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Presidential elections and party system institutionalization in Brazil

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Abstract

In this article, I propose to analyze party system institutionalization in multiparty presidential countries in terms of the stability of the alliances made by parties to elect the president and form governments, and in terms of the coherence of parties' strategies across the electoral and governing arenas. I argue that institutionalization is likely to increase as the parties that comprise the system interact in predictable ways, by forming large pre-electoral coalitions to dispute the presidency and these coalitions, in turn, provide voters with clear and distinctive government alternatives. I extend and complement the three dimensions of party system closure developed by Mair (1996;2002) and Casal-Bértoa and Enyedi (2016) by incorporating a set of measures to account for the degree of congruence between the structure of presidential competition and the formation of governments, and for the stability of interparty interactions in the presidential arena. The article relies on an in-depth case study of Brazil's party systems that emerged during the post-1985 and the 1946-1964 democratic periods to examine these various dimensions of party system institutionalization.

Presidential elections and party system institutionalization in Brazil

André Borges (UNB)

At least since Juan Linz (1990) inaugurated the first wave of presidential studies, scholars have been mostly skeptical about the possibility of conciliating stable and institutionalized party systems with the presidential system of government. It has been argued that one central aspect that differentiates presidentialism from parliamentarism – the popular election of the chief executive – has a detrimental impact on party and party system institutionalization (Andrews & Bairrett, 2014; Casal Bértoa, 2012; Clark & Wittrock, 2005; Ishiyama & Kennedy, 2001; Mainwaring & Zoco, 2007). Analyzing Central and Eastern European countries, Andrews and Bairret (2014) claim that the stronger the presidential powers, the greater the elite incentives to create new party vehicles to compete for the presidency, thus increasing volatility. Mainwaring and Zocco (2007) argue that presidential systems personalize the vote for the head of government and, therefore, they might be more vulnerable to political outsiders. In the same line, Samuels and Shugart (2010, p. 127), claim that parties have an incentive to present presidential candidates who can cultivate a personal vote above and beyond their own party.

Despite its theoretical and empirical achievements, this literature has failed to develop appropriate concepts and measures to assess party system institutionalization under the separation of powers, by overlooking some important institutional features of presidentialism, as well as the variation that exists both across and within presidential democracies. Even if it is true that pure parliamentary democracies tend to develop more institutionalized party systems than either pure or hybrid presidential countries, one still needs to account for: (a) party system change and development throughout time within specific presidential countries; (b) the variation that exists in the degree of party institutionalization across polities with popularly elected executives.

In this article, I propose to analyze party system institutionalization in multiparty presidential countries in terms of the stability of the alliances made by parties to elect the president and form governments, and in terms of the coherence of parties' strategies across the electoral and governing arenas. I argue that institutionalization is likely to increase as the parties that comprise the system interact in predictable ways, by forming large pre-electoral coalitions to dispute the presidency and these coalitions, in turn, provide voters with clear and distinctive government alternatives.

Because presidential elections are highly majoritarian, they create strong incentives for pre-electoral bargaining and for the formation of electoral blocs, especially in multiparty settings where no single-party can expect to obtain alone a majority of the vote. Also, presidential races present a large and important prize that is awarded in what is essentially a winner-takes-all fashion, which greatly increases the incentives for coordination (Cox, 1999). The formation of large pre-electoral coalitions around the presidential frontrunners in fragmented, multiparty systems may impose a constraint on party strategies in the post-electoral period. Comparative evidence on Latin American countries demonstrates that governing coalitions in presidential

systems originate, in many instances, from the winning pre-electoral coalition. On the other hand, the runner up in the presidential race and his allies in the legislature will often join the ranks of the opposition (Adrián Albala, 2016; Chasqueti, 2008; Freudenreich, 2016). If the parties and coalitions competing in the presidential election do not substantially change over time and party strategies are reasonably consistent across the governing and electoral arenas, voters will come to recognize the major blocs in the presidential race as clearly distinct government alternatives.

Following Mair (1996) and Casal-Bértoa and Enyedi (2016), I define PSI in terms of the stability of the interactions of parties in the governmental arena. Party systems are closed when there is little or no change over time in the range of governing alternatives or in the pattern of alternation, and with new parties systematically failing to gain access to office. I extend and complement this conceptual scheme by incorporating a set of measures to account for the degree of congruence between the structure of presidential competition and the formation of governments, and for the stability of interparty interactions in the presidential arena.

I rely on an in-depth case study of Brazil's party systems that emerged during the post-1985 and the 1946-1964 democratic periods to examine these various dimensions of party system institutionalization. Brazil is an ideal case because both democratic eras saw the development of multiparty systems where pre- and post-electoral coalitions were common currency. At the same time, there is substantial variation across periods in what concerns the structure of party competition and the linkages between the electoral and governing arenas. Another advantage of this comparative design is the fact that these two party systems developed relatively independently from each other and may be treated as mostly distinct "cases". Indeed, the major parties that organized during and after the democratic transitions of 1946 and 1985 did not exist before, which is to say that the characteristics of political parties and party systems are unlikely to stem from path-dependent, long-term trajectories of particular parties.

The article contributes to two distinct literatures. First, it relies on Mair's (1996) concept of party system closure to propose an innovative approach to analyze party system institutionalization in presidential countries. The focus is on multiparty, coalitional presidentialism, although these concepts and measures may be further refined and adapted to account for cases in which pre- and post-electoral coalitions are uncommon. Second, the article contributes to the country-specific literature on party systems and PSI in Brazil. Although there seems to be a relative consensus in that the current party system is characterized by a relatively stable structure of competition (Braga, 2010; Braga & Pimentel Jr, 2011; Limongi & Cortez, 2010; Melo & Câmara, 2012; Tarouco, 2010; Zucco Jr, 2011), empirical analyses have not yet provided a set of comparable and easily replicable measures to account for the actual pattern of interparty interactions. Besides, comparisons between the current and the previous democratic party system are virtually non-existing in the literature.

1. Party system institutionalization and party system closure

Party institutionalization is, by definition, a multidimensional concept, which has motivated substantial debate on strategies of conceptualization, operationalization and measurement (Chiaramonte & Emanuele, 2015; Luna, 2014; Mainwaring, Gervasoni, & España-Najera, 2017; Mainwaring & Scully, 1995; Mainwaring & Torcal, 2006; Mair, 1996). However, despite the great number of available measures of institutionalization, the comparative literature has focused on the anchors of parties in society (the institutionalization of parties), neglecting the pattern of interactions among parties (party system institutionalization) (Casal Bértoa & Enyedi, 2017). Although it is often assumed that the systemic and party-level dimensions of institutionalization are closely related and may be treated as a single and coherent composite measure (Bizzarro, Hicken, & Self, 2017; Mainwaring & Torcal, 2006), there are good theoretical and methodological reasons to conceptualize and analyze these two dimensions separately (Casal Bértoa & Enyedi, 2016; Mair, 1996; Randall & Svåsand, 2002; Toole, 2000).

The institutionalization of parties may be understood as the strength and durability of party organizations, their rootedness in society and their social legitimacy. These constitute three of the four dimensions proposed by Mainwaring and Scully (1995) in their oft-quoted book on Latin American party systems. The remaining dimension - the stability and regularity of party competition patterns – is not necessarily related to the individual properties of parties. Rather, it depends on the regularity and predictability of interactions among the parties that constitutes the system.

Luna (2014) has demonstrated, indeed, that the four dimensions conflated in the party system institutionalization (PSI) concept do not relate linearly. His conclusion is that scholars should analyze separately the party competition patterns dimension (most often operationalized as electoral volatility), and the party-voter linkages (social rootedness) dimension (*idem*, p. 461-462). Note further that the Pedersen index of electoral volatility is a limited and imprecise measure, to the extent that electoral stability is not synonymous with stability in the patterns of interparty interactions. It is theoretically and empirically possible to witness low levels volatility, in the sense that the same parties compete election after election and obtain very similar vote shares, while at the same time the alliances made by these parties to win elections and gain access to government substantially change over time (Mair, 1996). This is not to say, however, that the structure of party competition is unrelated to the degree of stability of parties' electoral support. These dimensions are indeed associated with each other, to the extent that party system consolidation depends on the stability of the components of the system (Toole, 2000; Bértoa and Enyedi, 2017). However, measures of electoral stability are insufficient to account for the actual structure of party competition.

Considering the limitations of existing concepts and measures that focus on electoral stability and change, I utilize the approach to PSI developed by Mair (1996, 2002) and refined by Casal-Bertoa and Enyied (2016;2017). Mair (1996) has defined party system institutionalization as the degree of party system closure. The structure of party competition is said to be closed when the process of government formation is restricted to a small group of parties that establish regular and predictable alliances among themselves. A high degree of party system closure implies that the protagonists and the patterns of their alliances are stable (Casal Bértoa & Enyedi, 2016, p. 266).

Although parties do not interact only in the governmental arena, there are a number of theoretical and empirical reasons that justify the focus on the formation of governments. First, national government is the major political prize of party competition

and, therefore, the pursuit of public office is likely to shape parties' strategies to a very a substantial extent (Casal-Bértoa and Enyedi, 2016). Second, recent trends in the development of parties and party systems in old democracies indicate the decline of parties as membership, representative organizations and the ascendancy of the party in public office (Katz & Mair, 1995; Mair, 2006). To the extent that parties have lost the capacity to represent voters in an ideological or purposive sense, party systems have tended to organize in bipolar fashion, as alternative teams of leaders that compete for access to government (Mair, 2006, p. 70). The characterization of parties as office-seekers is even more likely to apply to recently democratized countries, where parties have been less central in the struggle to expand citizenship, and they have had a much weaker impact on the formation of voters' identities (Mainwaring & Zoco, 2007).

Overall, the concept of party system closure rests on the assumption that party systems institutionalize as political parties interact in predictable ways, providing voters with a clear set of government alternatives (Mair, 1996; 2006). Closure is comprised of three dimensions. The first dimension concerns the prevailing pattern of alternation in government and the extent to which it is wholesale, partial or non-existent. Wholesale alternation implies that a set of incumbents are wholly displaced by a former opposition. No alternation, on the other hand, occurs when a party or coalition of parties remains in government for extended periods of time. Partial alternation is in between these two polar patterns and refers to a situation in which a newly incumbent government includes at least one party that also formed part of the previous government (Mair, 1996, p. 90-92).

The second dimension concerns the degree to which the governing formulas, that is, the combinations of parties in government are either familiar or innovative. Most certainly, innovation may occur simply because the party or group of parties in government had never occupied cabinet posts before. But note that innovation is often a result of new alliances formed between parties with previous experience in government. The issue is, therefore, whether or not the governing formula has been tested before. In some countries, innovation is almost non-existent, in that governments are always formed by a few coalitions, and these coalitions are comprised of the very same parties.

The third and last dimension of party system closure is access to government. It differentiates party systems in terms of the extent to which access to government is either open to a wide range of parties or limited to a smaller subset of parties (Mair, 1996). Governments are closed when they are formed exclusively by parties that governed in the past. Alternatively, governments said to be open when they include, or are even dominated by, novices (Casal Bértoa & Enyedi, 2016, p. 267).

By considering these three dimensions, one can assess the degree of party system closure. Closed systems are those in which: (1) alternations of governments are wholesale or none; (2) the governing formulas are stable over time; (3) access to government is restricted to a narrow circle of established parties. By the same token, systems are considered to be open when alternations of governments tend to be partial, the governing formulas change substantially over time, and access to government is open to a wide range of parties, including newly established ones (Casal Bértoa & Enyedi, 2016, p. 267)

1.1 – Presidential elections, pre-electoral coalitions and the structure of party competition

In presidential polities, party system institutionalization involves not only a stable pattern of interparty interactions in the formation of governments, but also a reasonable degree of consistency of parties' behavior across the electoral and governing arenas. In this sense, the components of party system closure discussed above must be complemented and contrasted with additional measures that account for: (a) the congruence between the structure of competition over the national executive and the formation of governments; (b) the stability of that same structure of competition.

The popular election of the national executive may foster pre-electoral bargaining and organize party competition around a few coalitions, in part because presidential elections present a large and important prize that is awarded in what is essentially a winner-takes-all fashion. Furthermore, the presidential race is a highly majoritarian contest that encourages vote-seeking behavior to a much greater extent than any parliamentary system does. Regardless of the electoral system employed to select the national executive, parties that nominate presidential candidates must gain the votes of a large portion of the national electorate (Samuels, 2002). Vote-seeking incentives tend to be strongest when presidential and legislative elections are concurrent. Simultaneous races magnify the electoral stakes of the presidential contest and it is likely that the same parties will be the frontrunner in both presidential and legislative elections (Cox, 1999; Hicken, 2009).

Congruence between electoral majorities formed in presidential and legislative races depends mostly on the strength of the coattails effect, or how much a presidential candidate affects other candidates from the same party label (or coalition) in national legislative elections. When presidential elections are held concurrently with legislative elections, voters should rely on their preferred presidential candidate as an information shortcut to help them select a candidate for the legislature, generating strong coattails for the more competitive presidential candidates (Borges & Turgeon, 2017; Golder, 2006; Jones, 1994; Samuels, 2002; Shugart, 1995; Shugart & Carey, 1992).

To the extent that concurrent elections increase the "size of the prize" to be awarded to the winner of the presidential race, they create incentives for coordination of like-minded politicians across electoral districts (Hicken, 2009; Hicken & Stoll, 2011). In multiparty, fragmented systems, these coordination effects are likely to involve the organization of large pre-electoral coalitions around the top vote-gatherers in the presidential race. Usually, electoral partners allow the presidential candidate to obtain the support of segments of the electorate otherwise inaccessible, and they aggregate valuable organizational resources, increasing the candidate's chances of winning the presidency (Spoon & West, 2015). On the other hand, parties joining an electoral coalition not only give up the possibility of controlling the presidency themselves, at the same time they lose an important tool to reach voters, but they also risk losing credibility and weakening their party base if the coalition is not perceived as adequate (Freudenreich, 2016, p. 5). Because there are substantial costs for parties to join the pre-electoral coalition, the formateur party (e.g., the party of the presidential candidate) usually compensates coalition partners by supporting them in simultaneous, lower-level elections (Borges and Turgeon, 2017). Furthermore, the formateur can compensate coalition allies by making policy concessions and promising cabinet positions in the case of winning (Freudenreich, 2016; Kellam, 2015).

Although these electoral agreements are not binding (Kellam, 2015), winning presidential candidates have important incentives to keep their promises after taking power, and transforming their electoral alliance into a governing one. Indeed, during the governing process presidents need a strong reputation to negotiate with the legislature, which strongly constrains them to keep their promises by inviting pre-electoral coalition members into the cabinet (Freudenreich, 2016, p. 6). The comparative evidence on Latin American countries suggests, indeed, that multiparty cabinets very often originate from pre-electoral coalitions (Adrian Albala, 2014; Adrián Albala, 2016; Chasqueti, 2008)¹.

Pre-electoral coordination may shape not only the behavior of the members of the winning coalition, but it is also likely to exert a strong impact on the strategies of the losing parties. Most certainly, the runner-up in the presidential election will reduce its ability to differentiate itself from government and present a viable alternative to the incumbent candidate in the subsequent election if it decides to join the presidential cabinet to obtain short-term office benefits. Evidence on Latin American cases demonstrates, indeed, that parties that present a strong candidate against the eventual winner are less likely to join the cabinet (Freudenreich 2016).

To the extent that the parties that comprise the winning pre-electoral coalition are usually invited to form governments, whereas the losing coalition parties form the opposition bloc in the legislature, there will be a high degree of congruence between voters' choices and the selection of government alternatives. Theoretically, in the presence of substantial congruence between pre- and post-electoral coalitions, the party system likely stabilizes if the same major parties regularly compete in the presidential race, and pre-electoral coalitions do not change substantially between elections. On the other hand, if the coalitions formed around the strongest presidential candidates are stable, but party strategies are incoherent in the sense that the presidential race does not substantially constrains parties' decision to either oppose or support the incumbent government, then the party blocs competing over the presidency will not represent clearly distinguishable government alternatives.

Table 1 presents a hypothetical example of coalition formation during and after the presidential election that illustrates the point made above. Presidential elections in the table are organized from the oldest to the most recent. The second and third columns show the partisan composition of the winning and the second largest pre-electoral coalitions. For the sake of simplicity, I assume that presidents form a single cabinet that stays in place during the whole of their terms. The composition of cabinets is displayed in the last column.

¹ Even if presidents sometimes invite additional parties into the cabinet, enlarging the original alliance, being a member of the winning pre-electoral coalition greatly increases the odds of a party joining the cabinet (Freudenreich, 2016).

Table 1: Pre- and Post-electoral coalition formation in a hypothetical presidential country

Presidential election	Winning PEC	Losing PEC	Government coalition
1	A-D-F	B-C-G	A-D-B-C
2	B-C-G	A-D-F	A-D-B-C
3	B-C-W-Y	A-L-G	B-C-W-Y
4	B-C-L-G	A-W-Y	B-C-L-G

Source: the author.

Pre-electoral coalitions formed in elections 1 and 2 are stable and do not change between races. Also, the very same parties form the government, which indicates a high degree of party system closure in terms of Mair's (1996) conceptual scheme. However, parties' behavior is inconsistent across the electoral and governing arenas. Parties B and C that were defeated by the coalition A-D-F in election 1 form a cabinet with their former opponents. In election 2, the A-D-F coalition is defeated, but parties A-D are again part of a coalition together with parties B and C. Although there is no alternation and access to government is restricted to the very same parties, there are good reasons to argue that party competition lacks a clear structure in the periods 1 and 2. That is, it is not possible to speak of a stable, bipolar pattern of competition opposing coalitions A-D-F and B-C-G, because these two blocs do not represent clearly distinguishable government alternatives.

During the presidential terms following elections 3 and 4, there is total congruence between the winning pre-electoral coalition and the incumbent government. On the other hand, pre-electoral coalitions are not stable. Parties W and Y are allied with B and C in election 3, whereas in election 4 they opt for supporting party A's presidential candidate. Also, in election 4 parties B and C make an alliance with two parties that were previously allied with A (L and G).

If one considers only party interactions in the governing arena, the party system that emerges after elections 3 and 4 is certainly less institutionalized than the party system of the previous period. After election 4, there is partial government alternation and two parties that had never been in government before are invited into the cabinet (L and G), forming an innovative coalition. However, despite the instability of electoral and government coalitions, the second party system has greater consistency in parties' behavior across the electoral and governing arenas. On the other hand, the previous party system lacks clearly distinct competing electoral blocs. In reality, both party systems are poorly institutionalized, yet for different reasons. Looking only at the indicators of post-electoral coalition formation would lead to an improper comparison between periods.

In view of these potential limitations, the indicators of party system closure must be analyzed in combination with measures accounting for the stability in patterns of party competition and pre-electoral coordination in the presidential race, and for the degree of consistency in parties' strategies across the electoral and governing arenas. In the following section, I discuss the operationalization of each of the dimensions of closure – alternation, formula and access – as well as the operationalization of three additional indicators that incorporate the electoral arena into the analysis.

2. Data and measures

I operationalize party system closure by relying on the measures proposed by Casal-Bértoa and Enyedi (2016). They substantially improve the original indicators developed by Mair (2008) by adopting a similar underlying logic that implies accounting for changes in the composition of governments weighting by the share of ministers belonging to each coalition party.

Government alternation is calculated by applying the Pedersen index of electoral volatility to ministerial turnover. The original index of government alternation (IGA) proposed by Mair (2008, p. 43) considered the absolute sum of the gains of all "winning" parties (those that increased their share of ministers) and the losses of all "losing" parties (those that had their share of ministers reduced) divided by two. Higher volatility was expected to reflect higher closure on the grounds that closed party systems are characterized by wholesale alternation in government. Casal-Bértoa and Enyedi (2016) criticize this operationalization because only wholesale alternation is recognized as closure and no-alternation is not. Indeed, instances of no-alternation necessarily receive a score of zero in the IGA. Due to this limitation, Casal-Bértoa and Enyedi (2016, p. 269) propose a slightly different formula that measures stability in terms of the distance from that endpoint of the continuum (0-100) which is further way. For instance, if only 10% of the ministers belong to new parties, then the 90% of the government is similar to the previous one. In that case, the score should be 90 instead of 10. Using this logic, each cabinet receives a score ranging from 50 to 100. Finally, the score is converted back to the 0-100 scale by subtracting 50 from it and multiplying by 2.

Government formula is calculated as the percentage of ministers belonging to the "familiar" part of the previous government. When the coalition is entirely new, in the sense that none of the parties that comprise it have formed a previous government, then the score is, by definition, zero. Totally familiar coalitions, on the other hand, receive a score of 100. In many cases, however, only part of the coalition is new, which requires comparing the composition of government with the most familiar coalition formed previously (Casal-Bértoa and Enyedi, 2016, p. 269-70). Suppose a coalition formed by parties A-C-F-G-H that was never formed before. Suppose further that coalitions A-C-H and A-C have formed before. In that case, the A-C-F-G-H coalition must be compared with the largest familiar coalition (A-C-H). Therefore, government formula will be equal to the share of ministers controlled by parties A, C and H.

Access to government is measured as the percentage of old governing parties, defined as all those parties which have already been constituent parts of a previous government. Higher scores indicate that participation in government is relatively closed to new parties.

Party system closure is a simple mean of the three indicators described above. Calculating means is justifiable in view of the moderate to high correlations observed between the three measures. Casal-Bértoa and Enyedi (2016) found that the alternation and access indicators were the least strongly correlated in their large sample of European party systems. They relied on reliability and factor analyses to demonstrate that formula is the central component of closure.

European party systems exhibited both mixed patterns, combining partial alternation with closed access and/or closed formula, and pure types (fully open or closed systems). Within the group of young democracies, mixed patterns were especially frequent (Casal-Bértoa and Enyedi, 2016, p. 271). It seems to be the case that partial alternation is not necessarily associated with open access and formula.

Throughout the article, I explore variation across the three components of closure to account for the potential differing patterns of association between them.

Similarly to Casal-Bértoa and Enyedi (2016), I consider both elections to replace the head of government and changes in the partisan composition of cabinets as indicating the end of a government and the start of a new one. Although their empirical analyses focuses mostly on parliamentary and semi-presidential European countries, these defining criteria are routinely applied to the study of cabinets in pure presidential systems (Alemán & Tsebelis, 2011; Martínez-Gallardo, 2012).

There is, however, an important difference between presidential and non-presidential democracies that must be taken into account in the calculus of the party system closure scores. Chief executives in presidential countries are usually endowed with much greater discretion to appoint and fire ministers and, therefore, the share of non-partisan ministers is likely to be much higher in presidentialism as compared to parliamentarism (Amorim Neto, 2006; Martínez-Gallardo & Schleiter, 2015). Because variation in the percentage of partisan ministers owing to variation in presidents' cabinet appointment strategies might exert substantial impact on the calculus of the scores, I opted for calculating percentages relatively to the total of ministers excluding non-partisans.

To account for the degree of congruence between the formation of governments and the structure of competition over the presidency, I utilize two indicators. The first is a measure of opposition incongruence that considers the percentage of ministers affiliated with the parties that comprise the largest losing pre-electoral coalition in the previous presidential election. High values in the index indicate that parties pursue inconsistent strategies in the governing and electoral arenas, and, therefore, the lines that would usually separate the incumbent government from the opposition in presidential systems are blurred. The second indicator relies on a similar logic to produce a broader measure of the importance of post-electoral bargaining for coalition formation. The post-electoral coalition index is calculated as the percentage of ministers belonging to parties absent from the winning pre-electoral coalition. High values in the index indicate that pre-electoral bargaining shapes the formation of governments only to a limited extent, as presidents rely mostly on the support of parties absent from the electoral alliance. As coalitions are mostly formed in the post-electoral period, they are more likely to be detached from the structure of competition in the presidential arena. Although the measures of coalition incongruence and post-electoral coalition formation tend to be correlated, they are different, in the sense that the second measure is broader and accounts for the presence of any party that did not support the election of the president, including parties that were absent from the presidential race.

Finally, I developed an electoral formula score to measure the degree of stability of the pre-electoral coalitions formed in the presidential race. For each election and all presidential candidates with a share of the vote equal or superior to 1%, I calculated the size of the familiar part of the coalition relatively to the total coalition size. That is, if the coalition A-B-F was formed in presidential election t but in election $t-1$ the coalition included only parties A-B, then I calculated the percentage of the votes obtained by A and B in the concurrent (or in the most proximate) legislative in relation to the total coalition vote. The percentages calculated for each pre-electoral coalition were then weighted by the share of the presidential vote to obtain a summary score. In those cases in which a party competed alone, I attributed to it a score of 100 if it had also competed in the previous race. Whenever a party present in the presidential race with a candidate of its own had not entered the previous race, either by filing a

candidate or entering a PEC, it received a score of zero. This procedure allows the electoral formula score to reflect the share of the presidential vote obtained by new parties: the greatest the share of parties absent from the previous election, the lowest the score.

I relied on several sources to obtain data on the partisan composition of coalition cabinets and on the number of ministries allocated to coalition parties throughout Brazil's two democratic periods. Data on the 1945-1964 period was obtained from Figueiredo (2007) and Hippolito (1985). For the 1985-2016 period, I relied on Amorim Neto (2018), Figueiredo (2007) and Meneguello (1998). Whenever I found inconsistencies across different sources, I consulted the website of the Brazilian presidency². The data on the recent period includes all cabinets formed until the impeachment of president Dilma Rousseff in May 2016. In future versions of the article, I expect to include data on cabinets formed during the Temer government.

Data on presidential and lower chamber elections was obtained from the High Electoral Court's website (www.repositorio.tse.gov.br) and from Nicolau (2004).

3. Comparing Brazil's democratic party systems

The party systems that emerged after the democratic transitions of 1945 and 1985 in Brazil share a fundamental similarity in what concerns the predominance of a mostly bipolar pattern of competition in the presidential race, as shifting coalitions led by the same set of parties obtained a very large proportion of the national vote in virtually all elections. From 1945 to 1964, the right-wing UDN (National Democratic Union) led center-right pre-electoral coalitions that competed against center-left PECs led by either the catchall PSD (Social Democratic Party) or the left-wing PTB (Brazilian Labor Party). All the presidents elected in between 1945 and 1960 were either affiliated with (or supported by) one of these three parties. Also, the PSD, the UDN and the PTB were the major players in Congress and in all other elections (Lavareda, 1999; Soares, 2001).

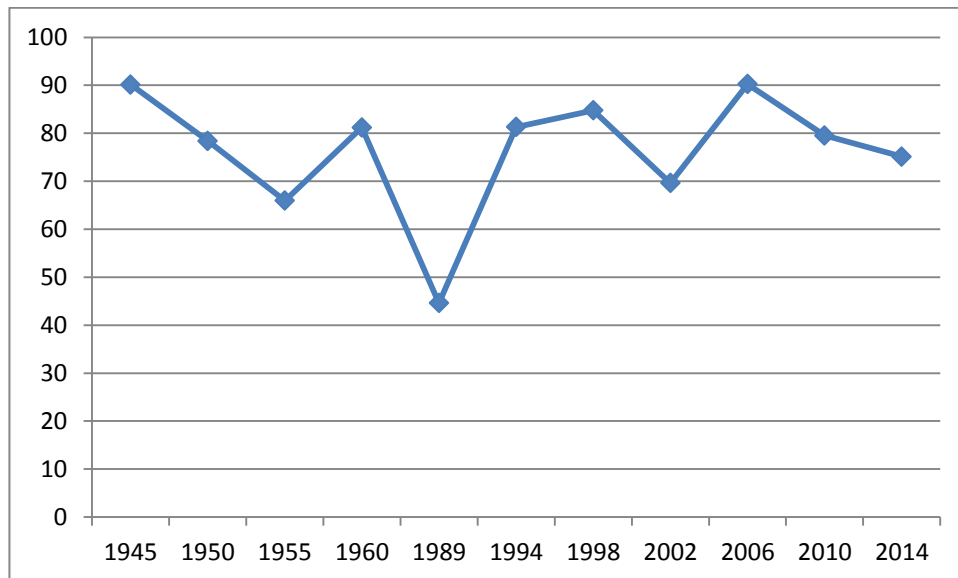
In the recent period, the democratic transition was not inaugurated by a direct presidential election as in 1945. Instead, the first president was indirectly elected by Congress in 1985. The first presidential race was only held in 1989, four years after the transition. Different from the mostly bipolar race disputed in 1945, when plurality rule was employed to elect the president, the 1989 election was a highly fragmented contest. Arguably, the utilization of majority runoff in a nonconcurrent election decreased the incentives for coordination, and virtually all the relevant parties opted to file a presidential candidate of their own.

Scholars have tended to agree that the period comprehended between the transition and the 1994 presidential election was marked by substantial instability in patterns of party competition, as the artificial two-party system created by the military regime was gradually replaced by a multiparty one. From 1994 onwards, high levels of fragmentation notwithstanding, the presidential race acquired a more stable structure, as pre-electoral coalitions led by the left-wing PT (Worker's Party) and the centre-right PSDB (Brazilian Social Democratic Party) obtained the lion's share of the national vote, alternating in government (Braga, 2010; Limongi & Cortez, 2010; Melo & Câmara, 2012).

Figure 1 below shows the sum of the vote obtained by the top two presidential candidates and their supporting pre-electoral coalitions in all presidential races held from 1945 to 1960 and from 1989 to 2014.

² <http://www.biblioteca.presidencia.gov.br/presidencia/ex-presidentes/>

Figure 1: Share of the presidential vote obtained by the top two candidates (first round), 1945-1960; 1989-2014



Source: TSE. Author's elaboration.

On average, the front-runners in the presidential race obtained 78% of the national vote between 1945 and 1960. In three out of the four elections held in the period, the top two pre-electoral coalitions obtained more than 75% of the vote. In the recent period, if the outlier 1989 election is excluded, the average share of the vote obtained by the largest PECs is also very high: 80.1%.

Despite the obvious similarities in the structure of presidential competition, the party systems of these two periods differ markedly in what concerns the degree of fragmentation in the lower chamber. Between 1945 and 1964, the effective number of legislative parties ranged between 2.7 and 4.5, as the PSD, the UDN and the PTB together controlled a smashing majority of the seats throughout most of the period. In contrast, the party system that emerged after the 1989 presidential election is a hyper-fragmented one. The effective number of legislative parties in the Chamber of Deputies reached a record high of 13.33 in 2014, as compared to 8.69 in 1990³.

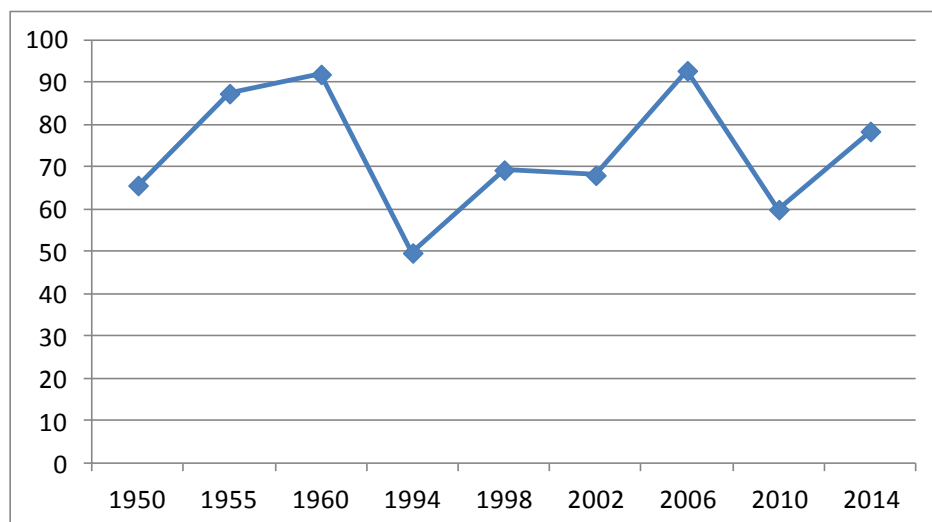
Very high levels of fragmentation have impacted on the patterns of interparty interactions by fostering the formation of large and heterogeneous pre-electoral coalitions to increase the likelihood of winning the presidential race. Between 1945 and 1960, PECs were formed in most cases by two large parties of similar size and a few small ones (such as the PSD-PTB coalitions in 1955 and 1960) or by a large party, which usually nominated the presidential candidate, and few small ones. But in the recent period, this pattern has changed substantially, as the parties that nominate competitive presidential candidates are themselves small- or medium-sized parties that only rarely control more than 15% of the seats in the lower chamber. The necessity of inviting an ever-growing number of parties to form a competitive electoral alliance has led presidential candidates to form increasingly large and heterogeneous pre-electoral coalitions.

Unsurprisingly, electoral alliances formed by the front-runners in the presidential race have been less stable in the recent period. Figure 2 below presents electoral formula scores for the 1950-1960 and 1994-2014 periods. Because the calculus of the scores requires comparing each presidential election with the previous one, I do not

³ Author's calculations based on Nicolau (2004) , www.camara.leg.br.

report scores for the 1945 and 1989 races. Recall that this measure looks at the share of the legislative vote obtained by old pre-electoral coalition parties (that is, parties that made a coalition before) relatively to the total PEC vote. Scores for each coalition are weighted by their respective presidential vote.

Figure 2 - Electoral Formula Scores, 1950-1960; 1994-2014



Between 1950 and 1960, pre-electoral coalitions became more stable over time. Between 1994 and 2014, in contrast, it is hard to identify a clear trend, despite the growth of overall stability of electoral alliances throughout the period. Note further that average scores in the recent period are lower than those calculated for the 1950, 1955 and 1960 elections (69.73 and 81.69, respectively).

Despite the greater stability of electoral alliances in the previous democratic period, these differences have not translated into more closed and predictable patterns of government formation. I address the question of why this is so in the following section, where I look at the evolution of party system closure indicators and I analyze the linkages between pre-electoral bargaining and post-electoral coalition formation.

3.1 – Party system closure and the degree of congruence between the electoral and governing arenas

As a first comparative exercise, I calculated aggregate closure scores for the 1946-1964 and 1985-2016 periods. I weighted scores by cabinet duration, following the same procedure adopted by Casal-Bértoa and Enyedi (2016). The aggregate measures of closure indicate that party system institutionalization is much higher in the recent period, as seen in table 2 below:

Table 2 – Brazil: Aggregate closure scores , 1946-1964; 1985-2016

	1985-2016	1946-1964
Alternation	68.51	47.97
Access	94.33	86.89
Formula	91.31	74.97
Closure	84.71	69.94

Overall, the party system that emerged in the recent democratic period has had much less innovation in government formula than the post-1945 party system. Also, alternation patterns have become more closed. These two dimensions – alternation and formula – are responsible for most of the increase observed in the mean closure scores between the two periods. However, although alternation scores have experienced a substantial increase, they remain well below the end of scale, which may indicate the predominance of partial alternation. A quick glance at the data reveals, indeed, that instances characterized by little or small change in the composition of cabinets, or by the replacement of the incumbent government by a completely different coalition of parties are uncommon.

Figure 3 below shows the yearly variation in party system closure for the two periods. The yearly scores were calculated in the following way. When a single cabinet was formed in year t I considered the scores for that particular cabinet; otherwise, I averaged the scores for all the cabinets formed in the same year.

Figure 3: Party System Closure, 1946-1964; 1986-2016

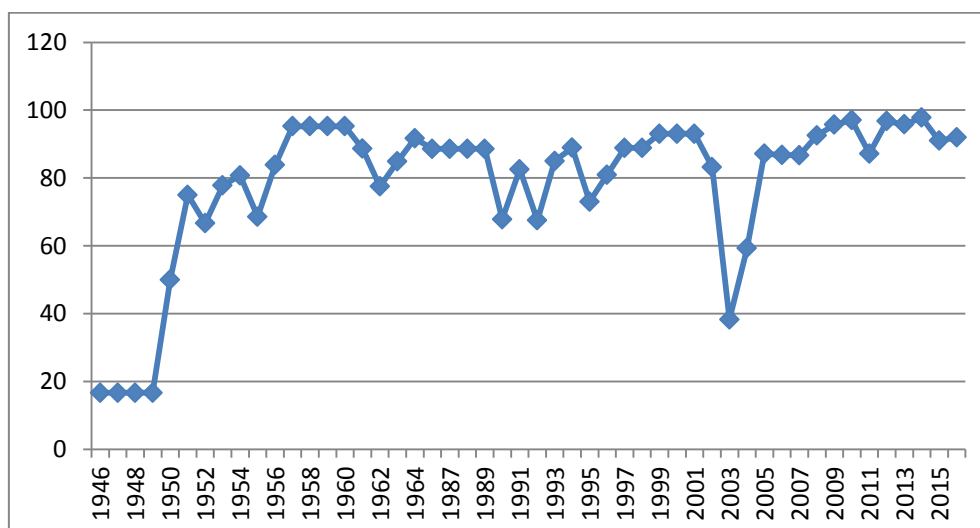


Figure 3 suggests that the previous democratic period was marked by greater variation in closure scores. In particular, the cabinets formed immediately after the transition (Dutra government, 1946-1950) received abnormally low scores. After 1985, on the other hand, it is possible to notice a trend towards the stabilization of party system closure at high levels, especially after 1994, with the only exception of the low observed in 2003. In that year, president Lula formed a coalition comprised mostly of left-wing parties that had never been in government before and, therefore, the cabinet scored low on the access and formula dimensions.

In what concerns the degree of congruence between the electoral and the governing arenas, the two party systems differ markedly. I calculated average opposition congruence scores for each period, weighting scores by cabinet duration. I also calculated separate means excluding all cabinets formed by non-elected presidents that were in charge of replacing a chief executive that could not complete his term. This is justifiable due to the fact that vice-presidents most often formed

cabinets that were completely different from the pre-electoral coalition that elected their predecessors⁴.

Opposition incongruence scores are reported in table 3 below. Recall that high/low values indicate a high/low proportion of ministries controlled by one or more parties that comprised the losing coalition in the presidential election.

Table 3 - Opposition incongruence scores, 1946-1964; 1990-2016

	All cases	Excl. non-elected presidents
1946-1964	30.85	15.11
1990-2016	1.45	1.05

When one considers the full range of cases the differences between the two periods are very substantial. Losing PEC parties controlled an average 30% of ministries between 1946-1964, as compared to a bare 1.4% for the 1990-2016 period. But even when non-elected presidents are excluded from the data set, the differences remain large : 15.1% against 1%.

The high scores calculated for the first period are partly attributed to the incoherent behavior of the right-wing UDN. The party filed presidential candidates in three out of the four elections disputed between 1945 and 1960, and lost all of them to candidates affiliated with either the PTB (1950) or the PSD (1945 and 1955). However, the party joined two of the cabinets formed by president Dutra (1945-1950) and it also supported the interim government of Café Filho (1954-1955). President Vargas (1950-1954) appointed a number of UDN politicians to his cabinet, but the party opted for not making a coalition agreement with the president (Figueiredo, 2007). Still, the UDN remained deeply divided, and part of its legislative delegation – the so-called “chapa branca” faction – did support the Vargas’ government (Benevides, 1981). Because I only consider as members of cabinet those parties that formally joined the government, it is probably the case that the averages shown in table 3 actually underestimate the extent of incongruence between parties’ strategies in the electoral and governing arenas in the previous democratic era.

Most certainly, part of the difference between the two periods is attributable to the greater number of cabinets formed by non-elected presidents between 1945 and 1964⁵. In many cases, presidential interruptions allowed parties that had been defeated in the previous presidential election to gain access to government. This was certainly the case of the PTB during the troubled Goulart government (1961-1964).

Between 1990 and 2016, the largest losing parties and their allies in the presidential election have pursued mostly consistent strategies, by joining the ranks of the opposition after the election. Different from the previous party system, when the PSD and the UDN formed several governments, the major competitors in presidential elections – PT and PSDB – never joined the same cabinet. Although incongruent strategies have been more an exception than the rule in the recent period, one must

⁴ The tendency of vice-presidents to form incongruent cabinets is understandable considering they were usually from a party different from the president they substituted. In particular, in the 1945-1964 period, vice-presidents were elected in a separate ticket. Note further that chief executives that govern the country in moments of deep political crisis following the interruption of the presidential mandate are more likely to form “grand coalitions” that bring together parties from all over the ideological spectrum.

⁵ The cabinets formed by Nereu Ramos, Café Filho and João Goulart accounted for 22% of the sum of the duration of all coalitions formed between 1945-1964. The data set for the 1985-2016 includes only one case of presidential interruption: the impeachment of Fernando Collor de Melo (1990-1992), who was substituted in office by Itamar Franco (1992-1994).

note that the electoral alliances formed by PT and PSDB substantially changed over time, and some parties have actually shifted their allegiances. For instance, the PMDB supported the presidential candidacy of José Serra (PSDB) in 2002, but in 2010 and in 2014 it nominated the vice-presidential candidate in the ticket led by Dilma Rouseff (PT).

An additional difference between the two democratic periods concerns the relative importance of pre- and post-electoral bargaining for government formation. Table 4 presents weighted averages for the post-electoral coalition score. I also applied the same procedure utilized in the analysis of opposition incongruence, by calculating means for a subset of the data excluding non-elected presidents. Recall that the score is a simple proportion of the total of ministers not affiliated with the parties that comprise the winning pre-electoral coalition.

Table 4 – Post-electoral coalition scores, 1946-1964; 1990-2016

	All cases	Excl. non-elected presidents
1946-1964	50.94	38.67
1990-2016	29.49	30.76

Once again, the weighted averages calculated for the previous democratic era are higher, although the differences are not too substantial for the subset of the data excluding non-elected presidents. It is worth noticing, however, that the Collor government (1990-1992) inflates the averages calculated for the 1990-2016 period. Collor did not form a pre-electoral coalition and relied instead on a newly created party – the PRN (Party of National Reconstruction) – to sustain his presidential project. Because the PRN had a tiny share of the seats in Congress, Collor had no option other than seeking the support of additional parties after the election. Note that all the other elected presidents in the data set relied on the support of a multiparty pre-electoral coalition. Given that the Collor government is clearly an outlier, I recalculated the weighted averages excluding that particular period, and obtained a significantly lower value: 23.46.

These results indicate that presidents in the recent period have relied to a greater extent on pre-electoral coalition partners to form cabinets. This is yet additional evidence that the connection between parties' coordination in the electoral arena and the subsequent formation of governments has become stronger.

How do the various indicators of party system closure and consistency of party strategies relate to each other? Table 5 presents correlation coefficients for all the indicators analyzed so far. The highest correlations in each row of the table are in bold.

Table 5: Correlation Matrix for PSI indicators*

	Alternation	Access	Formula
Alternation	1.000	0.404	0.601
Access	0.404	1.000	0.931
Formula	0.601	0.931	1.000
Post-electoral coalition	-0.340	-0.020	-0.102
Opposition incongruence	-0.224	-0.085	-0.187

* Correlations between the three dimensions of closure include all 50 yearly observations. The correlations for the post-electoral coalition and opposition

incongruence scores exclude 5 observations relative to the Sarney (1985-1990) government.

Formula and access are very highly correlated, as expected. Correlation coefficients between these two dimensions and alternation scores are substantially lower, the lowest coefficient being observed for alternation and access. These results are mostly congruent with those found by Casal-Bértoa and Enyedi (2016) in their analysis of European party systems. The relatively low correlation observed for these two dimensions indicates that closed patterns of access to government may sometimes coexist with partial alternation. Indeed, the 1945-1964 party system fits very well this characterization: cases of no alternation or wholesale change in the composition of governments were virtually inexistent, and yet a small group of parties remained in government for long periods of time. Of the 20 cabinets formed in the period, the PSD was present in 19 (85%), whereas the PTB participated in 17 cabinets (85%). The persistence of these two parties in government, regardless of presidential elections and presidential interruptions, is consistent with the very low alternation scores observed, as new governments would always keep at least part of the previous one.

Post-electoral coalition and opposition incongruence scores are negatively correlated with alternation ($r=-0.340$ and -0.224 , respectively). These dimensions are also negatively associated with formula, but correlation coefficients are substantially lower. It seems to be the case that, as the connection between the structure of competition in the presidential race and the formation of governments becomes more tenuous, changes in the composition of the winning pre-electoral coalition do not necessarily lead to changes in the composition of governments. Furthermore, as the political alignments in the presidential race do not impose a substantial constraint on cabinet formation, innovative government formulas are more likely to occur.

Finally, there is no clear association between access to government and the measures of consistency of parties' strategies. Relatively closed patterns of access to government can coexist with either consistent or inconsistent party behavior across the electoral and governing arenas. The lack of correlation between these two dimensions reflects the relatively small differences in government access scores across the two periods, in contrast with the substantial changes that occurred in what concerns the consistency of parties' strategies.

Overall, the party system formed after the 1985 democratic transition is characterized by greater stability of the patterns of government formation, and higher congruence in the patterns of interparty interactions in the electoral and governing arenas, as compared to previous democratic era. However, although both party systems exhibit a mostly bipolar structure of party competition in the presidential arena, the current party system is marked by somewhat lower stability of the electoral alliances formed around the major presidential candidates. Part of these differences are related to the much higher levels of party fragmentation observed in the recent period. They are also related to the erratic behavior of two of the largest parties of the post-1985 democracy – the PMDB and the PP -, which have supported governments and pre-electoral coalitions headed by both the PT and the PSDB. In other instances, the PMDB and the PP have opted for not entering the presidential race, to allow greater autonomy to subnational party branches in the making of alliances in gubernatorial and congressional elections (Borges, 2015). Arguably, the strategies pursued by these two parties have likely reduced the potential for organization of the party system around the PT-PSDB bipolarity. It is worth noticing that the PMDB participated in 30 out of 35 cabinets (85.71%) formed between 1985 and 2016, the

highest rate among all parties that formed governments in the period. The PP comes second: the party joined 25 of 35 cabinets (71.42%)⁶.

Frequent changes in the composition of the largest pre-electoral coalitions in the recent period are also attributable to party competition over the crucial support of the median voter in presidential elections⁷. In particular, the left-wing PT moved from a strategy of restricting the range of potential pre-electoral coalition partners to ideologically similar organizations until 1998, to a catchall coalition-making strategy, as it moderated ideological appeals (Samuels and Shugart, 2010). From 2002 onwards, PT presidential candidates have sought to obtain the support of right-wing, office-seeking parties that were actually ideologically closer to the party's main rival, the PSDB, which resulted in formation of increasingly heterogeneous coalitions⁸.

Conclusion

This article has proposed an approach to the analysis and measurement of party system institutionalization in multiparty presidential countries that accounts for both the stability of interparty interactions in the governing arena and the degree of congruence between the structure of competition in the presidential race and the formation of governments. This innovative approach was utilized to compare Brazil's party systems across two distinct democratic periods.

Mair (2006) has persuasively argued that the decline of parties as representative organizations and the rise of the party in public office imply that the institutionalization of party systems will depend to a great extent on whether or not the structure of party competition is sufficiently stable and predictable. This is so because parties that govern have a clearer need for immediate accountability than parties-as-representatives, and accountability requires the provision of coherent and clearly distinguishable government alternatives (idem, p. 70). In presidential countries, the direct election of the executive has a decisive impact on the patterns of interparty interactions, by creating incentives for the making of large pre-electoral coalitions around the most competitive candidates. I argue that the party system is most likely to organize around clearly distinctive teams of leaders that compete for office when pre-electoral bargaining in the presidential race constrains, to a substantial extent, the subsequent formation of governments.

The empirical findings support, indeed, the claim that a reasonable degree of congruence in parties' strategies across the electoral and governing arenas is a necessary condition for party system institutionalization. Throughout the 1945-1964 democratic era, the major competitors in the presidential race would often support the same governments, which in turn undermined the ability of party blocs formed in the

⁶ Both the PMDB and the PP (formerly PDS/PPR/PPB) emerged from the party organizations created by the military regime: the pro-regime ARENA and the opposition MDB. The PMDB was able to play a central role in the democratic transition, by electing then governor of Minas Gerais, Tancredo Neves, in an indirect election in 1985, with the support of regime dissidents. After the sudden death of Neves, in that same year, the presidency was taken over by José Sarney of the PFL.

⁷ The majority runoff system utilized in Brazil since 1989 requires presidential candidates to obtain a qualified majority of 50% plus one vote to win the race. This is to say that the vote-seeking incentives associated with the presidential race are especially strong under the current electoral rules.

⁸ For instance, president Dilma Roussef was elected in 2010 by a coalition of over 10 parties that included both the Brazilian Communist Party (PC do B) and the evangelical right, dispersed across small parties such as the PR (Party of the Republic).

around competitive presidential candidates to present clear and distinctive government alternatives. In the recent period and, especially after 1994, these patterns substantially changed, as the congruence between the winning re-electoral coalitions in the presidential race and post-electoral government coalitions increased, while the losing PECs adopted a mostly consistent behavior, forming the opposition bloc in Congress. Patterns of alternation in government have become more closed, whereas opportunities for innovation in the making of government coalitions have decreased. Presidential competition now constrains, to a reasonable extent, parties' decisions to join or not particular governments, preventing the formation of un-coherent cabinets including both the winners and the losers of the presidential race.

However, although the behavior of parties-in-government has become more structured and predictable, such changes have not fundamentally altered other party and party system traits that conspire against a more solid and enduring stabilization of party competition. Relatively high levels of party system closure coexist with a handful of particularistic parties lacking clear policy platforms, which perform a rather important, if not determinative role, in the making and breaking of coalitions⁹. Party system fragmentation has increased in all elections held after 1998, and such proliferation of new parties has no connection with underlying political cleavages. Facing increasingly fragmented legislatures, presidents have been induced to form increasingly large and ideologically incongruent coalitions that are costly to manage and sustain (Bertholini & Pereira, 2017). Last but not least, the dilution of ideological differences between the PT and the PSDB, as both parties have sought to obtain the support of the same office-seeking organizations to gain and remain in power, indicate that the current structure of party competition is lacking in ideological anchoring. To summarize, Brazil's case reinforces the view that party institutionalization is a multidimensional and complex phenomenon, comprised of several dimensions that are not always and necessarily related to each other in linear fashion.

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⁹ Kellam (2015) has developed a classification of particularistic parties in Latin America. Her data shows that share of seats controlled by these office-seeking organizations in Brazil throughout time is substantial in comparison with the other presidential systems in the region.

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