decisive not only with regard to rule adjudication and application, but also to rulemaking. With the purpose of assessing this governance model in action, three important recent rulings by Brazil's Electoral Justice System are analysed here: verticalization of the coalitions, reduction in the number of councillors, and party loyalty.

Keywords: Brazil; Electoral governance; Electoral Justice System; Judiciary branch; Higher Electoral Court; Judicialization of politics.

Introduction

The rising role of the Brazilian Electoral Justice System in the consolidation of Brazil's democratic regime has focused widespread attention on an institution that hitherto had been very little known and debated. It is true that research on electoral governance in the comparative political literature is recent. The subject gained importance due to a concern for the credibility of the electoral results of democracies born during the third democratic wave (Huntington 1993). The key concern in these new regimes was to guarantee that results coming from the polls were fair, transparent and, above all, accepted by political competitors.

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This recent literature argues that electoral governance – construed as a set of rules and institutions that frame the electoral contest – has been overlooked as a variable in studies on democratic transition and consolidation, as most studies focus on normative issues such as government systems and the electoral formulas adopted (Elklit and Reynolds 2000; Mozaffar and Schedler 2002).

For Pastor (1999), the political literature on electoral systems is often driven by the “4-Ps: *politics, parties, polling, and proportionality*”. The author further states that, even in broader comparative studies on the profile of democratic regimes, the question of electoral governance has been overlooked, as in the case of the study conducted by Lijphart (1999).

Recently, the *International Political Science Review* dedicated an entire issue to electoral governance, a concept thus defined in an article by Mozaffar and Schedler in the same periodical:

Electoral governance is the wider set of activities that creates and maintains the broad institutional framework in which voting and electoral competition take place. It operates on three levels: rulemaking, rule application, and rule adjudication. Rulemaking involves designing the basic rules of the electoral game; rule application involves implementing these rules to organize the electoral game; rule adjudication involves resolving disputes arising within the game (Mozaffar and Schedler 2002, 7).

Rulemaking is the choice and framing of the basic rules of the electoral game. At this level of electoral governance the following are established, for example: the electoral formula, electoral districts, the magnitude of the elections, dates on which they will be held and other legal matters designed to ensure a level playing field for the contestants. Here, some rules given little attention by the political literature, such as the rules of (in) eligibility and organization of the bodies responsible for the administration of the elections are also defined.

The rule application level deals with the implementation and management of the electoral game, such as the registration of parties, candidates and voters, distribution of ballot boxes, procedures to be adopted on election day and other rules designed to ensure transparency, efficiency, and neutrality in managing the game. Basically, this level addresses issues concerning the administration of the electoral game.

Lastly, rule adjudication is the resolution of potential disputes involving competitors – the electoral bones of contention. Apart from clarifying and resolving controversies arising from the electoral race, this level also carries out the vote tallying and the announcement of final electoral results.

These three different levels of electoral governance are not the responsibility of one single body. For instance, rulemaking is almost always defined in the constitutional text and the electoral code. Thus, it is basically a Legislative Branch duty. The other two activities,

however, are usually the responsibility of specific bodies – that we may generically call Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs).

Part of the effort of this recent literature is to create criteria to assess these bodies' institutional design and its impact on the electoral game, a design which itself becomes a variable in the analyses on the consolidation of democratic regimes.

Effective electoral governance alone does not guarantee good elections, of course, because a complex variety of social, economic and political variables affect the process, integrity, and outcome of democratic elections. But good elections are impossible without effective electoral governance (Mozaffar and Schedler 2002, 6).

These authors argue that, in recent democracies, a regime's greater or lesser stability is a function of the electoral governance model adopted. Good electoral governance conducted by an adequate EMB may give credibility to the electoral results by stabilizing and resolving disputes for political power (Pastor 1999; Schedler 2002; Hartlyn et al. 2008).

Even when building on minimalist definitions of democracy, the research agenda proves to be relevant. For institutions regulating political competition, the greater good is to guarantee the fairness of the electoral process. The legitimacy of poll results is the *sine qua non* for the major political forces to accept the electoral results. It is worth pointing out that a large part of electoral governance activities focus on ensuring opportunities for distinct political groups to win elections and, especially, to have their victory recognized and accepted. The race can only exist insofar as political groups are apt and confident to run in the elections.

Accordingly, this article seeks to contribute to fill this gap. To this end, we intend to present an interpretation of the institutional design of Brazil's electoral governance and its consequences for partisan political competition. The key argument will be that although the Brazilian model has favoured trust in the "electoral truth", it has also been responsible for the strong presence of the Judiciary in all electoral governance activities, including rulemaking.

To reinforce this argument we will analyse three recent rulings by the Electoral Justice System that will show the impacts of the model of electoral competition adopted – verticalization, number of councillors and party loyalty.

The Brazilian Governance Mode²

A series of political episodes in recent Brazilian history showcase the importance of the Electoral Justice System in ensuring significant standards of electoral fairness, thus revealing the strong institutional stability it has reached in the Brazilian political system.

Evidence of this is the structure set in place in 1932, after the debacle of the Old Republic, which endured the many political changes that characterized a significant part of Brazilian history in the 20th century.

Moreover, some posit a key role played by Brazil's Electoral Justice System in the long, recent democratic transition. "Without an institution of that kind, there would hardly have been trust in the competition; even more so if we take into account the political and legal restrictions of that time" (Sadek 1995, 41).

The comparative literature argues that one of the conditions for the establishment of fairness in the electoral process is the independence of the regulatory body from partisan interests (Hartlyn et al. 2008). The argument is that decision-making body independence protects the definition of the rules of the game from partisan interests. The argument is likened to that used in the debate on public policies for the relationship between bureaucracy and politics.

Analyses of the Brazilian case reflect the findings of comparative studies. In writing the history of the Electoral Justice System in Brazil, Fleisher and Barreto (2009) and Sadek (1995) showed that EMB independence from the holders of political power allows the Electoral Justice System to act independently from majority interests.

Actually, the neutrality acquired by the Brazilian model of electoral governance in relation to political interests was decisive for the paths taken in the transition. Nonetheless, here we argue that the persistence of the model throughout the democratic consolidation has yielded two other outcomes.

The first one is the *insulation* of the Electoral Management Body (EMB). This is not merely a model that protects governance from more immediate partisan interests but, rather and more importantly, a model that may have weakened EMB accountability.

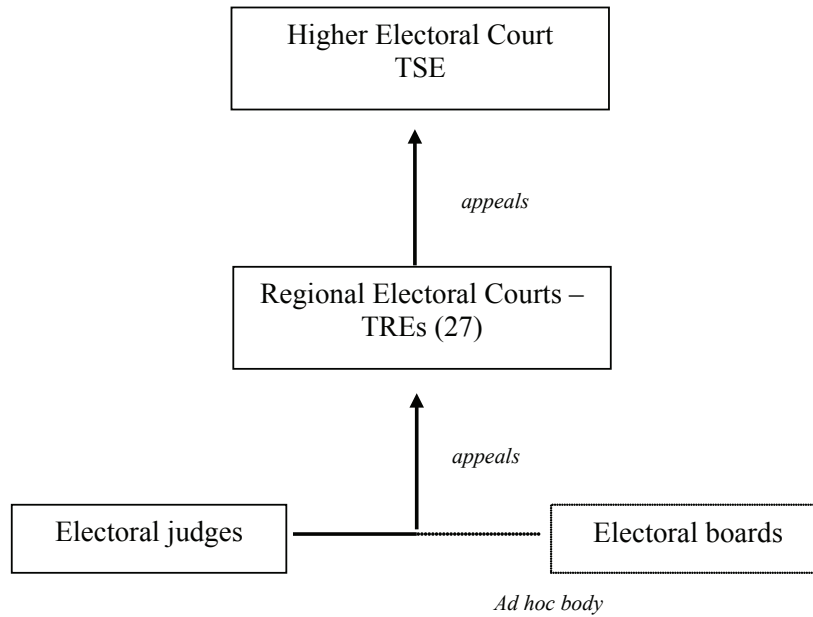
The second effect is that it created favourable institutional conditions for the EMB – especially for its highest body, the Higher Electoral Court (Tribunal Superior Eleitoral (TSE)) – to advance over *rulemaking* as well. Given the characteristics of Brazil's governance, there have been recent TSE decisions that have deeply altered the electoral rules, including with creative interpretations of the constitutional text.

But in order to deepen the argument we need to know this institutional design better.

Very little has changed in the Brazilian Electoral Justice System since it was created in 1932. The 1988 Constitution states that the Electoral Justice System bodies are: 1) the Higher Electoral Court, 2) Regional Electoral Courts, 3) Electoral Judges and 4) Electoral Boards.

The Higher Electoral Court is the highest body for decisions regarding the management and implementation of the electoral process and the highest court when it comes to rule application activities in Brazilian electoral governance. In addition, it is the court of last resort in cases of electoral controversy (rule adjudication).

Chart 1. Brazil’s Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs)



Source: Author’s own.

The TSE consists of seven members: three justices of the Supreme Federal Court (Supremo Tribunal Federal (STF)), two from the Higher Court of Justice (Superior Tribunal de Justiça (STJ)) and two citizens with remarkable legal knowledge and good moral reputation nominated by the STF and chosen by the President. These external members are usually lawyer working in the electoral field.

Regional Electoral Courts (Tribunais Regionais Eleitorais (TREs)) are based in every state capital. Aside from taking part in the management and implementation of the electoral process, a TRE is the second highest court for rule adjudication matters. Each TRE consists of seven members: two appellate judges from the state-level Court of Justice, two state lower court judges chosen by the Court of Justice, one federal lower court judge and two citizens of remarkable legal knowledge and good moral reputation nominated by the Court of Justice and chosen by the President.

The electoral judge is chosen by the TRE from among a state’s judges. Their jurisdiction is the electoral zone. They also take part in the management and execution of the electoral process and act as the first court for rule adjudication.

The Electoral Boards are ad hoc bodies, set in place only for the execution of the electoral process. Sixty days prior to the elections, the TRE selects a judge and two to four citizens of remarkable legal knowledge and good moral reputation. In this way, the Board assists the Electoral Judge to carry out the duties required by the electoral process in a given electoral zone.

Brazil's Electoral Management Bodies have no tenured members of their own. Although the TSE, the TREs and the Electoral Judges' Offices (where the electoral judges work) are permanent and therefore rely on their own tenured staff, the justices who become members of the Electoral Justice System are not obliged to stop their activities in other areas of the Judiciary. Not even the lawyers chosen are obliged to interrupt their professional activities.⁴

Such a profile can even make it difficult for the Electoral Justice System to meet all the demands it is mandated to by law. Examples of this are the audits that the Electoral Justice staff must conduct into campaign expenditures – a potential structural flaw that may compromise control quality (Taylor 2008).

Moreover, every sphere is guided by the “rule of intersection” in composing its board, in line with the Judiciary's structure. The highest electoral body intersects with the highest judicial sphere, as the lowest electoral body intersects with the lowest judicial bodies. Indeed, we may say that the highest electoral sphere intersects not only with the highest judicial spheres but also, and more importantly, it strongly intersects with the Constitutional Court (STF), a feature that will prove critical in underpinning our arguments.

Before going further with this point, it is worth deepening the analysis of the TSE's institutional functioning.

It is possible to state that the TSE is an STF body for electoral matters – not *de jure*, but *de facto*. As we saw earlier, the TSE consists of seven members. Three of them are chosen from among the justices of the Supreme Federal Court, while two others are lawyers who are nominated by the same STF, which, arguably, exerts strong influence over these members. It could be said that, at least, these lawyers are nominated in accordance with a projected and expected profile by the Justices of the Constitutional Court. The two other justices come from the STJ. However, we must also consider that these STJ justices exert less influence on the overall profile of the TSE than STF justices do. What allows us to make this statement is the length of their tenures.

All the members of the Electoral Justice System hold a two-year term of office, which may be extended for another two years. An STJ internal rule, however, bans its justices from holding a TSE office for more than one term, while for justices coming from the STF and independent lawyers the four-year term of office has become common practice.

The reason for the STJ Justices to remain with the TSE for less time is the higher number of Justices composing that court, and the need to comply with a rotation scheme to be met by its members. The STJ is composed of 33 Justices; so, in order for every STJ justice to have a chance to become a TSE member, an informal rule was set establishing that none of them shall hold office for a second two-year term.

STF members total 11 and there is no internal rule imposing on its justices the need

to become a TSE member. The procedures regarding justices chosen are quite informal and depend mostly on the disposition manifested by a given justice to hold such office.

Thus, from the first semester of 1989 until the end of the second semester of 2007, 21 STJ Justices were titular members of the TSE while only 16 different STF Justices had held that same office.

Another important point is that no STJ justice who has held a TSE office for a two-year term has ever returned to the post. Yet, among the STF Justices it is not uncommon for a justice to have held office for two consecutive two-year terms and return years later for another two terms. From 1989 to late 2007, these were the cases of Justices Néri da Silveira, Carlos Velloso, Sepúlveda Pertence and Marco Aurélio Mello.

Undeniably, the time a justice spends at the TSE ensures his/her experience in the matter, even more so when the court in question does not have an exclusive body of justices. Hence, we can say that the capacity to influence the profile to be adopted by the TSE in adjudicating conflicts and in administrative decisions regarding the electoral process is stronger in STF justices than STJ justices.

We must consider that 13 of the 21 STJ justices that have held office in the TSE had worked in Electoral Justice before as regional electoral justices (in TREs) or as lower-sphere electoral judges. Such experience notwithstanding, the shorter period STJ justices spend at the TSE compared to STF justices reduces these justices' power of influence on the institution's profile.

In addition to this predominance of the STF among the members that make up the TSE, the body's presidency and vice-presidency are exclusive offices of the justices of the Constitutional Court. Thus, the agenda and guidelines for the administrative functioning of the body itself are influenced by the profile of the STF justice occupying the presidency.

That is why we can affirm that the TSE is an STF body for electoral matters. After all, the power to influence the TSE by STF justices is undeniably greater when compared to its other members. One possible implication of this is that the rules of the competitive game can be submitted to the interpretation of a broader set of norms, including constitutional norms.

At times, when reviewing electoral legislation, the TSE makes a decision by resorting to an interpretation of the constitutional text. At other times, as it interprets the constitutional text, the STF rules for changing the rules of the electoral game. And there is no sign of any interpretive conflict between these institutions.

On the contrary, there is no record of any TSE ruling that once submitted to the STF was then reversed. In most cases, the STF does not even accept reviewing the appeal on the understanding that the TSE's interpretation is the last word in terms of electoral matters. And, when the STF hands down a decision on a theme about which it had already received an opinion by the TSE, there is no divergence in their rulings. They

end up reinforcing each other.⁵

A number of countries adopt electoral governance models that set forth the powers of the Judiciary in the electoral contest. In Costa Rica, for example, the responsibility for the nomination and appointment of EMB members is exclusively of the Supreme Court of Justice. The Higher Electoral Court consists of three members, chosen for an eight-year term. The minimum requirements for selection of members are a bachelor's degree in Law and prior professional experience.

Two aspects must be underscored in comparing Costa Rica and Brazil. The first one is that in Costa Rica there is no “rule of intersection”, that is, EMB justices are elected by the Higher Court of Justice, but are not members thereof. Another feature concerns the profile of the Supreme Court itself: all of its justices are elected by parliament for an eight-year term, contrary to the classic republican principle of not setting terms-of-office for members of constitutional courts. This characteristic sets other accountability mechanisms for the Judiciary, which, in the long run, indirectly affects the EMBs' accountability.

In Latin America, participation by the Judiciary in the electoral governance process also occurs in countries like Mexico, Peru and Chile.⁶ In these countries, however, governance activities are not concentrated in a single EMB. In cases like these, the Judiciary ultimately plays a decisive role in rule adjudication matters. Rule application, in turn, is the power of a different body. Thus, electoral governance is the responsibility of two distinct and independent bodies.

In short, Brazilian electoral governance can be defined by a combination of five characteristics: 1) concentration of governance activities in a single EMB (rule application and rule adjudication), 2) full independence from political parties and the Legislative Branch – given that nomination and appointment of its members are processes conducted by the Judiciary, 3) EMBs with non-exclusive members – given that members hold offices in electoral bodies but do not give up their activities in their bodies of origin, 4) “rule of intersection”, in that the major part of the justices' offices is held by members of the Judiciary and 5) predominance of the Constitutional Court over the highest EMB.

Thus it is the combination of these characteristics that creates a favourable institutional environment for the *insulation* of the Electoral Management Body and its active participation in *rulemaking*. As the partisan contest consolidates itself and some themes of this game gain greater relevance, the electoral governance model adopted ultimately produces more outcomes with greater frequency.

With the aim of illustrating these outcomes, we will conduct a brief analysis of three recent milestone rulings that have radically altered the rules of the competitive game verticalization, number of councillors, and party loyalty. The main goal here is to observe the Brazilian electoral governance model in motion.

Verticalization⁷

In 2002, a year when elections for president, governors, senators and state and federal representatives took place, the TSE (court of last resort of the Electoral Management Body) handed down a ruling regarding the rules that guided partisan coalitions quite different from all former practices and legal interpretations.

Until that year, political parties were allowed to make alliances for state-level majoritarian elections (governors) regardless of the coalitions they came to make for the purpose of the national majoritarian election (presidential). In other words, there was no legal obligation to keep state and national coalitions symmetrical. So much so, that it was common for parties that were allies in gubernatorial elections to be adversaries in the presidential elections.

The year before the election, however, the Democratic Labour Party (PDT) consulted⁸ the TSE with the following question: “can a political party (Party A) enter into a coalition for the presidential election with other parties (Parties B, C and D) and, at the same time, enter into a coalition with third parties (E, F and G, who also have their own presidential candidate) for the purpose of the election for state governor?” In other words, they wanted to know if it was possible to establish a state-level coalition with parties that were adversaries in the presidential election.⁹

In the answer to the consultation, the EMB, acting as a court of last resort, decided against the procedure: political parties could not make “incongruent” alliances. Thus, coalitions for presidential elections should impose certain limits on state coalitions.

In the two previous elections, 1994 and 1998,¹⁰ this practice had been common. The interplay between state and national levels constituted one of the most important pieces on the electoral strategies game board (Braga 2006; Limongi and Cortez 2010). In ruling on the matter, with a view to reforming the political system, the Electoral Justice System imposed an unprecedented and unexpected constraint on political parties at the time.

Each dot on the graph 1 represents a different political party. The closer to 100 along the axis, the more vertical (congruent) were the party’s alliances in the majoritarian elections in which it took part. On the other hand, the more distant from 100, the smaller the percentage of vertical alliances entered into by the party in state-level elections.

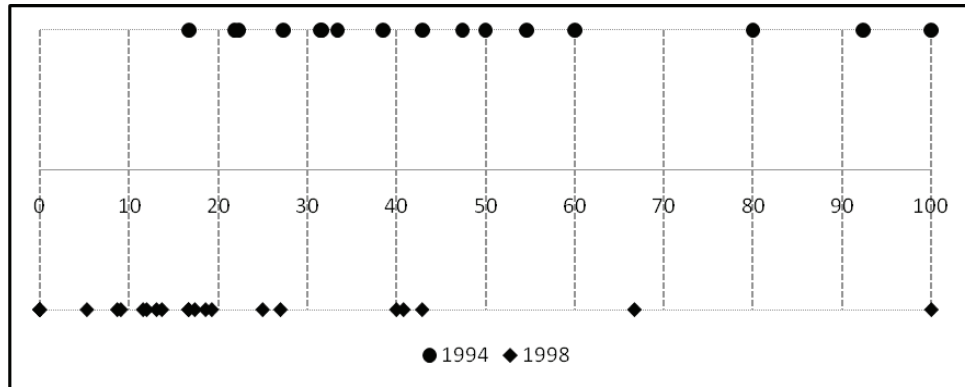
In other words, the party at the 100 point on the axis did not ally with opposing parties in the presidential elections in all states where it ran in gubernatorial elections.

In contrast, the party located furthest from 100 on the “verticalization” axis allied with adversaries in the presidential elections in a greater number of states where it ran in majoritarian elections.

Thus, on the right side of the axis are the parties that would have been closest in 1994

and 1998 to the obligation laid down from 2002. On the opposite side, the left side, are the parties that would have been the farthest from the verticalization practice, as designed by the TSE for the 2002 elections.

Graph 1. Level of verticalization between State and national alliances – 1994 and 1998



Source: Made by the author with TSE data.

Building on data from these two elections, we can therefore say that the decision handed down by the Electoral Justice System went counter to partisan strategies and altered the electoral competition. The objective here is not to debate if the practice then in force was positive or negative for the Brazilian partisan system, but to show how the highest EMB found the practice to be negative and imposed a new standard that, in its view, was healthier for the electoral contest and the political system.

In justifying their opinions, some Justices argued that the coalition patterns, as they existed in Brazil, impeded the appearance of strong national parties. Hence, the most relevant national issues were being conditioned by less comprehensive regional interests.

With the opinion in their hands, the TSE Justices decided to impose the rule of verticalization as from 2002 to reform the partisan system and contribute to democratic consolidation.

The legal argument that conducted the decision drew on an interpretation of Article 17 of the Constitution that sets forth that political parties must have a “national character”. Since, according to the opinion, by establishing asymmetrical coalitions political parties would be submitting the national character to regional particularities, the practice was found to be unconstitutional.

Consequently, a new norm was introduced into the Brazilian normative framework guiding the formation of partisan coalitions. It is important to stress that the new rule came into effect without having been submitted to traditional political procedures. It was not the result of a bill or an amendment to the Constitution, nor was it sanctioned by parliamentary majorities. It was simply the result of an innovative interpretation of the law.

The reaction of the political parties to the decision was obvious, and the developments of this reaction were a rather clear revelation of the *modus operandi* of our electoral governance.

Claiming that the TSE ruling had failed to comply with the constitutional text in two aspects – first, because it restrained partisan autonomy and second, because it would be changing electoral rules less than a year before the elections – many political parties filed injunctions so as not to comply with the new rule. None of these arguments, however, were backed by the Constitutional Court and the decision by the TSE prevailed.

Two elections were held under the rule of verticalization (2002 and 2006) until Parliament managed to overcome the rule by amending the constitutional text in order to once again allow political parties to engage in electoral alliances for the 2010 elections.

In the case of verticalization, therefore, there was an interpretation of the constitutional text developed by the highest EMB that altered the practice in force regarding political coalitions altogether. Thus, the status quo of political competition was changed by a new rule without the new rule having been debated, voted or sanctioned by the traditional political representative bodies

Number of Councillors

The issue of the number of councillors shows an interaction that is a little different from the previous case, yet is also revealing of the effects that the electoral governance model adopted in Brazil can yield.

In 2004, a year of municipal elections (mayors and councillors), the STF decided that a part of the municipal organic law of Mira Estrela, a small northern municipality in the state of São Paulo, regarding the city's definition of its number of councillors was unconstitutional.

The ruling was based on the interpretation of a word of the constitutional text. In line with the widespread redemocratization spirit, the Constitution granted autonomy to the municipalities to define the size of their legislatures within limits set forth therein. Municipal organic laws could define the number of councillors based on three tiers linked to a demographic standard of proportionality. Thus, small, medium and large municipalities would have autonomy within certain minimum and maximum limits.

The argument of the STF's winning thesis was that, despite its having set three classification tiers, the constitutional text made reference to the need to respect proportionality in the number of councillors and the size of the population. Even though the municipality in question was within the limits established by the constitutional text, the STF Justices understood that the city had failed to comply with the proportionality

principle, as other and bigger municipalities had fewer councillors.

To support the thesis, the case's rapporteur recommended criteria to establish the principle of proportionality. This principle prompted the creation of 36 classification tiers, rather than the three constitutionally established tiers.

In principle the STF ruling should only be applicable *inter partes*, that is, it should affect only the municipality in question. For the decision to be extended to other municipalities another petition must be filed with the STF, which would review the concrete case and hand down another ruling or uphold the decision made before.¹¹

The outcomes were, however, different. Soon after the STF ruled the unconstitutionality of the municipal organic law, the TSE published a resolution extending the same reasoning developed at the STF to all other Brazilian municipalities. Instead of the three constitutional tiers, municipalities had to adapt to the 36 new tiers defined by the criteria of the Electoral Justice System.

This resolution by the TSE was even harder-hitting because mayoral elections were being held that year. The decision, therefore, altered the magnitude of proportional elections in several municipalities.

In order to better measure the impact of that decision, when we compare the total number of councillors in Brazil in 2000 with the number running in the 2004 elections, we realize that the resolution by the highest EMB reduced by 14% the number of seats in the municipal legislative bodies.

The singularity of this case in relation to the case of verticalization is that the electoral rule was altered by the TSE after a decision by the Constitutional Court. In the previous case the decision by the TSE had been backed by the STF, whereas in this case the STF ruling was magnified by the TSE. Although the interactive pattern is not exactly the same, the closeness between the EMB and the Constitutional Court is worth pointing out. And it is this closeness that may have contributed to the advancement of electoral governance on rulemaking.

Table 1. Difference in number of councillors from 2000 to 2004

Region	Councillors 2000	Councillors 2004	Absolute variations	Variation (%)
BR	60,317	51,819	8,475	-14%
N	4,506	4,186	320	-7%
NE	19,625	16,539	3,064	-16%
SE	19,389	15,842	3,547	-18%
S	12,127	10,967	1,160	-10%
CO	4,669	4,285	384	-8%

BR - Brazil / N - North / S - South / CO - Central-West / NE - Northeast / SE - Southeast

Source: TSE (www.tse.gov.br).

What is interesting is that both at the STF and the TSE the prevailing opinion was that municipal autonomy had created a promiscuous and unhealthy mechanism with regard to the use of public funds. According to this opinion, by allowing local politicians to decide autonomously on the size of their legislative bodies the political system had created incentives for this power to become a bargaining chip in political negotiations or, worse, to meet the interests of groups.

The concrete data used by the Justices to back their opinions was municipal growth after the 1988 Constitution.

Table 2. Evolution of the number of municipalities in Brazil, 1980-2004

Region	1980	1991	1993	1997	2001	2004	Growth over 1980-2004 period	
BR	3,991	4,491	4,974	5,507	5,561	5,562	1,571	39.4%
N	205	298	398	449	449	449	244	119%
S	719	873	1,058	1,159	1,189	1,188	469	65.2%
CO	282	379	427	446	463	465	183	64.9%
NE	1,375	1,509	1,558	1,787	1,792	1,792	417	30.3%
SE	1,410	1,432	1,533	1,666	1,668	1,668	258	18.3%

BR - Brazil / N - North / S - South / CO - Central-West / NE - Northeast / SE - Southeast

Source: IBGE – National Statistics Office (www.ibge.gov.br).

Thus, even though the number of municipalities rose by 39% over this period, the number of councillors was reduced by 14% as a result of the criterion applied by the EMB.

No sooner had the TSE published the resolution than the political parties reacted leading a Constitutional Court claiming that: 1) the resolution published in April 2004 was against the constitutional principle that bans electoral laws from being altered less than a year before elections (principle of annuality) and 2) it also hindered municipal autonomy, altering the federative pact safeguarded in entrenched constitutional clauses and, further, that the TSE had infringed the principle of separation of powers, making laws in the Legislative Branch's place.

In a quasi-unanimous decision, with the single dissenting vote of Justice Marco Aurélio, the STF basically decided that the resolution was based on an interpretation of the constitutional text and could therefore not be considered a law. Such an interpretation would simultaneously rule out the theses of infringement of separation of powers, of the principle of annuality in electoral matters — i.e., electoral rules cannot enter into force the same year as they are issued — and amendment of an entrenchment clause of the Constitution.

Once again the thesis that resolutions issued by the TSE cannot be disputed in their (un)constitutionality, as they cannot be characterized as norms, was present. And this argument was upheld both in the case of verticalization and of the councillors, even though the resolutions in both cases clearly brought new rules for partisan competition.

In addition to those two Direct Unconstitutionality Actions, several petitions were filed with the STF seeking to reverse the ruling. None of these suits was successful and, unsurprisingly, the STF confirmed the number of councillors for all municipalities as established by the TSE resolution because, after all, that decision had been based on the opinion formulated by the STF itself.

Two elections for municipal legislatures were held under the criteria applied by the EMB, 2004 and 2008. For the upcoming municipal elections (2012) the federal lawmaker amended the constitutional text to reverse the court's decision, thus recovering the nearly 8,000 seats suppressed in 2004.

In the case studied, the electoral governance model adopted made it possible for an opinion released in an electoral year by the STF to quickly become effective for all municipalities. A decision by the Supreme Court with effect *inter partes* ended up producing effects *erga omnes* by a decision of the TSE. Had it not been for the intersection between the TSE and the STF, the matter most likely would not have had the trajectory it had, or at least not as easily.

Party Loyalty

In the first half of 2007, when the TSE answered a consultation filed, it decided that the terms of office of parliamentarians elected in 2006 who had just been sworn in belonged to the parties they had been elected by, not to the parliamentarians. Consequently, they could be disqualified from their offices if they changed parties during the Legislature.

The consultation to the TSE was proposed by political party Democrats (DEM) in the following terms: “[do] parties and coalitions have the right to preserve a seat obtained through the proportional electoral system when there is a request for cancellation of an affiliation or a transfer of a candidate elected by one party to another?”.

In the consultation, the party made its case as to what it expected the TSE justices to consider in their answer. The parties requested that the following situations be included: 1) the election of candidates to proportional offices is the result of the electoral quotient as achieved by the various parties and coalitions, 2) party affiliation is a constitutional condition for eligibility that serves to indicate to the voter the link between the candidate and the party's ideology and 3) the calculation of averages is a function of the valid votes given to parties and coalitions.

The Brazilian proportional, open-list electoral system is also called the single transferable vote system. That is, by voting for a candidate of a given party and/or coalition the voter transfers votes to the remaining candidates, who will benefit from the party's total votes.

The consultation was therefore guided by the following rationale: as party/coalition elected candidates benefit from the nominal votes given to all the candidates on the list and from the votes given to the party, the lawmaker's office, rather than belonging to the candidate, belonged to the party. And the TSE's answer confirmed that.

This debate is quite old in Brazilian politics. In Congress there are several bills addressing the issue, while the academic literature already features very robust studies focusing on the phenomenon (Melo 2000; Desposato 2006).

As part of the redemocratization process in Brazil, in 1985 Congress approved a Constitutional Amendment (EC 25) that withdrew from the text a penalty of disqualification from office for those lawmakers who switched parties. It was then that what the literature has come to call the first phase of partisan switching began.

This phase was characterized by the accommodation of political parties as a result of the recently regained political liberties. With that, new political parties were founded and a new competitive environment was established, with the progressive adoption of direct elections at all levels of the federation.

Almost at the same time, petitions began to be filed, with the TSE and the STF seeking the annulment of the migrants' tenures to secure seats won for the party. In March 1989, the TSE received the following consultation: "will a councillor elected by a given political party, upon joining another party, keep the office he/she was elected for?" The court's opinion was pronounced without the records of the plenary debates or any other manifestation that would allow us to conclude there was any evidence of doubt regarding the matter: "In our legal order there is no annulment of tenure for party disloyalty" (CTA Nr. 9.948/89).

The second phase of the party switching pattern started soon after this initial accommodation. As from the legislature that began in 1991 in the National Congress, there began a new party switching pattern, for "the movement of the deputies started to reflect a rationale internal to the partisan political competition" (Melo 2000, 6).

In other words, the party switching pattern as of 1991 reflected the way the partisan game has unfolded in Brazil under coalition presidentialism. Driven by the need to build their political bases, political parties that supported the Executive stimulated party switching, while parliamentarians, seeking their own immediate career interests, started shifting across the various partisan options. Table 3 shows partisan switching figures in Brazil.

Table 3. Partisan switching from 1983 to 2007

Legislature	Total representatives	Total migrants	% of migrants
1983 to 1987 (47th)	528	165	31.3
1987 to 1991 (48th)	560	154	27.5
1991 to 1995 (49th)	620	200	32.3
1995 to 1999 (50th)	621	167	26.9
1999 to 2003 (51st)	644	171	26.5
2003 to 2007 (52nd)	618	197	31.8
Total	3,591	1,054	29.3

Source: Melo (2000).

When the TSE received the consultation on party switching in 2007, a strategy in the legal argument proved decisive for the ruling handed down. It is worth noting that in the terms of the question formulated by the DEM there was no express intention to disqualify a parliamentarian from office, only the intention of defining the titularity of the parliamentarian's office: did it belong to the person elected or to the party?

As the Constitution is quite precise in Article 55 as to the roster of factors that can lead to a parliamentarian's disqualification from office – and changing political parties is not on that list –, the decision was not based on that norm. The decision ultimately invoked other constitutional provisions.

The argument that gained centrality in the discussions was the express condition for eligibility for partisan affiliation. If the existence of candidacies independent from political parties is not allowed in the country, the right to the office won belongs to the party and not to the candidate. The reasoning is inverted.

The other argument involves the open list proportional representation. After all, in this system, votes are distributed according to partisan quotients, thus creating a bond between the parliamentarian elected and the party for which he/she ran in the elections.

At any rate, even though the legal argument built on distinct issues, upon deciding that the titularity of the tenure belongs to the party, in practice, the Court re-established the penalty of disqualification from office for those parliamentarians who switch parties during their tenures. After all, if the office does not belong to the parliamentarians, when migrating from one party to another, representatives cannot take their offices with them.

This practical outcome of the decision was made clearer after the publication by the EMB of Resolution 22,610/07 establishing the criteria governing the rights of parties over the offices won and the judgment of those who leave the parties by which they were elected. Besides, in answering another consultation, it included those elected through

the majoritarian system in the rule; thus, any politician elected in Brazil after 2007 who migrates to another party is subject to disqualification from office.

There was still some political resistance to the application of the new rule. Even as recently as 2007, parties that had lost the most parliamentarians were requesting to the directing board of the Chamber of Deputies the right to occupy the seats that belonged to those deputies who, having been elected by the party, had left it immediately afterwards.¹²

The directing board of the Chamber rejected the request prompting parties to seek the STF in search of what they deemed to be a right recognized by the EMB. Each of them filed an injunction. In October 2007 came the decision by the STF, ratifying the thesis by the TSE that the office belonged to the parties and not the candidates, obliging the directing board to accept the decision.

The 53rd legislature of the Chamber of Deputies had 23 of its lawmakers' offices challenged at the TSE as a result of party switching. Of the 23, only one parliamentarian was found guilty. That is, only one of the party-switching cases was ruled as "without just cause" by the TSE.

Beside the cases under its original jurisdiction, the TSE received more than 2,000 appeals to review decisions made by lower EMB spheres (TREs). By the end of 2008, for instance, some 1,308 councillors had already been disqualified from their offices in the Municipal Chambers (close to 2.5% of all the country's councillors) due to party switching.

As in the cases we saw earlier, in Congress there are Constitutional Amendment Bills (Propostas de Emendas Constitucionais (PECs)) with the aim of overhauling judicial rulings. According to one of the PECs, there must be a 30-day "moratorium" prior to the end of the electoral registrations, dubbed by the public opinion the "infidelity window", during which party transfers may take place without any sanction. As yet, however, it is the TSE's resolution that prevails.

Yet again, we have the EMB interpreting the constitutional text through a consultation and deeply altering a practice current in the political game. Furthermore, once again we have interactive cooperation between the Constitutional Court and the EMB. When the STF was asked to give an opinion, it adopted the same opinion on constitutional norms as had been handed down by the TSE.

What we are arguing here is that had it not been for the electoral governance model adopted, the EMB would not have advanced over the constitutional text and the attunement with the interpretation given by the Constitutional Court would not have been as fine.

This case is particularly emblematic as to allow us to state that the highest EMB sphere (the TSE) is indeed an STF body for electoral matters. In addition to being able to advance over the constitutional text, its electoral governance powers have enabled it to incorporate judicial interpretations in the resolutions it drafts to regulate the partisan

political game. Thus, besides being the rule adjudicator and rule applicator, the TSE once again acted as rulemaker.

Conclusion

The key argument in this paper was that the electoral governance model adopted in Brazil combines elements conducive to an environment of judicialization of political competition, namely: the concentration of governance activities in a single EMB, exclusion of any political actor from the nomination and/or selection of members of the Electoral Body, the “rule of intersection” with the Judiciary, and control of the TSE – the highest EMB sphere – by the Constitutional Court.

At the same time as they removed partisan political interests from electoral governance, these elements, combined, transformed the TSE into an STF body for electoral matters, vesting the former in such institutional power as to even allow interpretations regarding the political game to include constitutional norms.

We also argue that this model has engendered two main outcomes: 1) the insulation of the EMB and 2) the conditions for the EMB to become a rule maker as well.

As for the first outcome, we can say that as the TSE merged with the Judiciary Branch, it developed a shield against the interference of any representative institution, whether political, social or partisan interest groups. If this granted it independence to act, it may also have reduced opportunities for accountability.

Surely we could argue that the Electoral Justice System’s accountability has not been affected; after all, two of the rulings analysed here were later reversed by Parliament (verticalization and number of councillors), and the same is bound to occur with the other ruling (party loyalty).¹⁵

However, one must bear in mind the high costs incurred by Parliament to reverse these rulings. Firstly, because such rulings set conditions for the electoral contest, for at least two consecutive terms, that were far from the curve of preference of the political actors.

Secondly because, in order to reverse the rulings, Parliament had to amend the constitutional text, hence prompting two outcomes (costs): 1) the need to achieve qualified majorities – a task which, in a markedly consensus-dependent institutional environment as the Brazilian one, is even more difficult, and 2) the entrenchment of further details in a Constitution already criticized for the number of relationships it seeks to regulate (Couto and Arantes 2008).

We argue that the Brazilian electoral governance model’s accountability flaws stem not only from the costs entailed in reversing such rulings, but first and foremost, from a

lack of institutional mechanisms designed to avert such costly decisions before they come to affect the status quo.

At this point it is important to remember that the most creative TSE decisions have been made in response to “consultations” (see note 6). This situation is a function of the level of insulation attained by Brazil’s Electoral Justice System and of how this feature reduced opportunities for accountability. After all, let’s face it, deeply altering electoral rules by means of “consultations” does not favour debate, especially not the checks and balances system.

As for the second outcome we can say that by merging the EMB’s highest sphere with the Constitutional Court, the model adopted created institutional conditions such that rulings on electoral competition may be based on innovative interpretations of the constitutional text. This allowed the EMB to make decisions that ultimately prompted the overhaul of competitive rules, thus altering the normative framework without mobilizing traditional lawmaking spheres.

For in the cases of the verticalization of coalitions and partisan loyalty, as it answered consultations, the TSE promoted original interpretations of the constitutional text which, challenged at the STF, were upheld by the Constitutional Court. Indeed, in the case of party loyalty, it was precisely an interpretation by the TSE of the constitutional text that informed the majority vote at the STF. In the case of the number of councillors, there was an inversion in the interaction. As it interpreted constitutional norms, the STF altered the rules of the competitive game, magnifying the outcomes of its decisions through decisions made by the TSE.

Importantly, the debate on the need for comprehensive reform in the Brazilian political system is as old as it is controversial. We cannot say that there is consensus on the need for it – so little compared to what kind of reform needs to be done (Rennó 2007). The fact to note here is that the most striking changes on the rules of political parties did not come from the classical political arena. Political reform in Brazil in recent decades has advanced more by judicial decisions than by policies.

There is still much to be researched in Electoral Governance in general and the Brazilian model in particular. This paper has sought to contribute to fill this gap by shedding light on an institution that is as important as it has been neglected by our literature, and also by defining some core characteristics of the institutional design of Brazil’s electoral governance model and its effects on the country’s partisan political competition.

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Notes

- 1 Some of the arguments developed here are in Marchetti (2008).
- 4 Such permission is based on a ruling by the STF in Direct Unconstitutionality Action 1,127/94 interpreting the statutes of the practice of law and of the Brazilian Bar Association Ordem dos Advogados do Brasil (OAB) (Law 8,906/94). This law sets forth an impediment to exercise law for “members of bodies of the Judiciary Branch, public attorney’s offices, audit courts and boards, ad hoc courts, peace justices, class judges, as well as all those holding judging offices in collective deliberation bodies of the direct and indirect public administration”. The STF opinion opened an exception in the case of Electoral Justice System.
- 5 On very few occasions has the STF reviewed appeals involving electoral matters. An important precedent was set with the ruling in Direct Unconstitutionality Action 4,018 of February 2008, when the STF ruled for the unconstitutionality of a decision of the Goiás State TRE. A recent decision on the application of the Clean Slate Law in the 2010 elections was quite significant in this respect. After a drawn ruling, the STF decided that, instead of ruling on the matter, what had to prevail was the constitutional interpretation developed in the TSE ruling. The Constitutional Court stated that the last word in interpreting the constitutional text should be the TSE’s (on the decision, see Marchetti (2011)).
- 6 I am grateful to Julio Rios-Figueroa for this remark.
- 7 A more detailed analysis of this issue can be found in Marchetti (2010).
- 8 The consultation is an administrative instrument that aims to solve doubts regarding electoral matters. Thus, for a consultation to be submitted and accepted by the TSE there is no need for litigation to exist or for different parties to be involved. It only requires that there be doubt regarding the legislation and that it be formulated to the TSE by an authority with national jurisdiction or by a political party’s national body.
- 9 There is no clear and definitive information regarding the party’s motivation for such consultation. After all, as we will demonstrate further ahead, the practice had been present in the two previous elections, thus allowing for very few doubts. However, we will not venture into speculating about motives as our interest is to know how the Electoral Justice made its decision.
- 10 It was only in the 1994 elections that electoral races for different levels started to take place simultaneously, as the presidential elections began to be held on the same date as the gubernatorial elections.
- 11 To better understand the hybrid characteristics of the Brazilian constitutional control (diffuse and concentrated) see Arantes (2005).
- 12 In proportional terms, the Socialist People’s Party (PPS) lost the most candidates, a third of the 21 elected. The Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB) lost 13.6%, and the DEM (Democrats), 12.3% of the seats won in the elections.
- 13 Again, I am grateful to Julio-Rios Figueroa for this critical remark.

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Marx and the Invention of Post-capitalist Politics

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(Pogrebinschi, Thamy. 2009. *O enigma do político.*

Marx contra a política moderna. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira)

A book that, with remarkable erudition, addresses politics and State in the immense theoretical work of Marx does not need many justifications nowadays.

If in the 1980s and 1990s Marxism was to philosophy, ideology and the official social science a definitely lost continent, the extraordinary volume of scholarly meetings, specialized publications, critiques and renewed translations of Marx's works over the last ten years only confirm the rising interest in this theory, at least in Brazil (Boito Jr. and Motta 2010). Thamy Pogrebinschi's book is part of this new wave and is eloquent testimony that the old social division of scientific labor, which split and hierarchically categorized the academic community in "producers of theory" (the French, British, Germans, Americans) and "consumers of theory" (the Latin-Americans), makes increasingly less sense.¹

Only that now this consistent and resolute university Marxism does not reign alone in the national intellectual scene as was the case during the glorious period between the late 1950s and the late 1970s (Ridenti 2010). Instead, it has to face strong competitors, in Brazil and abroad, as for example, an increasingly more methodologically sophisticated Political Science, an academically institutionalized Sociology and, especially, a Political Philosophy relentlessly posing ever more difficult questions that cannot be ignored, theoretically and empirically. These questions range from multiculturalism to feminism; from egalitarianism

to libertarianism; from the politics of recognition to communicative action; from a theory of justice to the new democratic forms of participation and deliberation. That is why it is not only impossible but useless to counter all these subjects merely with some ideological manias that excited generations of Marxists throughout the 20th century: the triumphalism of the October revolution, the apocalyptic pessimism of the Critical Theory, the optimism in face of the counter-hegemonic strategies, confidence in Eurocommunism, and the renewal of the western communist parties.

Thamy Pogrebinschi's essay on the "enigma of the political" in Marx's thought seems to build precisely on the current stage of contemporary Political Theory and, in particular, on the Democratic Theory, to propose a much more ambitious question: once the social revolution is accomplished and the modern State and its representative and governance institutions have been superseded, how should, according to Marx himself, politics be in the communist society? (p. 18-19). The answer that will arise thereof, Thamy believes, "may allow a change of perspective in the way political theory is conceived of and done today" (p. 22). After all, Marx would have known, since his first writings, how to foresee problems and anticipate the solutions for the contemporary crisis of political representation (p. 259).

To think like Marx thought of politics after the end of politics is to reflect upon what the political should be. In the philosophical language that the author borrows from the young Marx, to discover the Marxian formula for the organization of men in the society of the future is to try to say which would ultimately be the *essence of the political* – that is, the essence of that world where the State is no longer separated from society and where society does not know alienation, contradiction, and domination. The whole discussion is hinged on a host of hypothesized norms, strewn across the entire theoretical work produced by Marx, the essay patiently attempts to rebuild.

This project imposes two tasks upon the commentary on Marx that must be conducted concomitantly, something which is also a source of great complications: in order to reveal which would be the post-capitalist political structures and how they would function it is necessary, at the same time, to discover the *categories* that, drawing on Marx himself, would make it possible to think of such structures. Or, for another: if the notions of modern State, civil society, class, "real, active men" (the expression employed by Marx and Engels in *The German ideology*), and domination work adequately in the Marxian theoretical discourse on pre-communist societies, in order to understand the communist society it is necessary to think in radically new terms. It is necessary to think in terms of community, association, individual, human essence, and emancipation. In such a world, modern politics would be replaced by "true democracy". Thus, in place of State authority, there would be self-determination; in place of political representation by professional politicians, self-government; and in place of bureaucratic despotism, autogestion. Read

like that, the book's goal is, at first sight, to discuss the institutional genesis and concrete functioning of the political structures of a social world redeemed by the Revolution. But it is not exactly like that. The author warns the reader that at the core of her analysis is the *concept* of democracy. Not the really existing (capitalist) democracy, nor the potentially attainable (communist) democracy. Engels himself emphasized that, in discussing such matters, "We are not talking about the *things* which belong to the nineteenth century, and which are bad and ephemeral, but about categories which are eternal and which existed before 'the mountains were brought forth' [...]" (p. 209). This is, in short, the *essence* of democracy. And theorizing about it is theorizing about what the political proper *should be* in the post-capitalist society.

The awkwardness of any reader of Marx in face of this singular passage is not unjustified. Eternal categories? Essences? Yet, doesn't this insistence on reading Marx on the basis of concepts rather than of the "things" of the real social world betray the very spirit of the theory? A theory, after all, that has always insisted on denouncing the illusion of the natural, the eternal, and the universal? The operation of converting Marx into a "political philosopher" has its setbacks eventually. As Thamy makes Marx talk about what should be (and not about what is), she seems to subvert the foundational principle that is at the root of the Marxian judgment itself: the social conditions of the possibility of the possible world.

The book is organized into four considerably long chapters, each one addressing the theme of the organization of ideal power— and not the traditional theme of the taking over of real power – on one hand. The first chapter discusses the end of the State; the second, the society resulting thereof (the "real community"); the third, its peculiar mode of political organization; and the fourth chapter, the scope of the political for Marx: human emancipation. Within the limits of this review I intend to comment only on the question of the new form of political coordination of the human community or that which Marx, Engels, and Lenin later on will designate as "true democracy", by opposition to the really existing democracy in the West in the 19th century.

The *enigma of the political* builds on three controversial assumptions established by the author: *i*) that Marx's work is a coherent system of ideas (that is, assumptions, theses, concepts) and the division that was established between a "young Marx" and a "mature Marx" (Althusser 1965) is extravagant and arbitrary (as indeed was held, among others, by Cerroni (1973)); *ii*) that it is necessary to get rid of the Marxist tradition (its epigones, its aficionados, and its interpreters) in order to be able to have access to the true sense of the Marxian text (along with Althusser (1965); Rubel (1974); Preve (1984) etc.); and *iii*) that the guiding thread in Marx's work is not the fundamental contradiction between Capital and Labor (that is, his Political Economy), or between productive forces and relations of production (his Philosophy of History), but the opposition between State and

Civil Society, such as approached in his critique of Hegel. It is this opposition that provides the cornerstones for his Political Philosophy and allows us, by connecting the two ends of his work, to decipher him. Marx's entire theoretical, political and ideological forty-year-long journey only led him to the starting point: the radical democrat (Saes 1994) would be hiding in the revolutionary socialist, just like the boy in the man. Hence the strategic interest of the first writings for an accurate understanding (along the same line adopted by Colletti (1969a; 1969b), for example). And, it is assumed, to evaluate the dimension of his actual contribution.

These three points call for a brief commentary. It is not the case of recuperating herein the problems implicated in the history of the theoretical formation of Marx's thought and its canonical periodization. Several critics have already drawn attention to the misguided understanding that postulates, as Althusser (1999, 9) postulated, the existence of a "radical" difference between the texts written before *The German ideology*, still captive of philosophy and, especially, of Hegel's German idealism and Feuerbach's idealist materialism, and the machinery of scientific concepts, like mode of production, relations of production, productive forces, and so on, employed in *The capital*. The existence or not of an "epistemological rupture" (Althusser 1965, 25) between the two Marxs is a dispute that would take us too far. Still, if Thamy would rather not reintroduce this discussion and division, it would at least be necessary to demonstrate more than the existence of a "strong relation" between the earlier and the later texts written by Marx, lest we forcefully identify, behind the same words, the same ideas.² Even though Marx resorted, in a book like *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, to the same terms employed in the pamphlets of the *New Rhine Gazette* ("State", "civil society"), both their sense and function in this theoretical discourse are at the moment of the drafting of the essay on the coup against Bonaparte, fundamentally different.³ We might say, as indeed the author himself did in his Preface to the *Critique of political economy*, that the more adjusted terms from now on to explain the social world should be "superstructure" and "infrastructure"; and that between these two elements there is no *opposition*, as argued in his critical review of Hegel's philosophy of right, but a concrete *interconnection*; and, finally, that it is the interconnecting principles of this social totality (determination, discrepancy, correspondence, conditioning) that allow us both to distinguish the distinct historical modes of production and to explain their forms of reproduction and transformation.⁴

The other proposition calling for a commentary is that advocated by Thamy concerning the "incompatibility of all political and ideological Marxism with the teachings of Marx", to speak as Maximilien Rubel. This stance has the advantage and the disadvantage of sparing Thamy from debating a key theme – what politics would be like in the communist world – with the vast literature that Marxists and *Marxologists* have produced in that regard. Yet, that is not

exactly what we read in this enticing book. Not only does Thamy correct formulations based on misguided translations of fundamental terms for Marx and advances new interpretations of read and reread passages from which she extracts a political moral which is quite different from conventional communist orthodoxy, but also she actually chooses two interlocutors to dialogue with: Abensour (1998) and Avineri (1968). It is in relation to their formulations (at times against them, others, in favor) that she will explain how Marx actually thought of the political organization of a classless society, its virtues and foundations. According to Thamy Pogrebinschi, and this is her main thesis, this is the angle that should be favored if one wishes to unravel *the enigma of the political* in the Marxian work.

A long time ago Norberto Bobbio drew the Marxists' attention to the exaggerated importance they assigned to the "famous, at times, too famous, indications that Marx extracted from the Commune [of Paris] and which had the fortune of being exalted (but never attenuated) by Lenin" (Bobbio 1979, 31). The indelible effect thereof was to rid them of the obligation of predicting and thinking, effectively, the shape and functioning of political institutions under socialism ("dictatorship of the proletariat") and under the society without State (communism) (Bobbio 1983). Actually, continues Bobbio (1979, 31), "Marx had no intention of providing prescriptions with those few formulas [about the experience of the Paris Commune] for the future and only the abuse of the principle of authority [...] transformed five or six theses into a Public Law treatise".⁵

The enigma of the political does not fall into that trap. This is not about evoking the famous five or six theses, nor is it about evoking what Engels, Kautsky, Rosa, Lenin, and others said. Thamy Pogrebinschi reconstructs, with all the confidence that a sound knowledge of Marx's various writings on the subject enables, his set of *political principles* regarding the political form that would succeed the dictatorship of the proletariat. But what are the characteristics of this true democracy? Thamy lists a dozen distinctive features of this peculiar form of life which has (or intends to have) the capacity to solve the paradoxes of "modern" (i.e., capitalist) politics.⁶

True democracy, the paradigm of all forms of government, would abolish the separation ("alienation") between man and political structure. It would not be the outcome of juridical fiction (the "social contract" as a product of "individual wills"), but a real expression of "the people's lives", based on the activity of real human beings and not on abstract subjects of rights. Hence the difficulty in capturing its final form in a fixed set of political institutions – and, therefore, the difficulty of the Marxists in coming up with the ideal prescription for the ideal political regime. Rather, true democracy would presuppose a set of social precepts: those who manage the community politically would be the same ones working in it productively, the social division of labor would have disappeared, work itself would not be commanded by necessity, human action would have to be the very expression of freedom,

each one's development would lead to the other's development and the development of all, to the development of the community.

That accomplished, "popular sovereignty" (that is, the constituent power formalized in a Constitutional Charter, another legal fiction) would give place to community self-determination, "active citizenship" of sorts, where all is political or, for another, where there are no individual, personal, private activities but, rather, public roles, functions, insofar as all the social practices of the individuals ultimately concern the collective management of the community, the administration of things ordinary. As in classical democracy, the political participation of men would be associated with their social existence.

In this new world, self-government would replace political representation, mandate, and mediation, since there would exist a kind of "synchronicity and completeness of the relation between the parts and the whole" (p. 230). The best image to represent this fantasy would be that of the orchestra without the conductor. Each musician would tune her/his instrument in harmony with the other instruments and the correct pitch and tempo would be defined by the whole as a whole. Thus, the adequate category to envisage the functioning of this peculiar democracy should not be decision or deliberation, but interaction. Government itself is no longer a political question (entailing thus power, prestige, hierarchy and domination), but rather a mere administrative question, depending on the workers' cooperative's management model.

Even without explicitly formulating a theory of the future form of government, Marx provides some indications of the political institutions of this true democracy. Or of what should not exist as political institution. As political and social power cannot be separated from the community, transferred to a representative, and is much less monopolized by some, the very legislative function would have to be carried out by all (a different problem, as can be seen, from the imperative mandate, valid for the transition period, not for communism). Therefore, there would be no need for suffrage, nor would there exist professional politicians, political parties, and a Legislative Branch, an institution specializing in the task of filtering interests and drafting bills. Indeed, there would not even be the traditional separation between legislative and executive work, since those who legislate must also test in practice the efficacy of the legislation.

In sum, true democracy for Marx, according to Thamy Pogrebinschi, is neither a form of State, nor a form of government, much less a system of government. True democracy is the rejection of all the forms, principles and institutions of liberal democracy and, specifically, the rejection, and not merely the correction, of its deadlocks – a lack of representativeness of the elected, lack of enthusiasm of the voters, irrelevance of the parliaments, the arrogance of the Executive Branch and its bureaucracy, decadence of the role of the political parties as spheres for political socialization. Instead of all that,

Marx bets on a radical, direct, active and profoundly humane democracy, since it is tied to the practices and experiences that constitute true human beings, as redeemed from exploitation, alienation, and domination.

What should we make of all this? When one bears in mind the historical memory of totalitarianisms, fanaticisms grounded in purported general wills or even less solemn, though equally troubling, problems as, for example, the inevitable tendency toward an oligarchy of partisan organizations (Michels), the dilemmas of collective participation and of mobilization (Olson) or even the inevitable transformation of traditional forms of political socialization (Manin), Marx's political imagination seems to have solved all that still needs solving.⁷

It is rather far-fetched to hold that Marx's fantasies about politics in the communist society enable us to solve the problems and deadlocks of the Democratic Theory, especially the dilemma of representation (the question regarding the control over elected representatives, the problem of the development of merely corporatist concerns by the caste of professional representatives, the contradiction between the aspiration of professional politicians to be representatives of the general interest and their reality as advocates of private interests, and so forth). Nonetheless, one of the great merits of Thamy Pogrebinschi's book is to establish a new boundary for mainstream Political Theory, or rather, a new set of themes and a huge constraint with which it is necessary at least to dialogue. After all, if we accept (at least as an intellectual exercise) the Marxian critique of the fiction of the very principle of representation in the liberal society, about the inefficacy of suffrage and the impossibility of capitalist democracy to promote "true democracy", then the whole contemporary debate about guaranteeing political rights to minorities, about the need to promote ever more "participation" of stakeholders in public decisionmaking or about the value of free, rational, and critical communication between men loses great part of its sense. As summarized by Thamy, the Marxian lesson is: there is no improving liberal democracy without questioning the normative assumptions and institutional mechanisms on which this political form is founded. Thus, more (liberal) democracy is more of the same: a medicine that runs the risk of worsening the patient's situation. Moral: to disregard Marx is absolutely not advantageous to any political scientist.

Translated by Robert Stuart

Notes

- 1 Boito Jr. and Motta (2010) list over ten books that have been published since 2000 only on Marx's theoretical work: Boito *et al.* (2000); Naves (2000); Ranieri (2001); Fausto (2002); Benoit and Antunes (2009); Giannotti (2002); Romero (2005); Sampaio and Frederico (2006); Chasin (2009); Frederico (2009); Magalhães (2009); Paulo (2010). The list could be more extensive if we included, building on a random sample, the works of Teixeira and Frederico (2010); Netto (2011); Ranieri (2011); Saad Filho (2011); Trindade (2011) and Codato and Perissinotto (2011).
- 2 When we consider the problem of politics and the State, says Thamy, “even though some concepts were formulated as enigmas in texts written in 1843 and 1844” (namely, the *Critique of Hegel's philosophy of right*, *On the Jewish question* and the *Economic and philosophic manuscripts of 1844*), “the solution they contain can only be fully understood by examining texts dating to 1871 [*The civil war in France*] and 1875 [*Critique of the Gotha Programme*]” (p. 25).
- 3 Actually we may say that the use of these words has a purely descriptive sense (Luporini 1979, 91-102) and, to a large extent, anachronistic (Colliot-Thélène 1984).
- 4 One of the main theses defended by Marx in *The eighteenth brumaire* is that there is a necessary relation of *correspondence* between the political and the social, more precisely, between the capitalist State and the capitalist economy. This correspondence is historical and is instrumental to the reproduction of the mode of social domination.
- 5 The answer by Atilio Borón to Bobbio's censorship is yet further evidence of the Marxists' “incurable defect” (Bobbio 1979): to invoke the principle of authority instead of argumentation and demonstration: “To assume that authors of the stature of Engels, Kautsky, Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin, Trotsky, Bukharin, Gramsci, Mao, among so many others, were incapable of enriching [...] the theoretical legacy of the founder of Marxism in the domain of politics – or to provide some new ideas in case Marx had not produced anything at all on this terrain – is no more than a symptom of how deeply rooted certain anti-Marxist prejudices are in political philosophy and in social sciences as a whole, and against which not even a superior talent like that of Bobbio was adequately immune” (Borón 2007).
- 6 A peculiarity of Thamy Pogrebinschi's theorizing that should not be overlooked is the revealing replacement of the word ‘capitalism’ (with all it describes in Marx) by the word ‘modernity’ and its variations: in place of the ‘capitalist State’ or ‘bourgeois State’, the ‘modern State’ (Weberian) formula; instead of ‘capitalist ideology’, ‘modern political imaginary’; and so forth. At a certain point Thamy Pogrebinschi herself judges it necessary to recall that “I had always taken it for granted the assumption that the [Marxian] critique of the modern State is identified with the critique of capital” (p. 262). That said, the author seeks to interconnect certain notions. For example, State and political representation would be capitalism-derived political forms (p. 263). However, at least in my reading, the necessary interplay between political and economic forces is not demonstrated, as well as how the latter are indispensable for understanding the former – at least for a *materialistic* interpretation of social history.
- 7 In this regard, it is at least curious that Thamy Pogrebinschi, always so perceptive of the latent sense and of the potentiality both critical and revealing of Marx's sentences, has not discussed the “solutions” that he presents to the *practical* problems of exercising “true democracy”. In his analyses of Bakunin's book *Statism and anarchy*, Marx anticipates, in an imaginary dialogue between both, which would be Bakunin's main objections to the democracy defended by the

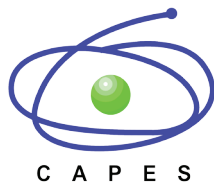
communists. It is worth citing a passage of this hypothetical discussion. Readers should take their own conclusions. Speaking about the political desires of the supporters of the socialist movement, Bakunin would have said, still according to Marx, (Bakunin) “So the [practical; included by Adriano Codato] result is: conduction of the great majority of the people by a privileged minority. But this minority, the Marxists say... (Marx) Where? (Bakunin) ...will be made up of workers. Certainly, with the permission of the old workers, who, nonetheless, no sooner have they become representatives or rulers of the people, are no longer workers. ... (Marx) Just like a factory owner today is no longer a capitalist once he becomes a municipal councilor... (Bakunin) and despise, from the height of the State, the whole ordinary world of the workers. They will no longer represent the people, but rather themselves and their bids for the people’s government. Anyone who may doubt this knows nothing about human nature”. (p. 236)

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