

Chapter 1

Elections and the Politics of Geography

“Voters are irritating. One hundred percent ask for a job, money or a scholarship. It wears you down.”

Deputy Gastone Righi (*Veja*, April 22, 1992, 25)

“All politics is local.”

Thomas P. ‘Tip’ O’Neill

This chapter explains the workings of Brazil’s electoral system, focusing, in a broad sense, on accountability—that is, on the link between representatives and voters. Brazil’s electoral system is extremely permissive. It gives congressional deputies extremely wide latitude in the kinds of winning electoral coalitions they construct. At the same time, however, the electoral rules allow enormous ambiguity in the postelection reconstruction of these coalitions. Voters cast ballots for individual deputies, but formally these deputies represent their whole states as part of multimember delegations. Subsequent legislative votes usually have little relation to the issues that once defined the electoral coalition; many pit elements of the coalition in conflict. Not surprisingly, deputies easily evade their constituents’ monitoring.

After a brief description of the rules, the chapter offers a typology of the multiple kinds of constituencies, or voting bases, deputies develop. The chapter then considers the implications of this electoral system in terms of commonly discussed problems of democratic consolidation, including malapportionment, corruption, the nature of representation and accountability, and party building.

Brazil conducts legislative elections under a set of rules called proportional representation (PR). Such systems allocate legislative seats to parties in proportion to the percentage of the total votes the parties receive. Unlike Anglo-American plurality (“first past the post”) systems, PR rules ensure that a party getting 30 percent of the votes will end up with roughly 30 percent of the seats, depending on the precise allocation formula used. PR systems differ, however, in the way they determine the holders of these seats—that is, in the way the systems decide which candidates fill seats.

Most PR systems choose candidates through a closed list. Under closed-list rules, voters cast a single ballot for the party of their choice. That party has already selected and ranked its candidates. In parliamentary systems, for example, parties typically ensure a parliamentary seat for their choice as prime minister by placing that person's name at the top of the ballot. Other well-known party leaders might come next, with party newcomers bringing up the rear. The central fact of closed-list systems is that voters determine how many seats each party gets, but parties determine who gets those seats.

Instead of closed-list rules, Brazil uses an open list to determine who occupies each party's legislative seats. Voters face a choice: they may vote for the party label, but they may also cast their ballots directly for individual candidates. Most people—about 90 percent—vote for an individual. After the election, the votes won by all the candidates of each party (plus the votes for the party label) are added together. A formula determines how many seats each party gets, and each party's candidates are ranked according to their individual vote totals.¹ A party entitled to ten seats then elects its ten top vote getters.

All open-list systems thus shift power from party leaders to individual candidates. The Brazilian system magnifies this tendency. Ballots, for example, do not include the candidates' names, so the party cannot list them in a preferred order. Instead, voters entering the polling area must know their candidate's name or code number. The rules allow unlimited reelection, and parties are obligated to renominate incumbents desiring reelection, no matter how they voted in the previous legislative session. Together, these details mean that party leaders lose an important means of disciplining deputies.

Other nations, including Finland and pre-1973 Chile, adopted open-list proportional representation, but Brazil's version differs significantly. In elections for the national Chamber of Deputies, each Brazilian state is a single, at-large, multimember district. The number of seats per state ranges from eight to seventy. Lightly populated states, mostly in the North and Center-West, are overrepresented; heavily populated states, principally São Paulo, have too few seats.² State parties, not national parties, select legislative candidates, and the voting district (the state) is an important political arena in its own right. In pre-1973 Chile, by contrast, voting districts cut across provincial lines, so district delegations and local political machines did not match up.³ In addition, national

1. Brazil uses the D'Hondt formula for seat allocation.

2. Until 1994, parties faced no minimum threshold for attaining seats in the legislature. In 1993 Congress approved a 3 percent threshold, but a loophole minimizes the law's effects.

3. The Brazilian system introduces the possibility of what Tsebelis (1990) calls "nested games."

party leaders chose legislative candidates for the whole nation. With this power, they could make adherence to the party's program a criterion for selection.⁴ In some Brazilian states, conversely, powerful governors control nominations and dominate campaigns. In other states local leaders deliver blocs of votes to deal-making candidates; in still others neither governors nor local bosses have much influence over individual voters.

Brazilian campaign regulations are both restrictive and permissive. Candidates may not, for example, buy advertisements on radio or television, but free TV time is allotted to parties (not individual candidates). Parties dole out TV time in proportion to the importance of the race, so the hundreds of congressional candidates get only a few seconds each week. Practically everyone advertises in newspapers, but print ads have little impact (Straubhaar, Olsen, and Nunes 1993). Candidates erect billboards and paint signs on walls, but these activities are usually in conjunction with other campaign efforts such as participation in rallies or delivery of public works to local leaders.

Permissive spending laws allow aspirants for the federal legislature to finance state assembly candidates' campaigns.⁵ Because state assembly districts are also whole states, with all candidates elected at large, politicians engage in *dobradinhas*, or double-ups, in which federal legislative candidates pay for the campaign literature of assembly candidates whose bases of support lie far away. The assembly candidates reciprocate by instructing supporters to vote for their benefactor for the national legislature. Such deals add little, of course, to linkages between representatives and their constituents.

A Taxonomy of Spatial Patterns

Legally, candidates may seek votes anywhere in their states, but in reality most candidates geographically limit their campaigns.⁶ The state-level spatial pat-

4. On the Chilean system, see Valenzuela 1977. He notes that party leaders chose candidates who were attractive to local voters, but loyalty to the parties' positions on national issues appears to have been a necessary condition for selection.

5. A good discussion of campaign corruption can be found in Geddes and Neto 1999.

6. Political geography as a political science methodology is more common in Europe than in the United States, but the indispensable starting point is still Key 1949. Although Key drew his maps by hand and utilized no formal statistical methods, his insights are still rewarding, even for those whose interests lie far from the American South. Spatial analysis will probably be most fruitful in multiple-member districts, but of course single-member systems like the United States may include multiple-competitor primaries. Spatial analyses also mesh nicely with aggregate data, since surveys rarely have enough people in the smallest political units to allow the analysis of contextual phenomena.

terns that result have two dimensions, each based on municipal performance. Suppose, for every candidate in each municipality, V_{ix} , candidate i 's share of all the votes cast in municipality x , is calculated. Each candidate's municipal dominance is defined as the candidate's share of the total votes cast for members of all parties. These shares represent the candidates' dominance at the municipal level.⁷ Now suppose V_{ix} is used to calculate D_i , the average dominance for each candidate across all the state's municipalities, weighted by the percentage of the candidate's total vote each municipality contributes. Candidates with higher weighted averages tend to dominate their key municipalities; those with lower weighted averages share their key municipalities with other candidates. Thus dominance-sharedness is the first dimension of spatial support.

The second dimension also begins with V_{ix} , candidate i 's share of the total vote cast in each municipality, but this dimension utilizes a statistical measure called Moran's I to assess the spatial distribution of those municipalities where the candidate does well.⁸ These municipalities can be concentrated, as close or contiguous neighbors, or they can be scattered. Combining the two dimensions yields the four spatial patterns shown in the accompanying box:

State-Level Spatial Patterns			
Share of Total Vote in Key Municipalities			
		Low	High
Spatial Distribution of Key Municipalities	Scattered	Scattered-Shared	Scattered-Dominant
	Contiguous	Concentrated-Shared	Concentrated-Dominant

Concentrated-Dominant Municipalities

This is the classic Brazilian *reduto* (literally, electoral fortress), in which a deputy dominates a group of contiguous municipalities. Domination can stem from a variety of sources. Candidates' families may have long enjoyed economic or political preeminence in a particular region; they might have climbed the ladder of politics from local jobs; they may have struck deals with local bosses. Figure 2, mapping the 1990 vote of Deputy Laire Rosado Maia, illus-

7. Note that municipal dominance has nothing to do with winning seats. Whole states, not municipalities, are electoral districts. As an alternative formulation, dominance could be measured solely in terms of votes for candidates of each candidate's own party.

8. For a discussion of Moran's I and other aspects of spatial statistics, see Cliff et al. 1975.

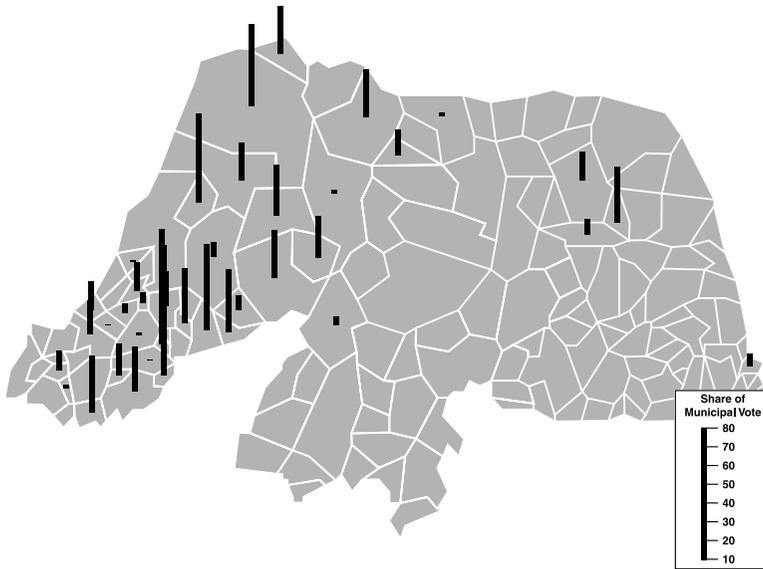


Fig. 2. Concentrated-dominant vote distribution
Municipal Vote Share of Laire Rosado Maia, PMDB-RN

trates extreme concentration.⁹ Rosado Maia received nearly all his votes in the “elephant’s trunk,” the western section of Rio Grande do Norte. Maias have long controlled this area—one county even carries the family name. Where Rosado Maia received votes, he averaged at least 50 percent of all votes cast. So not only does Rosado Maia get all his votes in this region, but other candidates rarely dare to compete in his impermeable *reduto*.

Concentrated-dominant distributions often reflect traditional patronage and pork-based relationships between voters and politicians. Such distributions can also develop when skilled local leaders climb through the ranks to mayor or state deputy from posts on municipal councils. Geraldo Alckmin Filho is a doctor who first won election to the municipal council of Pindamonhangaba in 1972, becoming mayor in 1976. After a term in the State Assembly (1983–86), he ran for the Chamber of Deputies on the PMDB slate. With 125,000 votes, he finished seventh (out of sixty successful candidates) on the overall São Paulo list and fourth on the PMDB list.¹⁰ As Figure 3 shows, his vote was highly con-

9. Appendix A discusses the construction of the maps as well as other data problems.

10. São Paulo had sixty Chamber seats through 1990 but seventy seats thereafter. Although winning a seat depends solely on the candidate’s place on the party list, candidates envisioning re-

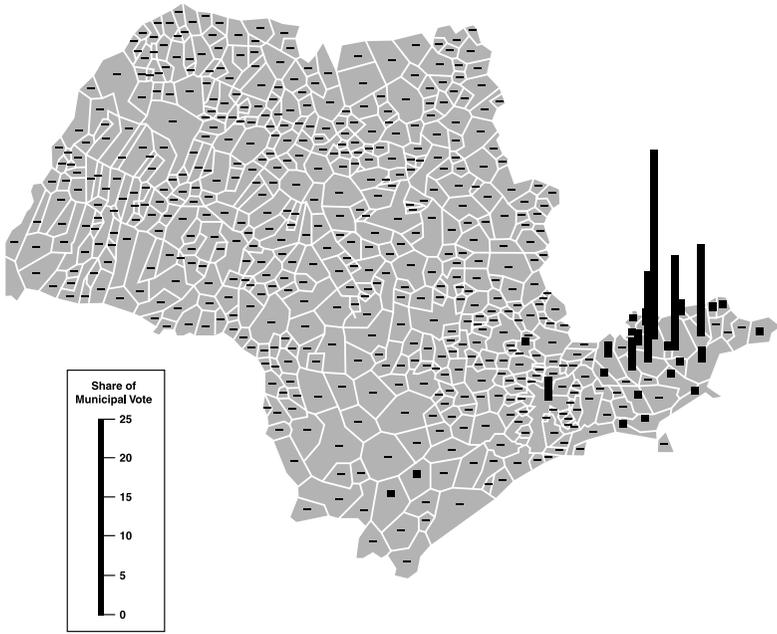


Fig. 3. Concentrated-dominant candidate in modern São Paulo
 Geraldo Alckmin Filho, PMDB-SP, 1986

centrated around Pindamonhangaba, where he won 91 percent of the 1986 vote. In the neighboring cities of Guaratinguetá and Taubaté, he took 40 percent and 29 percent of the vote, respectively.

Alckmin’s career took a risky turn when he defected, along with eight other PMDB members, to the newly formed PSDB, the Party of Brazilian Social Democracy. Orestes Quércia, then governor of São Paulo, dominated the *paulista* PMDB, and Quércia was not a politician to take defections lightly. Quércia cut off state funds scheduled to flow to Alckmin’s key municipalities. When the 1990 election came around, Quércia financed the campaign of a direct competitor, Ary Kara, a businessman and former council member in Taubaté. Kara’s likely bailiwick would be in exactly the same region as Alckmin. Could the region support two deputies?

Figure 4 shows the results of this local clash. In two key municipalities Alckmin’s vote share declined: in Pindamonhangaba his share of the municipal vote dropped from 91 percent to 60 percent, and in Guaratinguetá he fell from

election also evaluate their place on the overall list, and published reports on the election carry the overall order.

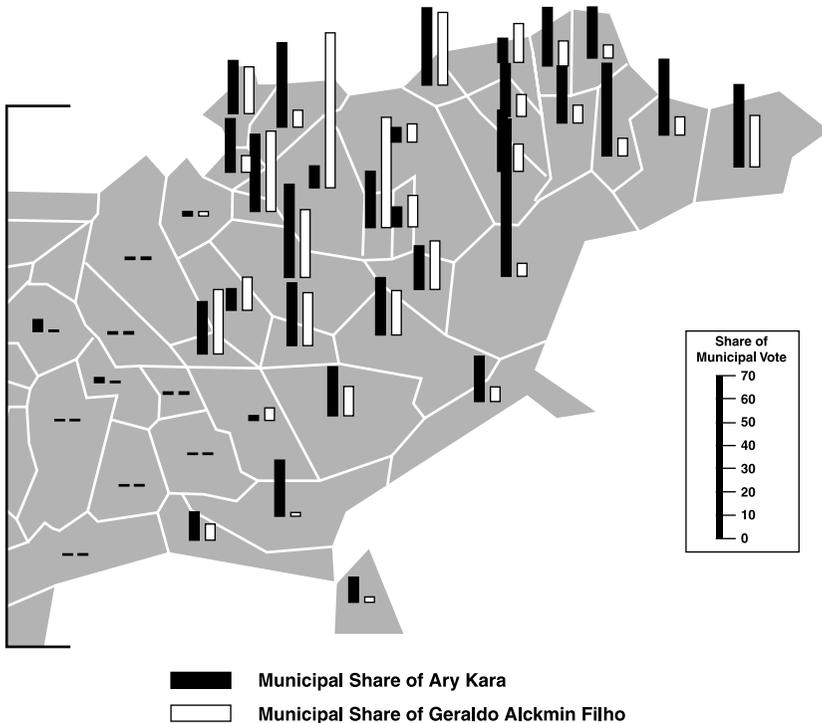


Fig. 4. Two candidates compete in a corner of São Paulo
 Geraldo Alckmin Filho, PSDB, and Ary Kara, PMDB, 1990

40 percent to 8 percent. But in Kara's home base, Taubaté, Alckmin's share held at 29 percent of the total municipal vote. In the end, Alckmin did well enough to retain his seat for four more years. Kara won as well, so the ultimate result was to convert the region from dominated into highly competitive. In terms of the relationship between Alckmin and his voters, the 1991–94 term saw a sharp increase in his efforts to bring local pork to the district. For the first time, Alckmin submitted budgetary amendments designed to channel federal largesse to Pindamonhangaba and Guaretinguetá. Competition, then, changed the linkage between voters and their representative.¹¹

Concentrated-Shared Municipalities

In large metropolitan areas, especially megacities like greater São Paulo, discrete blocs of voters may be so large that their votes alone elect many deputies.

11. In 1994 Alckmin won election as vice governor of São Paulo.



Fig. 5. Vote distribution for a working-class candidate
Eduardo Jorge, PT-São Paulo

In the state of São Paulo, for example, working-class candidates often get three-fourths of their total statewide vote from one municipality, the city of São Paulo. But they may never receive more than 5 percent of the votes cast in the city or in any other single municipality, because they share these municipalities with many other candidates. Figure 5 illustrates this possibility quite clearly: PT member Eduardo Jorge got most of his votes in São Paulo and its industrial suburbs, but he shared these municipalities with dozens of other candidates, including many others from the PT.

Working-class candidates are not the only Brazilian politicians with concentrated-shared vote distributions. Fábio Feldmann, whose 1990 vote map is shown in figure 6, is a PSDB member appealing primarily to environmentalists. He collected nearly 70 percent of his vote in the municipality of São Paulo, but he received only about 4 percent of the capital’s vote. In terms of municipal domination, Feldmann’s best showing came from Ilhabela (literally, “beautiful island”), an island off the coast of São Paulo where tourism reinforces environmental issues.

Scattered-Shared Municipalities

Some candidates appeal to voter cohorts that are numerically weak in any single municipality. Examples include Japanese-Brazilians and *evangélicos* (Protestants who typically vote for evangelical candidates). These cohorts are cohesive



Fig. 6. Shared-concentrated vote of an environmentalist
Personal and Municipal Shares of Fábio Feldmann, PSDB-São Paulo

and loyal, but they are not very large, so candidates relying on them construct coalitions composed of small slices of many municipalities. Figure 7 displays the vote distribution of Antonio Ueno, a Japanese-Brazilian whose career has been rooted in the areas of Japanese migration in northern Paraná. Ueno actively sponsors sports clubs in the region and directs his vote appeals to club members, especially baseball players. Figure 8 displays the vote of Matheus Iensen, a Protestant minister in Paraná. The scattered-shared category also includes candidates occupying ideological niches. Cunha Bueno, a *paulista* conservative, was notorious for his campaign to restore the monarchy. In a nationwide plebiscite, voters rejected his proposal better than seven to one, but he found enough support across the state of São Paulo to win a Chamber seat.

Scattered-Dominant Municipalities

This pattern fits two kinds of candidates: those who make deals with local leaders—a theme examined later in this chapter—and those who once held such state-level bureaucratic posts as secretary of education, a job with substantial

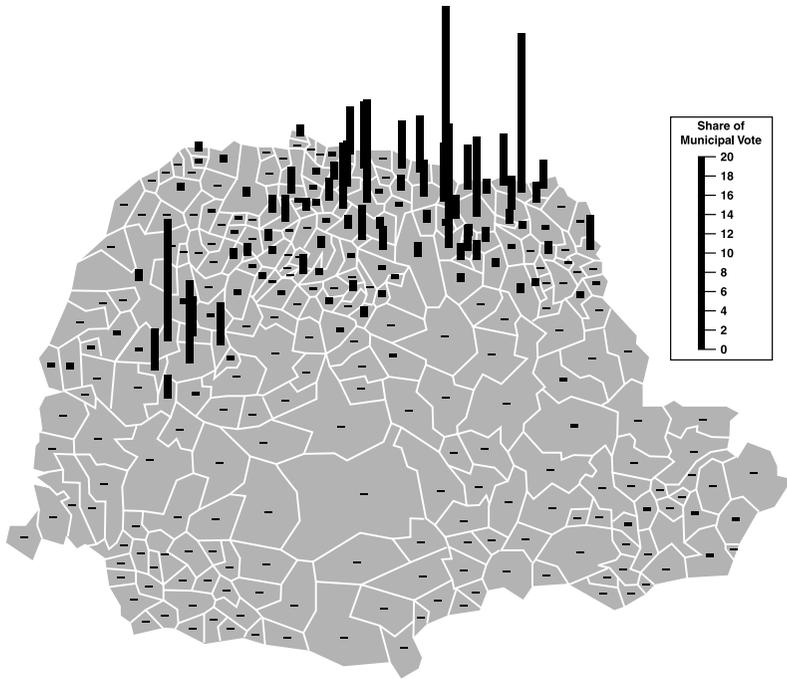


Fig. 7. Scattered-shared distribution: The ethnic and sports vote in Paraná
Municipal Vote Share of Antonio Ueno, PFL-Paraná, 1986

pork-barrel potential. Figure 9 displays the 1990 vote of Jonival Lucas, a conservative politician from Bahia. Linked politically to an ex-governor of the state, Lucas had been president of the Intermunicipal Road Consortium, a group with substantial clout in the location of state roads. Lucas also owned a radio station, a common source of political influence (and revenue) among Brazilian politicians. Before coming to the Chamber in 1987, Lucas's only elected office was a single term as state deputy (1983–87). In his first run for the Chamber, on the PFL ticket, he managed a second-place finish among Bahia's thirty-nine deputies. He also did quite well in 1990, though he had switched to the small Christian Democratic Party (PDC). But Lucas's vote bases shifted substantially between 1986 and 1990. Six municipalities that had contributed, jointly, about 25 percent of his 1986 vote fell to less than 1 percent in 1990. Conversely, five municipalities contributing only 1 percent in 1986 climbed to 26 percent in 1990. According to Bahian politicians and journalists, Lucas lost support where other candidates had undercut his arrangements with local bosses. He gained support where he managed to make new deals with other local leaders. In those

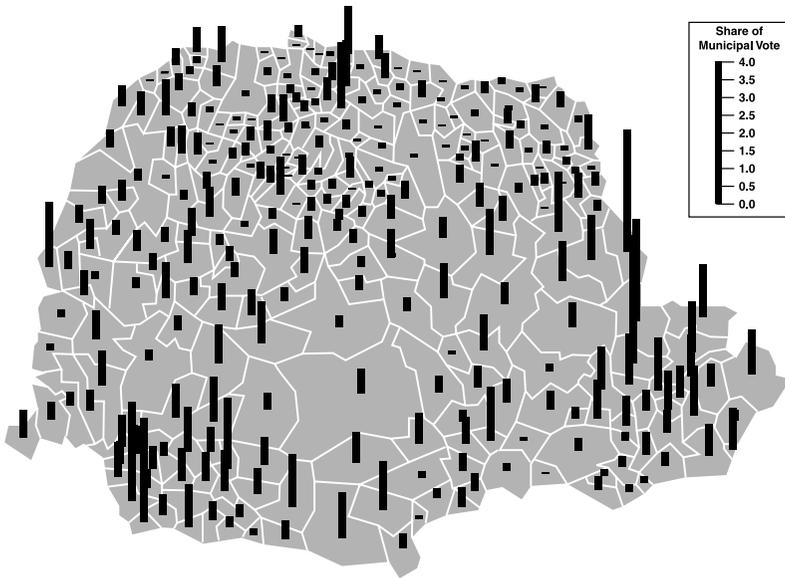


Fig. 8. Scattered-shared vote of an evangelical
Municipal Vote Share of Matheus Iensen, PTB-Paraná

areas where he had been active in his road-building career or where his radio station reached listeners, he managed to preserve his 1986 bailiwicks.

Brazilian deputies thus have enormous flexibility in constructing coalitions of voters large enough to elect them to office. In a sense, the system is extremely democratic. It makes no presuppositions about the kinds of societal cleavages that ought to be the basis of election. Unlike the single-member district, which favors locality as the dominant cleavage, or closed-list PR, which favors class, open-list PR with districts of high magnitude allows the campaign itself to determine which cohorts of voters achieve representation.¹²

Brazil's system may be highly democratic, but openness and flexibility come at the cost of weak parties and personalized politics, and they in turn lead to corruption and policy immobility. The following section examines some of the implications of deputies' widely varying vote bases, highlighting examples

12. Closed-list PR in Brazil would undoubtedly benefit class as the dominant cleavage, but in other societies race or gender might be advantaged—i.e., closed-list PR favors cleavages in which the contenders have relatively constant shares in each district across the entire nation. For a historical discussion of the development of electoral cleavages in Europe, see Bartolini and Mair 1990 and Lipset and Rokkan 1967.

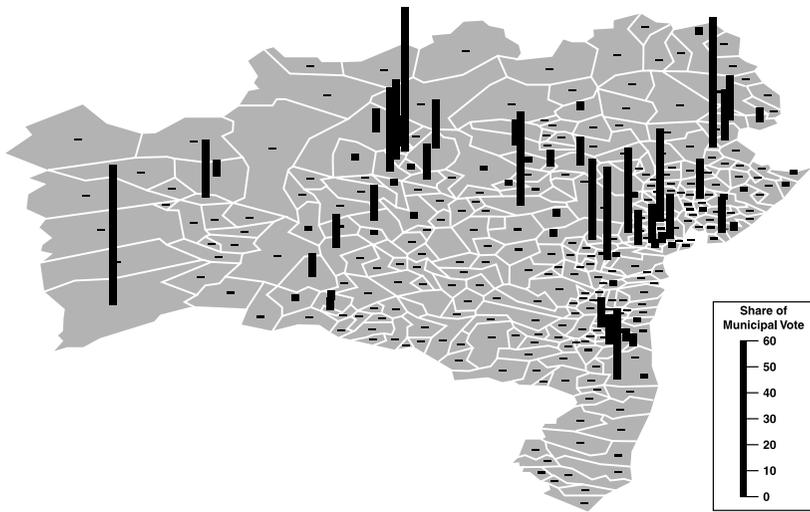


Fig. 9. Scattered-dominant vote distribution
Municipal Vote Share of Jonival Lucas, PDC-Bahia

and cases related to problems of democratic consolidation, including malapportionment, corruption, the nature of representation and accountability, and party building.¹³ The strength of the relationship between these aspects of democratic consolidation and the electoral system varies greatly; indeed, malapportionment turns out to have more complex effects than generally expected.

Malapportionment and Its Consequences

Like the U.S. Congress, Brazil's legislature is bicameral, but Brazil's seat allocation rules favor small states in both chambers. In the Senate—where three senators represent each state—a senator from Roraima represents around 24,000 voters, while a senator from São Paulo represents more than 6 million.¹⁴ As a result, senators representing 15 percent of the population can block legislation. In the Chamber of Deputies, seats are allocated by population, but since no state can have fewer than eight or more than seventy seats, the number of voters per deputy (see table 1) varies enormously. The big loser, obviously, is

13. For useful discussions of democratic consolidation, see Higley and Gunther 1992; Mainwaring 1999; Mainwaring and Scully 1994; and Shugart and Carey 1992.

14. These estimates are based on the 1989 electorate (see Nicolau 1992).

TABLE 1. State Representation in the Chamber of Deputies (corrected according to the Sainte-Lague Formula)

State	Electorate ^a	Current Seats	"Corrected" Seats	Difference
Roraima	73,001	8	0	-8
Amapá	118,144	8	1	-7
Acre	182,797	8	1	-7
Tocantins	485,048	8	3	-5
Rondônia	557,781	8	3	-5
Sergipe	776,071	8	5	-3
Amazonas	842,083	8	5	-3
Distrito Federal	857,330	8	5	-3
Mato Grosso do Sul	1,002,232	8	6	-2
Mato Grosso	1,027,972	8	6	-2
Alagoas	1,210,797	9	7	-2
Rio Grande do Norte	1,298,088	8	8	0
Piauí	1,334,282	10	8	-2
Espírito Santo	1,407,759	10	9	-1
Paraíba	1,756,417	12	11	-1
Maranhão	2,144,352	18	13	-5
Goiás	2,178,977	17	13	-4
Pará	2,186,852	17	13	-4
Santa Catarina	2,729,916	16	17	+1
Ceará	3,351,606	22	21	-1
Pernambuco	3,764,143	25	23	-2
Paraná	5,045,626	30	31	+1
Rio Grande do Sul	5,700,461	31	35	+4
Bahia	5,893,861	39	36	-3
Rio de Janeiro	8,166,547	46	51	+5
Minas Gerais	9,432,524	53	58	+5
São Paulo	18,500,980	60	114	+54
Total	82,025,647	503	503	0

^a Electorate of 1989.

São Paulo; the big winners are the lightly populated frontier states of the North and Center-West.¹⁵

Does malapportionment matter? Most observers believe that malapportionment weakens progressive forces and strengthens patronage-dependent forces (Mainwaring 1999). With more seats, São Paulo would elect more deputies representing the working class. The frontier states, which not only have few industrial workers but suffer invasions from free-spending political entrepreneurs, would elect fewer deputies. Without question, Brazilian politi-

15. For convenience, table 1 utilizes the Sainte-Lague Formula rather than D'Hondt. With the latter, the results would not vary significantly.

cians have acted as if they believed malapportionment favored the Right. In the Constitutional Convention of 1946, conservative delegates from São Paulo supported allocation rules penalizing their own state (Fausto 1970). The military regime followed the same reasoning: it added one senator to each state (from the original two), divided certain states to increase their representation, and joined two states (Rio and Guanabara) to minimize opposition from the former capital.¹⁶ Like the *paulista* conservatives, the military strategists based their tactics on an estimate of the inclinations of São Paulo and frontier delegates.

Is it possible to estimate malapportionment's legislative effects? After any election, we can determine which individual candidates, from which parties, would win or lose seats if a state's allocation were smaller or larger. It is not possible to know, of course, how the newly included deputies would vote. But suppose these deputies—hypothetically added to a delegation by new proportionality rules—vote according to the mean of their parties' current votes. If the *paulista* PMDB delegation expands 25 percent, then each current PMDB vote is weighted by 1.25. If the PFL delegation expands 10 percent, then each current PFL vote is weighted by 1.10. In other words, the *paulista* delegation is assumed to continue to cast its votes in the same proportions, by party, except that the delegation will cast fifty-four more votes. I call this technique the party ratio method. The key to this method is that we know which deputies, from which parties, will be added to the delegation.

This reallocation method assumed that preelection slates (all the people on the ballot) would not change if a state's politicians knew they had 1 seat rather than 8, or 114 rather than 60. This assumption is frequently wrong: party leaders fill out their slates with candidates bringing in a few votes but with no chance of winning a seat. So, as an alternative modeling of proportionality rules, assume nothing about the identity of the new winners or losers. Instead, assume that each delegation preserves its current party breakdown. For example, if a state's delegation shrinks from eight deputies to one, each deputy on a delegation currently including three PTB and five PFL deputies will now cast the same legislative vote, but it will have one-eighth the original weight. *Paulista* deputies will cast the same votes they currently cast, but each vote will be weighted by the ratio 114/60. This is the state ratio method. In this method it is not possible to know which parties will gain or lose deputies under new allocation rules, so current party ratios are assumed to hold.

Now these reallocation rules are applied to some important votes in the Constitutional Assembly of 1987–88. Two of its most important—and most

16. I discuss these *casuismos*, or sophisms, in Ames 1987.

conflictual—issues were the vote over parliamentarism (known as the Humberto Lucena amendment) and the decision to grant the incumbent president a five-year term rather than a four-year term. President Sarney lobbied strenuously on both issues. After vigorous debate, presidentialism won, 344–212, and Sarney got his five-year term, 304–223.

How would the two models affect voting on these two issues? Using the state ratio model—that is, simply weighting each vote to reflect the fraction of the delegation added or subtracted—presidentialism still wins, but a five-year presidential term is defeated by the four-year alternative. Using the party ratio model, thus eliminating those deputies who would not have been elected in states losing members and assuming that new members (in states gaining deputies) would vote with their party brethren, the results are the same: presidentialism still wins, but the four-year term vanquishes the five-year term. Taking a broader sample of crucial votes in the constitutional assembly, the results are similarly mixed: about one in five changes.¹⁷

Why are the effects of correct proportionality in seat allocation not more dramatic? Remember that party discipline in the Brazilian Congress is low. Only the PT votes as a unified bloc, and it has never been more than the fourth or fifth largest party in the Chamber (with even less support in the Senate). If São Paulo increases its seat share dramatically, center and center-left parties can expect a substantial share of the additions. But these parties rarely cast a unified vote, so the additional progressive vote will be much smaller.

As an alternative model of allocation changes, imagine parties voting as blocs. Suppose it is assumed that all the party's delegation voted with the majority's position. Delegates from the states losing seats are eliminated, and delegates are added (according to their rank in the substitute list) for those states gaining seats. In this case, parliamentarism defeats presidentialism, but Sarney gets a five-year term. Why the change? The majority of the PMDB voted for parliamentarism but supported PMDB President Sarney on his quest for a longer term. On the broad range of crucial issues in the constitutional assembly, many other outcomes change from what actually occurred.

In the end, reallocating seats according to population makes a difference, sometimes an important difference, even though the absence of party discipline diminishes the effects of misallocation. However, this experiment treats the Chamber of Deputies in isolation, ignoring the malapportionment of the Senate. Given the Senate's extreme disproportionality, projects prejudicial to

17. There is no consistent pattern explaining why some change and others do not. The broader sample utilizes Kinzo's (1989) indexes of crucial votes in the assembly.

lightly populated states have even less chance in that body. As a result, such proposals are not even subject to bargaining or to logrolling with other issues. Proposals that would be dead on arrival tend not to be introduced at all.¹⁸ The inclusion of such nondecisions would greatly magnify the true effects of malapportionment.

Corruption and Patterns of Vote Distribution

In the introduction, I mentioned a 1993 violent crime that led to the unmasking of an extortion ring involving members of the Budget Committee and many big construction companies. The racket's basis was simple: deputies submitted, and the Budget Committee approved, amendments to the general budget law mandating the construction of certain public works. Only particular companies could build these public works, either because a company had already initiated the project or because the bidding would be rigged. Because these colluding firms stood to make substantial profits, they could afford handsome kickbacks to the deputies, often 20 percent or more of the project's value. The deputies laundered their kickbacks through the national lottery: they would go to the lottery office, buy someone's winning ticket for a small premium, and receive "clean" money from the lottery itself.

The ringleaders of the scheme, a group of Budget Committee deputies known as the seven dwarfs (because of their small stature), were investigated by a special parliamentary committee of inquiry. Most either resigned or were kicked out of the Chamber.¹⁹ One rapid resignation was that of the former chair of the Budget Committee, João Alves, a senior deputy from Bahia. Alves had come to the Congress in 1966 with no money; by the early 1990s he had millions of dollars in real estate and a \$6 million airplane.

Figure 10 displays Alves's 1990 vote distribution. His votes come from widely scattered municipalities, but where he gets votes, he gets lots of votes. In many of these pockets of support he collects 70 percent or more of the mu-

18. In interviews conducted in 1996 with central government officials, including the ministers of finance and state administration, the president, and the former planning minister, Stepan (1999, 43) found a high degree of awareness of the blocking potential of small minorities in the Congress. Their veto power led to the withdrawal from the agenda of potential policy initiatives backed by majorities in Congress and in public opinion.

19. The dwarfs included José Carlos Vasconcelos (PRN-PE), Genebaldo Correia (PMDB-BA), Cid Carvalho (PMDB-MA), José Geraldo Ribeiro (PMDB-MG), Ubiratan Aguiar (PMDB-CE), Manoel Moreira (PMDB-SP), and João Alves (PPR-BA). A secondary group included Ricardo Fiuza (PFL-PE), Ibsen Pinheiro (PMDB-RS), Carlos Benevides (PMDB-CE), Fábio Raunheitti (PTB-RJ), Daniel Silva (PPR-MA), Paulo Portugal (PDT-RJ), and Paes Landim (PFL-PI).

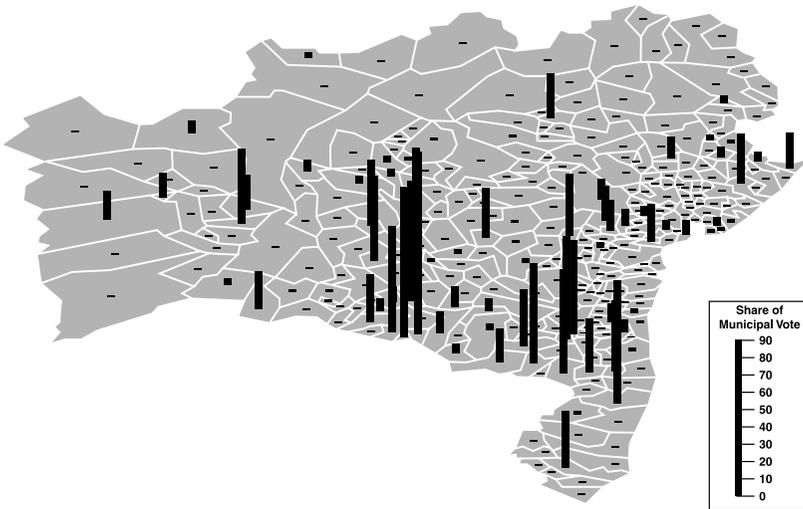


Fig. 10. Vote distributions of the “budget mafia”
Municipal Vote Share of João Alves, PFL-BA

municipality’s total vote. In the municipality right next door he might get nothing. What causes this spatial variation? If he had the kind of support enjoyed by a local mayor or council member, a leader with a strong local reputation, Alves would have a single dominant cluster of votes with a gradual tapering off as his local fame grew faint. It is possible, of course, for a locally based politician to have more than one cluster of votes. For example, a deputy with family in one region might build a political career in another. Alves, however, has too many separate clusters to fit that pattern. It is also possible for candidates appealing to some special bloc of voters to receive scattered support. But in any given municipality such candidates receive only small shares of the total vote. Alves, by contrast, dominates his bailiwicks.

What about the other dwarfs? Figure 11 displays the vote distribution of Pernambucan José Carlos Vasconcelos. Like Alves, Vasconcelos’s votes fall into the dominated-scattered category. In fact, with the exception of one *paulista* deputy, all the accused deputies have this type of distribution, and most of the accused deputies who were outside the core group are similar.²⁰ Is the tie

20. The one glaring exception was a deputy from Rio Grande do Sul who had been considered one of the outstanding members of the Chamber and had been very active on national issues. In his case, greed seems to have been stimulated by personal problems.

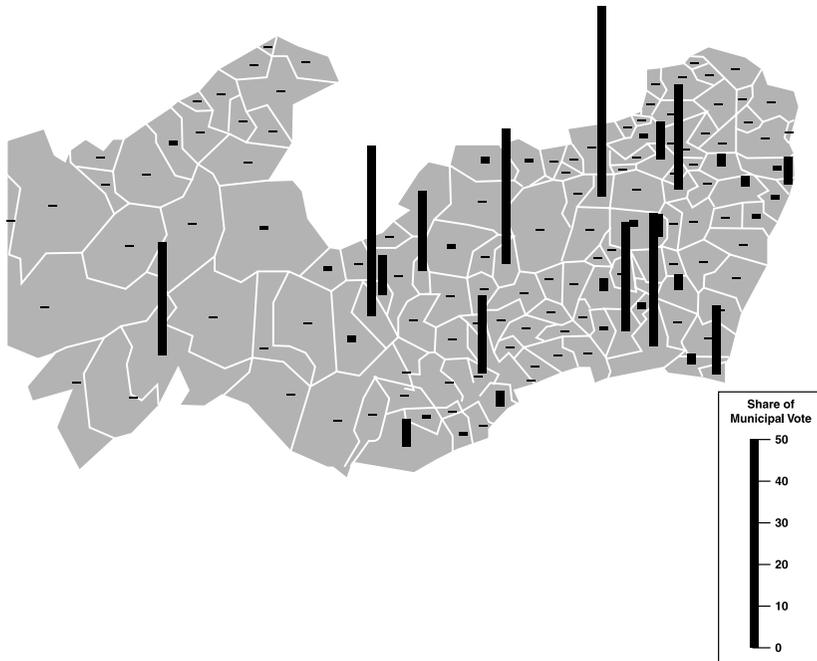


Fig. 11. Vote distributions for the “budget mafia”
Municipal Vote Share of José Carlos Vasconcelos, PRN-PE

between this kind of vote base and corruption mere chance, or does it reflect a systematic vulnerability of the Brazilian electoral system?

The pork-barrel plus kickbacks scandal depended first on the existence of a highly concentrated construction industry. Fewer than a dozen huge companies dominate construction. Without government contracts they could not survive. Politicians and bureaucrats have traditionally had great leeway in allocating such contracts. Although a bidding reform (approved in 1993) cleaned up the process a bit, collusive bid rigging has long been a way of life in the construction industry. Whether a particular corrupt project involves local officials, the existence of local bosses who can deliver voters en masse is critical to the survival of this kind of corruption. Deputies get rich on the bribes of the *empiteiras* (construction giants) but must use part of the money to pay off the local bosses. Although no empirical data are available to support my intuition, I suspect that the amount of money that goes back to the district in the form of personal loans and grants, petty favors, and walking-around money accounts

TABLE 2. Political and Economic Factors in the Dominance of a Corrupt Deputy (ordinary least squares estimates)

Parameter	Estimate	T for HO: Para. = 0	PR > I T I
Intercept	25.407	3.90	.0001
Liberal Front Party (PFL)	18.146	2.46	.0146
Intraparty fragmentation	-71.845	-3.12	.0020
Interparty fragmentation squared	62.937	2.95	.0034
PFL × Intraparty fragmentation	-20.890	-1.64	.1030
Municipal employment	651.932	1.54	.1255
Electorate	.0000074	0.48	.6323
Income per capita	-.0039	-2.15	.0323
Migratory population	.0419	.79	.4297
Share of population earning < 1/4 minimum salary	.0766	1.41	.1595
$R^2 = .124$ $F = 5.11$ $Pr > F = .0001$ $N = 334$			

for a substantial part of the bribes deputies receive.²¹ Thus a key part of corruption must be the existence, on the one hand, of politicians willing to sell blocs of voters and, on the other, of politicians with the money to buy such support. To probe more deeply into the basis of scattered-dominant distributions, table 2 presents a statistical model of Alves's vote.

The idea behind this regression model is to search for the determinants of Alves's vote among political and economic variables. The political variables include a dummy variable indicating whether the mayor came from Alves's party (the PFL), a measure of intraparty fragmentation, and a measure of the importance of government employment in the municipality. Alves should gain votes in PFL-dominated municipalities, he should do better when there is less intraparty fragmentation, he should do especially well in less fragmented PFL municipalities, and he should do better where high proportions of the workforce are in the municipality's employ. His dominance is likely to be greater in municipalities that are sparsely populated, poorer overall, more stable (fewer migrants), and where more people live in absolute poverty.

The model's results suggest that the political characteristics of municipalities are much more important than their economic and demographic charac-

21. During a congressional recess, one deputy's chief aide told me that the deputy had not returned to his district, as he had no money to respond to the hundreds of requests for small financial favors that he would inevitably receive.

teristics. Alves was more successful, in terms of his share of total municipal votes, where the municipality's mayor represented the PFL and where the fragmentation of PFL candidates was low.²² In addition to these direct causal relationships, he also did slightly better in counties that were both PFL-controlled and low on fragmentation. And finally, he gained a small increment of votes in municipalities where a higher share of the workforce was employed in municipal government.²³ In such municipalities politics is often the only thriving business, and municipal employees understand the importance of remaining in the local boss's good graces.

In general, demographic and economic factors explain little of Alves's vote. When the level of absolute poverty is higher, Alves does a bit better, but the relationship is weak.²⁴ Neither population size nor the percentage of migrants in the municipality matters at all. Given the strong negative relationship between income per capita and municipal vote share, poverty seems to be a necessary but not sufficient condition for the existence of dominant vote bases. Only amidst poverty is dominance possible, but it also requires a set of favorable political conditions. The particular kind of dominance enjoyed by deputies accused of corruption results from the interaction of poverty with stable, machine-based politics. When deputies dominate a concentrated set of municipalities, they usually represent some family with a long history of political influence. When the dominated municipalities are scattered, arrangements exist with local leaders, bosses seeking the best deals available.

Could electoral reform end this kind of corruption? Brazilian politicians and social scientists have extensively discussed one reform, the German "mixed" electoral system. The German system divides the legislature into two halves: one half elected in single-member districts, the other half elected by closed-list proportional representation. In theory, the German system strengthens parties through its reliance on closed-list PR for half the seats but maximizes local accountability through single-member districts. The German system would also reduce campaign spending, because candidates would only campaign as individuals on the district side and the districts would be relatively small. Whether these gains would really be achieved is unclear, but it does seem

22. Alves's vote was subtracted from the municipal total before calculating the fragmentation of PFL candidates. In effect, the variable measures the fragmentation of all PFL candidates except Alves. Interparty fragmentation was also squared, because Alves's connections in Salvador might bring him a slightly bigger share in the capital.

23. Population size and percent employed in municipal administration are unrelated, so Wagner's Law is not in effect here.

24. Absolute poverty is measured by the share of the population earning less than one-fourth the monthly minimum wage—about sixty dollars at the time.

certain that the German system would eliminate exactly the corrupt deputies considered here, simply because scattered-dominant distributions would be extremely difficult to maintain. Deputies such as Alves could not be elected on the district side, because they could not compete, in any given district, with popular local leaders. On the closed-list side such candidates would have difficulty getting nominated, and, if they did get nominated, business interests and local bosses would have little incentive to make deals with these deputies. So, regardless of other benefits, the adoption of a mixed German-type system would kill off deputies relying on dispersed deal making.

Issue Caucuses and Accountability: Who Represents Whom?

Caucuses of like-minded deputies occur naturally in legislatures. When parties have little control over their members, issue caucuses are likely to cut across party lines. In the U.S. Congress, for example, a single legislator may belong simultaneously to the black caucus, the steel caucus, and the women's caucus. Another legislator may belong to the textile and tobacco caucuses. These issue-specific caucuses usually have regular meetings and permanent staff, and they are an important form of representation in a legislature basically organized around spatial communities—that is, around single-member districts. Through issue caucuses, deputies represent their constituents' economic, ethnic, and social interests.

As mentioned earlier, seats in Brazil's Chamber of Deputies are filled from multimember districts. Because each district elects many members, political scientists characterize Brazil as a country with high district magnitude.²⁵ Given open-list PR and high district magnitude, communities lose the privileged position they hold in a single-member district system like that of the United States. Any politically mobilized cohort of sufficient size can elect a deputy whose sole function is the representation of that cohort. Figure 12 presents a curious example: Deputy Amaral Netto, from the state of Rio de Janeiro, occupied a unique ideological niche: he ardently defended the death penalty. The resulting pattern of electoral support was remarkably even: with the exception of the lightly populated northeastern end of the state (where he campaigned little), Netto received 3–5 percent of the vote in nearly every municipality. In Rio de Janeiro and its populous suburbs, where crime is a huge problem, his vote was at the high end; in the more bucolic regions, the death penalty was less impor-

25. Japanese districts, by contrast, send between three and five representatives to the Diet.

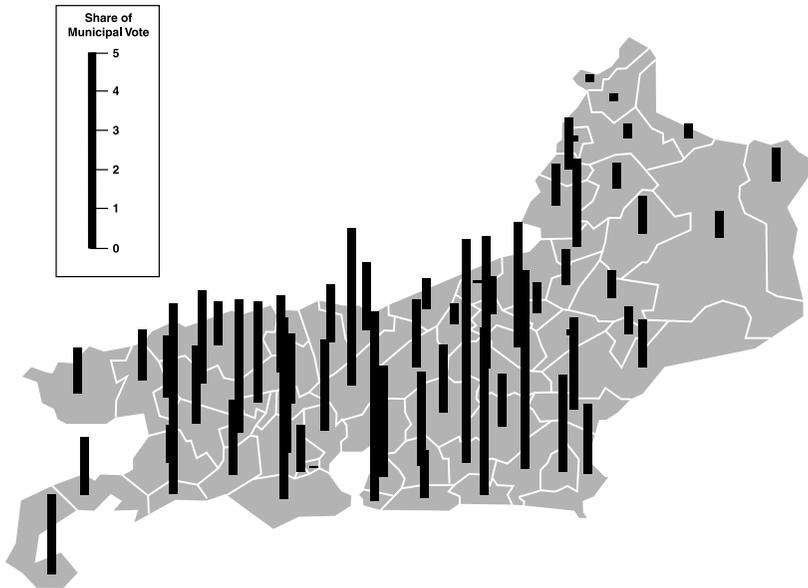


Fig. 12. Support for the death penalty as an ideological niche
Amaral Netto, PDS-RJ

tant. Netto was unsuccessful in promoting the death penalty in Brazil, but no one doubted the authenticity of his ideological base.

Observers of the Brazilian Congress identify at least fifteen caucuses. The largest, with about one hundred deputies each, are the agricultural (or rural) caucus, the construction industry caucus, and the health caucus, followed by Petrobrás (the national oil company), Catholics, bankers, evangelical Protestants, and communications, each with between fifty and eighty members. Caucuses of twenty to thirty members include education, the pension system and its employees, state banks, civil servants, multinational firms, auto dealers, and unions (“Bancada de Interesse” 1994). These estimates, however, are based on guesses: no caucus, even those meeting regularly, has permanent staff or a fixed membership list.

In the issue caucuses of the U.S. Congress, and in cases like the Brazilian deputy advocating the death penalty, the authenticity of a claim to representation is based on the interests of the voters sending that deputy to the legislature. In the House of Representatives, members of the steel caucus come from steel-producing regions. No one would expect a member of the steel caucus to own a steel mill personally; such a tie would be a conflict of interest. In Brazil, how-

ever, such ties are often exactly the motivation behind caucus membership. A deputy from Rio Grande do Sul represents the interests of the civil construction industry in the Congress. A map of his vote base reflects no concentration of construction workers or firms. Rather, the construction industry supports his campaigns; he responds by working for their interests. The health caucus includes doctors lobbying for improved public medical facilities as well as doctors owning private hospitals and lobbying for their personal interests.

The Brazilian Congress, then, shelters multiple bases of representation, especially in states with more legislators. Some are direct. The evangelical caucus lobbies for subsidies for Protestant churches and schools, but caucus members get their votes from precisely the interest they represent. Similarly direct ties with voters also characterize the union and civil servant caucuses. But self-representation—that is, representation of an economic group in which a deputy has a personal interest—characterizes many of the members of such caucuses as health, civil construction, and state banks.

To examine self-representation further, consider the rural caucus, usually considered the strongest organized interest in the Congress. The rural caucus is so large and so unified that it can stop any major agrarian reform effort. In 1994 the caucus prevented the government from pushing through its economic stabilization package until the government bargained on completely unrelated agricultural debt issues. Caucus members claim, of course, that they represent farm interests. The question, however, is whether they represent districts where agriculture is central to the economy or whether they represent their own personal interests. Table 3 shows the determinants of two votes central to the interests of the rural caucus during the 1991–94 legislature. One issue concerned a tax benefiting the pension system but calculated in terms of agricultural production; the second concerned a tax increase penalizing nonproductive rural properties. Farm interests opposed both taxes. I combined support for the two rural caucus positions, scoring each deputy as pro-rural caucus or anti-rural caucus. The explanatory variables include measures of personal economic interests, region, the economic base of a deputy's voters, party affiliation, and membership in the evangelical caucus. Biographical directories facilitated identification of deputies with agricultural interests—that is, owners of large estates or significant agricultural enterprises.²⁶ The indicator "rural base" (the inverse of urbanization) came from the 1980 census. I aggregated the character-

26. These sources included Istoé 1991 and Brazil, Câmara dos Deputados 1987. I also consulted the lists prepared by DIAP, the union research office in Brasília. The government agricultural extension agency Embrapa had also prepared its own list of deputies holding substantial rural property.

TABLE 3. Personal Interest versus Constituency Interest in the Rural Caucus (logistic estimation of support for rural caucus)

Parameter	Estimate	Wald Chi-square	Pr > Chi-square
Intercept	-1.783	52.09	.0001
Agricultural interest	1.411	27.95	.0001
Northeast region	-.553	1.74	.1867
South region	.719	1.95	.1630
Rural base	.070	3.75	.0529
PFL	1.155	11.56	.0007
PDS	0.434	.93	.3341
PTB	1.040	3.68	.0552
Evangelical	1.419	4.45	.0348

Note: Likelihood ratio significant at .0001 level, $N = 408$.

istics of the municipalities where each deputy received votes, weighted by the percentage of the deputy's total votes the municipality contributed.

Table 3 offers striking results. Deputies' personal agricultural interests were by far the dominant influence in their voting on agrarian issues. Those who owned rural properties essentially made up the rural caucus, and they voted to defend their economic interests. Region turned out not to matter significantly, although deputies from the supposedly traditional and backward Northeast were actually a bit more likely to support agrarian reform than their "modern" southern colleagues.²⁷ A rural base made deputies more likely to oppose agrarian reform, but the relationship was much weaker than the linkage between support for reform and personal economic holdings.²⁸

This test of the bases of the rural caucus supports the contention that the Brazilian electoral system's rules distort representation and accountability. Obviously, not all caucuses are self-representing. Unions, evangelicals, and civil servants trade voting support for real representation. But like the ruralists, caucuses representing civil construction, telecommunications and state banks have a different claim to legitimacy. The ordinary voters electing a particular deputy who clearly and unequivocally represented civil construction did not vote for him to represent their construction interests, because the overwhelming majority of his voters have no ties at all to that industry.

27. The South has recently been the site of many violent conflicts between huge, modern agricultural operations and the landless poor.

28. Party mattered. Membership in the PFL or PTB was associated with strong antireform positions. PDS partisans, however, took no clear position, most likely because their delegation was split between urban and rurally based deputies. Evangelicals also opposed agrarian reform, probably because of both their natural conservatism and their willingness to logroll: they traded support to the rural caucus for its support on their bills.

Open-list proportional representation and high-magnitude districts seem to be necessary but probably not sufficient conditions for self-representation. The inevitable vagueness of voter-deputy ties in Brazil makes it easy to hide self-accountability to voters. Self-representation is also encouraged by Brazil's tradition of state corporatism in the executive branch (Schmitter 1971). The corporatist state sanctioned, regulated, and controlled economic interests' participation in policy-making. With government financial support and a guaranteed place at the policy-making table, economic interests found it profitable to penetrate the state, both from inside the state apparatus and from the legislative branch.

Open-List Proportional Representation and Party Building

By this point it should be clear that open-list PR personalizes politics and hinders party building. If, in a given state, the average number of voters per congressional seat is 50,000, and if a candidate has 200,000 voters that will follow the candidate to any party, then that candidate has enormous power. Whichever party attracts the candidate can be assured of another four seats—that is, the candidate plus three others elected by the 150,000 “extra” votes. Party leaders, of course, will be very tolerant of ideological deviations between such heavyweights and the party's official program. To explore party building under such rules, this section examines four systemic ramifications: the growth of blank and null voting, the incentives for inconsistent cross-party alliances, the consequences of party switching by incumbents, and the weakness of links between social groups and parties.

Null and Blank Voting

Voting in Brazil is obligatory for all literate persons over eighteen; it is optional for illiterates and those between sixteen and eighteen.²⁹ Since obligatory voting forces many unwilling people to the polls, it is not surprising that Brazil has high levels of blank (*em branco*) and invalid (*nulo*) voting (Power and Roberts 1995). In the 1989 presidential election, null and blank votes together reached 5 percent of the electorate. In 1994, in an election characterized by the absence of negative campaigning and by the presence of two serious candidates, null voting alone doubled, to 7.8 percent of the electorate. Blank voting climbed

29. Those who abstain without a valid excuse, such as illness, pay a small fine.

even faster, reaching 7.6 percent. Thus, null and blank voting together surpassed 15 percent of the electorate.

Are these levels of null and blank voting an indicator of underlying problems in the electoral system? It is obviously not possible to compare Brazil to polities in which voting is optional. But even on its own terms, the 1994 election was a complex one: simultaneous voting for five levels of office and the recent impeachment of the 1989 presidential victor, Fernando Collor de Mello. Resources available for clientelistic trading of favors had certainly decreased by 1994, so voters may have felt that bosses could no longer hold up their end of the bargain.

In certain races, however, high levels of null and blank votes merit special attention. Null votes in senatorial races surpassed 8 percent of the electorate, and blank votes were greater than 20 percent. In a number of senatorial races, null and blank votes outnumbered the votes of the winning candidate. Null and blank votes in the Chamber of Deputies races were the highest of all, reaching 41 percent (Tribunal Superior Eleitoral 1995).

Most Brazilian observers point to obligatory voting as the essential cause of null and blank ballots. Such observers suggest that invalid votes result from forcing to the polls people who either do not want to vote or do not know how to vote. The strongest partisan criticism of obligatory voting comes from the Left, which remembers that Lula would probably have beaten Collor de Mello for the presidency in 1989 if voting had been optional. The strongest defense comes from the Right: rural oligarchs back obligatory voting because they depend on a manipulated vote. These partisan reactions are predictable, but are there larger issues? Can null and blank votes demonstrate anything more about the functioning of the Brazilian electoral system?

Given the local character of Brazilian electoral politics, an analysis of invalid voting must build on electoral results at the municipal level. Utilizing data from Ceará and Santa Catarina, I tested regression models explaining null and blank voting on the basis of municipal-level aspects of political competition.³⁰ Political competition affects the information available to the voter—that is, the voter's knowledge of the candidates and the political process. Competition also affects the anger voters feel toward a political process that has produced extraordinary corruption and abysmal public services.

The spatial structure of political competition is quite different in Ceará and Santa Catarina. Ceará's deputies have mostly scattered distributions, with the

30. The regressions also include measures of socioeconomic characteristics. Complete results are available on request.

majority falling into the scattered-dominant type, while Santa Catarina's deputies typically have concentrated distributions, mostly in the concentrated-shared camp. How did competition affect blank and null voting? In both states, the higher the mean personal share (the percentage of a candidate's total statewide vote earned in a given municipality), the lower the level of blank voting. When candidates pick up more of their overall votes in a particular municipality, it becomes more important to them. Thus, when the average personal share of all candidates in a given municipality is low, the municipality is important to no one. Little campaign effort will be devoted to the municipality, and few efforts will be made to inform its voters. Because voters have no basis on which to choose, they cast blank votes. In Ceará, the higher the fragmentation of the vote of the state's dominant party (at that time the PSDB), the more blank voting occurred. Santa Catarina saw the same effect: high levels of fragmentation in the dominant PDS were tied to more blank voting. Why? Pulverization of a municipality's vote by many candidates from one party is not simply the sign of even competition. Rather, fragmentation results when no candidate has real ties to the municipality. Faced with a plethora of unappealing candidates, voters increasingly cannot choose at all, so they vote blank.

How does the spatial structure of competition affect the null or "anger" vote? When candidates had a higher stake in a municipality's votes, the level of null voting declined in both Ceará and Santa Catarina, presumably because candidates were attentive to the district during the previous legislative term. In Ceará, fragmentation both within the PFL and PMDB and between the two parties was positively associated with higher levels of null voting. In Santa Catarina, however, neither of the fragmentation measures affected null voting. Perhaps voters in these two states were responding to the presence or absence of dominant politicians. In Ceará more than half the delegation elected in 1986 had scattered-dominant distributions. Such vote patterns occur only when local bosses command voter loyalties and deliver voters in blocs. Null voting should be low in such places, but in the few municipalities that are truly fragmented, mostly big cities, voter anger emerges. In Santa Catarina, more than two-thirds of the deputies had concentrated-shared distributions, which means that most voters faced a choice of candidates with ties to the district. Since this kind of distribution predominated in both urban and rural areas, fragmentation of party competition had no independent effect on levels of null voting.

Overall, then, Brazil's electoral rules combine with the socioeconomic characteristics of each state's communities to generate particular patterns of spatial competition. In turn, the pattern of spatial competition affects the information available to voters and the alternatives they perceive. Frustrated and ill

informed, voters in communities where few candidates have strong ties respond by casting ballots expressing anger or by refusing to cast ballots at all.

Multiparty Alliances

Brazil's formula for apportioning legislative seats (the D'Hondt method) hinders small parties' chances of attaining the electoral quotient that would entitle them to a seat. As a result, they often ally with larger parties so that their joint total, which determines whether they reach the quotient, is larger. A candidate with a personal total insufficient to earn a seat—because the total of all the party's candidates is inadequate—may have enough votes as part of a multiparty alliance. These electoral alliances are truly just electoral: they do not imply joint action in the legislature. At the same time, the parties have to agree on a common set of promises—it would be a stretch to call them programs—to offer their electorates during the campaign,

If electoral alliances are inconsistent across the states, delegations from the same parties from different states are less likely to share a common program at the national level. Consider the 1986 election. The PTB allied with the PMDB in Acre and Pará, but the PMDB joined anti-PMDB alliances in Bahia, Goiás, Mato Grosso do Sul, Santa Catarina, and São Paulo. In most states the PFL aligned with the PDS, but in Piauí, Rio de Janeiro, Rio Grande do Sul, and Santa Catarina, the PFL either opposed the PDS or ran a separate slate. The PDC joined the PFL in Bahia but allied with the PMDB—against the PFL—in Ceará.

The apparent capriciousness of state-level alliances results from a conceptual confusion. With the exception of the Workers' Party and, on some issues, the PFL, Brazilian parties really exist only at the state level. At that level, moreover, parties can be surrogates for traditional factional disputes. So politics in Maranhão is either pro-Sarney or anti-Sarney; in Bahia the lineup is pro- or anti-Antônio Carlos Magalhães. In the 1994 presidential election, PSDB candidate Fernando Henrique Cardoso defeated the PT's Luís Inácio Lula da Silva in the first round of the election, but in the second round Cardoso supported the PT candidate for governor in the state of Espírito Santo. The PT and PDT are fierce enemies in most states, but in Rio Grande do Sul and in Rio de Janeiro they cooperate. Leonel Brizola, the PDT's founder, controls the party in Rio Grande do Sul and Rio de Janeiro, but in Paraná he has no influence whatever. An even stranger example is found in São Paulo. Former Governor Orestes Quércia naturally dominated a wing of the *paulista* PMDB, but for a few years he also dominated the *paulista* PFL, which answered to him rather than to national party leaders.

Party Loyalty and Party Switching

I have previously demonstrated how Brazil's version of open-list PR personalizes politics and hinders party development. Party leaders lack the means to discipline deputies seeking the party label, and efforts to rein in individualistic or deviant behavior can be costly to the parties themselves. At the same time, parties do nominate governors, senators, and presidents, and, in spite of their ideological vagueness, many of the major parties (especially the PT, PSDB, PMDB, and PFL) occupy recognized positions on a left-right spectrum. Could partisan affinities develop in spite of the hostile environment of open-list PR, and will these affinities prevent deputies from changing parties?³¹

Public opinion surveys during the past ten years suggest that low percentages of Brazilian voters, compared with voters in other industrial democracies, identify with political parties or consider party when casting a vote. In 1994, for example, respondents to a national survey were asked the following question: "When you choose candidates for various positions, do you make an effort to vote for candidates of the same party, or do you vote taking into consideration only the candidate, regardless of his/her party?" Mainwaring (1999, 112) reports that 24 percent of the respondents chose the party-based response, while 67 percent claimed to ignore party. Open-ended questions on surveys between 1989 and 1994 found that 44–57 percent of the Brazilian electorate identified with a party (Meneguello 1994). In 1994, the last survey year, 48 percent of respondents were party identifiers. While these figures are lower than those of other industrial democracies, they remain significant.³²

Clues about the strength of party loyalties can also be found in the electoral fates of deputies who change parties.³³ Between the elections of 1986 and 1990, seventy deputies left the parties they originally represented and sought reelection under a different party label, and only sixteen were reelected in 1990. Since the 1990 success rate of all deputies seeking reelection (both switchers and nonswitchers) exceeded 50 percent, party switching may seem a fairly lame tactic. Do the switchers' failures imply that party loyalties really matter, that party switchers lost because they were unable to carry their voters to their new party? Before party loyalty is blamed for the switchers' failure to survive, it is necessary to assess their electoral chances if they had remained in their parties

31. For discussion of party switching outside Latin America, see Canon and Sousa 1992.

32. Industrial democracies range from Canada's 90 percent to Denmark's 54 percent (see Mainwaring 1999, 114, using figures from Dalton, Flanagan, and Beck 1984, 300–301, 196).

33. Here I ignore the difference between mass loyalties and the loyalties of political bosses. In Ames 1994b, I distinguish empirically, at the municipal level, between mass partisan tendencies and the effects of the political machine.

of origin. One basis for such an inquiry is the switchers' individual ranks in their states' 1986 deputy lists. High-ranking 1986 deputies had a better chance of winning in 1990, but not by much. Of the thirty-four party-switching deputies who had finished in the lower half of their states' lists in 1986, six won in 1990. Of thirty-six switchers who had finished in the upper half in 1986, ten were re-elected in 1990. So a higher finish in 1986 did help, but only a little, and switchers were almost equally likely to have done well or poorly in 1986. Deputies should not change parties because they think their chances with the original party are poor.

Politicians know that while some of their voters will support them regardless of their party affiliation, others will remain loyal only as long as candidates belong to a given party. Deputies considering a shift to a new party ought to examine the spatial configuration of their vote. If their personal vote is highly correlated with the overall party vote (the vote for all members of that party together), then it will be tougher to move their voters to another party.³⁴ However, in most states, party switchers were about as likely as nonswitchers to have received their 1986 votes in party bailiwicks. In Bahia and Minas Gerais, switchers were a bit more likely to have done well in party bailiwicks than were nonswitchers, while in São Paulo and Paraná, switchers were less successful in party strongholds.³⁵ Overall, then, switchers were not loners with essentially personal votes. Their willingness to change parties underscores their belief that party loyalties would not cripple their reelection chances.

Could switchers hold their 1986 voters in 1990? One answer is found in the correlation between the spatial distributions of deputies' personal vote shares in the two elections. In other words, did deputies get their votes in the same places in the two elections? In Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, and Paraná, party switchers held their voters better than nonswitchers, and in other states switchers did about as well as nonswitchers in transferring their bailiwicks. But the fact that party-switching deputies maintained the same bailiwicks could indicate merely that deputies contemplating a change in party did not foresee that party loyalty would be a problem and, as a result, failed to extend their campaigns out from their 1986 bailiwicks.

The best way to test party loyalty is to compare the vote gains and losses between 1986 and 1990 of switchers and nonswitchers from the same party. Deputies leaving the PMDB constitute the biggest group of potential switchers.

34. The overall party vote is defined as the sum of all party members' shares of each municipality's total vote minus the share of the deputy in question.

35. São Paulo and Paraná are two traditional strongholds of the PMDB, so here party loyalties may play a real role in voter decisions.

In almost every state, switchers did much worse in 1990 than did nonswitchers. In Bahia, for example, switchers from the PMDB lost an average of 20,550 votes between 1986 and 1990, while nonswitching PMDB candidates gained 9,611 votes. In Paraná, switchers lost almost 50,000 votes apiece, while nonswitchers lost only 13,480. In only two states, Rio Grande do Sul and São Paulo, did switchers do better than nonswitchers, and in these states the deputies who did well in 1990 had all been extremely popular vote getters in 1986.

The poor performance of deputies who changed parties between 1986 and 1990 becomes even more dramatic in light of the fact that switchers, overall, had previously performed as well in 1986 as nonswitchers. In other words, the failure of party switchers cannot be dismissed on the grounds that they were merely weak candidates. In addition, few switchers lost their seats in 1990 simply because their new parties could not muster enough votes from all their candidates to guarantee the switchers' seats, even though these candidates personally had about the same totals as in 1990. Only about one-third of losing switchers could plausibly argue that their defeat resulted from the party's failure to accumulate enough total votes rather than from their personal decline.

The surprising strength of party at the mass level is even more dramatic in the context of the PMDB's debacle in 1990. Riding the strength of the Cruzado economic plan in 1986, the party had swept most state assemblies and governorships and was easily the biggest party in the Chamber of Deputies. But by 1990 the Cruzado was a bitter memory, the PMDB's presidential candidate had finished with only a few percent of the national vote, and the party was in disarray. Leaving the PMDB should have provided candidates a boost, and many clearly saw switching as a political lifeboat. They were wrong, as it happened. Loyalty would have paid off.

The discovery that party identification may develop more quickly and resist poor governmental performance more sturdily than commonly believed needs qualification. The results discussed here are mainly based on switches of former PMDB members. As the party associated with resistance to the military dictatorship, the PMDB enjoyed the highest levels of partisan identification in the Brazilian electorate. Other parties, except for the PT, are unlikely to do as well. In addition, the PMDB's recent decline helps explain the overall fall in partisan identification in Brazil. Party switching inevitably reinforces that decline.

Ultimately, the origins of party switching lie in career calculations. Brazilian deputies are less likely to seek long-term legislative careers than their U.S. counterparts. Enticed by committee positions, pork projects, or other benefits proffered by party leaders seeking to expand their delegations, Brazilian

deputies often switch parties early in the legislative term. Benefits accrued during the term under the new party label must outweigh the risks in the subsequent election. For some deputies, the immediate objective may not be reelection to the legislative seat at all. Rather, they plan off-year runs for municipal mayoralities. Other deputies may have only a token interest in an immediate reelection campaign. For these deputies, party switching maximizes the short-term gain of a legislative seat.

Society and Party: The Missing Link

Party systems are usually classified as institutionalized when parties have stable shares of the popular vote, when parties and elections clearly determine who governs, when party organizations have stable rules and structures, and when parties have roots in society.³⁶ As scholars often point out, Brazil's parties fail all four tests. The PMDB, the nation's largest party, had 43 percent of the national legislative vote in 1982, 48 percent in 1986, 19.3 percent in 1990, and 20.3 percent in 1994. In 1989, just three years after the PMDB's sweeping 1986 legislative and gubernatorial victories, the party's presidential candidate received just 4.4 percent of the national popular vote.³⁷ Parties and elections determine who governs in Brazil, at least in the sense that military coups, in the view of most scholars, are highly unlikely (Hunter 1996). But at the national level, parties—with the exception of the Workers' Party—really do not exist, and the strength of state party organizations varies enormously. Still, these aspects of institutionalization are all fairly obvious. More interesting and more complex is the question of roots—that is, the problem of parties' links to societal groups.

For a political party to offer a coherent national program, it must represent essentially the same social groups in each of the major regions of the country, and it must maintain these ties over time. Because Brazil's party system is still evolving, with new parties appearing, old ones fading, and politicians switching parties, it is not possible simply to chart the correlation between each party's candidates and various socioeconomic indicators.³⁸

36. For an extended discussion of these themes, see Mainwaring and Scully 1994.

37. For a treatment of the 1989 presidential election, see Ames 1994b.

38. Moreover, the votes of city-based candidates would correlate with such characteristics as urbanization and manufacturing whether their votes come from the working class, the upper middle class, or—as in the case of charismatic candidates—a multiclass coalition. A perfect test of the stability of party-societal ties requires information that is simply unavailable—i.e., longitudinal survey data in different states.

I will now return to the four-category typology of electoral bases: concentrated-dominant, concentrated-shared, scattered-shared, and scattered-dominant. In an open-list proportional system of Brazil's type, would any single category predominate if the system were evolving in the direction of tighter party-society linkages? It is clear that neither the concentrated-dominant nor the scattered-dominant cells reflects society-party linkages. A scattered-shared pattern usually represents groups like evangelicals or ideological niche fillers like the *paulista* candidate favoring the monarchy. Scattered-shared patterns also reflect candidates relying on narrow social groups, such as pensioners, but in this case these candidates represent very specific interests. The remaining pattern, concentrated-shared, seems more promising. Given the large size of Brazil's districts, candidates appealing to broad social forces are likely to do so in individual metropolitan areas (which encompass multiple municipalities), and these areas are usually large enough to elect more than one candidate. In such districts, contact between voters and their representatives is possible. Thus the PT candidates who share the votes of São Paulo's working class have concentrated-shared bases, but middle-class candidates successfully mine the same metropolitan area for votes. Such distributions, in other words, reflect competition along group or class lines.

Over the four elections from 1978 until 1990, how can the number of candidates with concentrated-shared vote distributions be determined? If all four elections are pooled and then each dimension is divided by its median, the result, for the entire universe of deputies serving between 1978 and 1990, is a rough balance between the four distributional types. In 1978 19 percent of the deputies had concentrated-shared distributions. In 1982 this number rose to 27 percent, and by 1990 it reached 33 percent. Some parties deviate from this evolutionary pattern. The PDS (now called the PPB), once the promilitary party and long the largest conservative party, shows no shift at all in its deputies' vote distributions. In 1986 the PDS lost most of its northeastern adherents to the PFL. Those PDS members who remained in the party tended to have secure, non-competitive vote bases, so the party looks increasingly anachronistic. But the general rise in competitiveness does seem to fit the nation's largest party, the PMDB. It gained many new members in 1986 and then watched many members defect between 1987 and 1989 to the PSDB, the PTB, and other smaller parties. Since the PMDB lost deputies who tended to dominate along with deputies who shared vote bases, this overall change does not merely reflect the defeat of a particular type; rather, it reflects the overall shift of the universe of deputies. New PMDB politicians were more likely to invade old PMDB bailiwicks, and old PMDB deputies adopted the same campaign style as the newcomers.

In sum, the evolution of the party system—a theme to which I shall return in chapter 3—has reduced the number of traditional, municipally dominant deputies, and the result has been an increase in community-based deputies who appeal to broad social strata but face competition. This kind of competition forces deputies to deliver pork-barrel benefits to communities. But to the degree that parties shape the behavior of their deputies (a topic examined in chapter 6), such competition also leaves open the possibility that parties will develop programs responding to their voters' class affiliations.

Conclusion

This chapter began with a discussion of the workings of the Brazilian electoral system. The central theme was simple: open-list PR, as it functions in Brazil, personalizes politics and weakens party control over politicians in both campaign and legislative behavior. The system is extremely democratic in the sense that all potential cleavages receive equal treatment. But openness and flexibility weaken the ties between voters and deputies, and parties have difficulty aggregating interests into anything resembling a coherent program.

Campaigning for legislative seats in Brazil is a competition for space. This space can be ideological (like the “spatial modeling” literature in political science), but more often space really means physical space. Candidates seek municipalities whose voters and/or leaders will give them support. The fight for space produces a four-cell taxonomy combining vertical penetration of municipalities (domination) with horizontal coverage (contiguity). The taxonomy classifies deputies as concentrated-dominant, concentrated-shared, scattered-shared, and scattered-dominant. Deputies with certain kinds of occupational backgrounds and political histories tend to concentrate in each of these categories. Local mayors, for example, have concentrated vote distributions, while businessmen more often have scattered patterns. In traditional regions of the country, deputies get most of the votes of municipalities that contribute a substantial part of their personal vote, while in other regions deputies face much higher levels of interparty and intraparty fragmentation.

To explore the functioning of this unique electoral system, I then explored a series of topics central to contemporary political debate in Brazil: malapportionment, corruption, accountability, and party building. Malapportionment refers to the distribution formula for legislative seats. São Paulo is more than fifty seats short of its proportionate share of the chamber, while states in the Center-West and North have far too many seats. At times, it seems to be

expected that granting São Paulo its just share, while cutting the delegations of the frontier states, will move the Brazil's political center of gravity sharply to the left. However, reasonable assumptions about new deputies' voting (given the weakness of party discipline) somewhat temper radical expectations. Some important votes in the National Constituent Assembly would have turned out differently under true proportionality, but many others would have been unchanged. In the permanent legislature, however, the fact that both chambers sharply reduce the influence of populous regions may prevent certain issues from ever becoming the object of political debate and compromise.

The outbreak of an extraordinary corruption scandal in 1993 provided the opportunity to test the practical importance of this vote-distribution taxonomy. Deputies accused of corruption overwhelmingly tended to be scattered-dominant types. Such distributions reflect their efforts to make deals with local political bosses. The chapter also demonstrated that a reform of the German type, combining single-member districts with closed-list PR, would probably retire these corrupt types from the legislature.

Brazil's system gives new meaning to that commonly heard term in American politics, "special interests." The openness of the Brazilian system allows deputies to fill ideological niches—the classic being the *paulista* running on a promonarchy platform—but deputies also reflect Brazil's traditional corporatism, in which narrow economic interests penetrate the bureaucracy and legislature. The so-called rural caucus represents not the interests of the voters who elect these deputies but the personal interests of deputies holding rural property, which is not what accountability normally means.

The chapter then turned to the effects of Brazil's system on the building of political parties. After every election, the Brazilian press is full of stories about the high levels of null and blank voting. Such voting mainly is a consequence of obligatory voting but also says something about the electoral system. The analysis presented here suggests (but cannot measure definitively) that null and blank voting has an information component and an anger component. In constituencies where all candidates get small proportions of their personal vote, deputies' campaign efforts are likely to be minimal, and voters simply lack sufficient information to choose. But anger matters as well: with corruption scandals, a perennially unsatisfactory economy, and an impeached president, voters expressed their feelings about politics not by staying home but by defacing their ballots.

In talking about party building, what is really meant is national parties. Brazil has some parties with considerable organizational strength at the municipal and even state levels, but at the national level one can hardly talk about

political parties. One reason parties have difficulty forming coherent programs is that the system encourages multiparty alliances. Right-wing parties ally with center parties in some states and with left-wing parties in others. In the 1994 presidential election, a supposedly center-left party made two strange deals: one with a far-right party that includes a neoliberal wing and a pork-barrel wing, the other with a party that has nothing but pork-barrel types.

Brazil's electorate has less than fifteen years experience with open, democratic politics. In spite of the party-weakening effects of open-list PR, there are some signs that party loyalties matter. Deputies who switched parties between 1986 and 1990 provided a kind of experimental sample. Party switching was costly: switchers had a lower reelection rate than did loyal deputies. Perhaps to the switchers' surprise, they failed to transfer their voters to their new parties. For many switchers, this risk may have been worthwhile, because the gains from switching during the legislative term outweighed the electoral risk. For others, however, their behavior may appear quite irrational.

Does the possible irrationality of some party switchers call into question this book's stress on politicians' "rational" behavior? I think not. Brazilian deputies operate in an environment of great uncertainty. The New Republic's first parliamentary election was really 1986, and most conventional political wisdom downplayed the strength of party identification. For some of these politicians, immediate reelection was probably not the primary objective. Last, a focus on rationality means not that irrational behavior will never occur but that it will not be rewarded. Over time, party switching should prove electorally more successful, because only those truly benefiting will switch.

The chapter concludes by returning to the taxonomy of voting bases presented at the beginning of the chapter. The system's evolution is the subject of chapter 3, but here I note merely that deputies with concentrated-shared distributions are becoming more common. Such deputies appeal to broad social strata in particular communities. These representatives' concentrated vote means that they are likely to identify with their communities, but they also face significant political opposition. The increased number of such deputies may magnify interest in delivering pork-barrel benefits, but at least deputies will have to pay attention to the communities where they get votes, and they will have to compete with other candidates for these votes. It may not be much, but it represents the beginning of accountability.