

ESTIMATING IDEOLOGY OF BRAZILIAN LEGISLATIVE PARTIES, 1990–2005

A Research Communication*

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Abstract: We present a new data set on the left-right placement of major Brazilian political parties serving in the first five legislatures under democracy. On the basis of survey responses of more than 850 federal legislators from 1990 to 2005, we generate party placements on an ideological scale where 1 = "left" and 10 = "right." The data are rescaled to account for idiosyncrasies in responses as well as variation in use of the survey scale across time. We discuss both the validity and the reliability of our new measures by comparing them to other data sets. We further discuss three substantive issues that the data reveal. First, ideological polarization has moderated over time. Second, the median legislator has shifted noticeably to the left and now stands equidistant from the influential PT and PSDB, the parties that have anchored recent presidential elections. Third, Brazilian political elites continue to shun self-identifications associated with political conservatism or neoliberalism.

Parties are an essential feature of modern democracies, both in theoretical terms and in empirical terms. In particular, nascent democracies—in which policy challenges are many and mass loyalties to the new regime may be untested—require that parties fulfill the functional need for accountable intermediation between state and society (Hagopian 1998; Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Webb and White 2007). Although the party systems can, and frequently do, function on bases other than programmatic politics (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007), most would agree that quality political representation requires a party system with a reasonable level of ideological differentiation and organization. As Rosas (2005, 825) argues with regard to postauthoritarian Latin America, "A party system or-

* We are indebted to the late Maria D'Alva Gil Kinzo (1951–2008), a pioneer in research on Brazilian political parties. We are also grateful to Manuel Alcántara, Nina Wiesehomeier, and Kenneth Benoit for sharing their data. Thanks to Jeff Lewis, Tim Groseclose, Chris Achen, and the LARR anonymous reviewers for comments and suggestions. The original survey responses, legislator and party rescaled ideological placements, and a Web appendix with details of the estimation are available at <http://hdl.handle.net/1902.1/11567>.

ganized along ideological lines is a first step toward building labels with staying power over time. In short, citizens are better represented and better able to exercise accountability when they understand what their vote buys, and this understanding is aided by the existence of clear ideological stances." Thus, a key task in the analysis of any party system is the production of a reliable ideological map.

This research note advances the ideological cartography of the Brazilian party system. We assess the ideological placements of political parties in the Brazilian National Congress in the first five legislatures elected under democracy. Drawing on the recorded survey responses of more than 850 federal legislators since 1990, we develop and present new left-right estimates of the principal parties, and we make them publicly available for the first time. We find that, although individual Brazilian parties have clearly undergone ideological change since the late 1980s, the main legislative parties can be arrayed clearly on a classic left-right scale and that the overall ordering has been relatively stable across time.

The research note proceeds as follows. In the next section we discuss the types of extent ideological classifications in the literature, as well as the ideological positioning of Brazilian parties according to previous studies that draw on several different types of data. We then introduce our own main data source and discuss two potential pitfalls that arise in this enterprise, namely, idiosyncratic use of the survey response scale as well as possible variation of the meaning of the scale over time. The subsequent section details the method used to generate the ideological estimates. The technique we employ overcomes the two aforementioned challenges, rendering survey responses comparable both across individuals and across surveys. We then present the results of this estimation, with both ordinal and cardinal estimates of the positions of the main parties in Brazil over the past two decades. In introducing these data, we also discuss the most conspicuous patterns in the way legislators respond to the surveys, and we illustrate how our estimates compare to other well-known classification schemes. Following our concluding remarks, the appendix provides background information and detailed party placements for use by other researchers.

IDEOLOGY AND THE BRAZILIAN CONGRESS

The meaning and relevance of political ideology, as well as the translation of ideological tendencies into parties and legislative factions, has been the subject of considerable debate at least since the French Revolution. Both the rise of postmaterialist politics in the 1960s (Knutsen 1995) and the end of the Cold War in the 1990s (Giddens 1994) led scholars to debate whether the long-standing political labels of "left" and "right" retain any meaning. We have no intention to enter into the debate on the sub-

stantive meaning of ideology or the designations associated with it. The reason for this is simple: our study is restricted to the most conventionally used ideological dimension, the basic left-right scale, which remains the most meaningful indicator of ideological positioning in contemporary democracies (Badescu and Sum 2005). As Zechmeister (2006, 153) notes with regard to Latin America, "As ideological labels, left and right are understood as having strong symbolic content to the extent that they differentiate among political actors." It is exactly this symbolic function—the differentiation among parties using conventional shorthand terms that provide mental shortcuts for both elites and voters—that we examine in the contemporary Brazilian democracy.

In empirical terms, attempts to array parties and politicians in ideological space typically rely either on behavioral data or on perceptual data. We understand behavioral data to include roll-call voting (Poole and Rosenthal 1997), manifestos (Amaral 2003; Laver, Benoit, and Garry 2003), discourse (Campello 2007), or any other concrete manifestation of elite behavior that indirectly reveals ideological preferences but in which politicians are not asked directly to classify themselves or answer questions according to predefined categories.

In contrast, perceptual data, as the name suggests, relies on the self-perception and/or reciprocal perceptions of politicians (Power 2000) or on the perception of observers, be they experts (Coppedge 1997; Wiesehomeier and Benoit 2008) or voters polled in surveys (Zechmeister and Luna 2005). Although it is less obvious, we also consider the information revealed by politicians' responses to substantive political questions (Rosas 2005) as perceptual, though for some this particular type of data might be a borderline case between the two approaches.

As with any conceptual distinction, the limits between these two categories are fuzzy, as perceptual data do rely, ultimately, on prior actions of politicians. Reputations are built on behavior. However, it is important to distinguish between these types of approaches, for the issues involved in making sense of the empirical results are potentially very different.

One problem common to analyses of behavioral data is that they typically capture the end result of some complex political process and thus offer only a partial or "contaminated" picture of ideology. For instance, campaign discourse may frequently respond more to immediate strategic electoral concerns (e.g., the results of last night's tracking polls) than to ideology itself. As for roll-call analysis, which is probably more familiar to most readers and has already made its way into the analysis of Brazilian politics (Figueiredo and Limongi 1999; Leoni 2002; Morgenstern 2004), we note that this method captures the combined effect of ideology and the political bargaining that goes on between the executive and legislative branches. Thus, roll-call data may reveal not underlying ideological pat-

terns in parliament but a government versus opposition cleavage (Spirling and McLean 2006; Zucco 2007). Although the processes by which other strategic considerations distort ideology are important and interesting for political analysis, the pictures that emerge from the analysis of behavioral data should not normally be considered snapshots of ideology *per se*.

In this sense, perceptual data have the advantage of revealing the ongoing and shared understanding of respondents regarding ideology. Obviously, such data do not necessarily reveal what the substantive content of ideology is, but they can still reveal what the relative positions of political players are (i.e., their locations on a systemic map). The chief methodological challenge here is to establish that a wide array of actors use this map in roughly the same fashion. In this research note, we use only perceptual data, but we give special attention to two important and potentially confounding problems involved in using data of these type: the difficulty in making comparisons over time and the possibility that different respondents use the scale on which perception is measured differently.

Before turning to these issues, we provide some background information on what is already known about the ideology of Brazilian parties. In two decades of democratic experience, several authors have classified parties according to their ideology. Although these schemes relied on different sources of data and produced different types of scales, most observers (both Brazilians and Brazilianists) seem to agree on a basic ordering of parties on a standard left-right dimension.

To mention just a few examples, Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán (1997), using data from Kinzo (1993), constructed a scale that captured the ideological positioning of parties during the constitutional assembly of 1988. A similar ordering emerges from Figueiredo and Limongi's (1999) analysis of the functioning of the legislature during the 1990s, from Coppedge's (1997) expert-based classification that served as the benchmark for much work done on Latin American party systems in the past decade, which Amorim Neto, Cox, and McCubbins (2003) refer to as consensual. Rosas (2005), while rescaling answers to the surveys of the Latin American Parliamentary Elites project (Alcántara 1994–2005) found the PMDB to the right of the PFL but acknowledged that idiosyncrasies in his data drove the results. Moreover, this ordering, roughly summarized in table 1, appears to be quite stable over time. The main exception would be an inversion of the positions of the two main centrist parties, PSDB and PMDB, although they continue to be regarded as highly proximate.

Here we attempt to give a more precise picture of the ideological placements of Brazilian legislative parties and of they have evolved over time, using data that incorporate both how legislators see themselves and how their peers see them.

Table 1 *Approximate Ideological Ordering of Brazilian Parties*

Left of center			Center	Right of center		
PCdoB	PT		PSDB		PL	PDS [†]
PS TU	PCB [†]	PDT	PMDB	PTB	PFL [†]	PRN [†]
PSOL	PSB				PDC [†]	

† Parties that no longer exist, as detailed in the Appendix.

Notes: Classification scheme is informally based on studies cited in the text. List does not include all parties in parliament.

DATA AND THE PROBLEMS OF MEASUREMENT

In contrast to behavioral data, perceptual data are not usually systematically available across time. Surveys are expensive and/or troublesome to run and can provide only a snapshot of reality at one point in time. It is frequently the case that when a researcher decides that he or she needs data from past periods, it is no longer possible to produce them.

In the case of Brazil, Timothy Power conducted essentially the same survey of federal legislators in 1990, 1993, 1997, 2001, and 2005, which puts us in a privileged position to analyze ideological patterns both statically and longitudinally. Power applied written survey instruments to all members of both houses of the Brazilian Congress—whose total size in this period ranged from 570 to the present 594 members—in each quadrennial session beginning with the forty-eighth legislature (1987–1991).¹ The forty-eighth legislature was the first parliament elected under democracy, in 1986, and served simultaneously as the National Constituent Assembly in 1987–1988. In the forty-eighth legislature (survey applied in 1990), there were 249 respondents to the survey; in the forty-ninth legislature (1993), 185 respondents; in the fiftieth (1997), 162; in the fifty-first (2001), 139; and in the fifty-second (2005), 124. Although the response rates have been declining over time (a problem that all survey researchers in Congress increasingly face), the samples are still very large, ranging from 21 to 43 percent of all federal legislators, which affords us more-than-adequate statistical leverage.

Two survey questions are relevant to this study. The first asked the respondent to place him- or herself on an ideological scale where 1 = “left” and 10 = “right,” and the second question asked the respondent to place all of the other main political parties using the same scale. The combination of these two questions enables us to separate the self-evaluative responses

1. For a description of the project and its methodology, including transcriptions of the survey questionnaires used in waves 1–3, see Power (2000), appendix C. The instruments used in wave 4 (2001) and wave 5 (2005) are largely replications of the earlier questionnaires.

to the scale from the perceived interparty ideological distances. Moreover, by making use of how each legislator classified every other party (i.e., not his or her own party), we are able to obtain estimates of party positions that rely on a much larger N than if we had simply considered respondents who belonged to each classified party.

An important problem with this type of data is that they tend to capture not only actual perceptual distances between respondents but also variation in the response to the answer scale itself. We view this variation not only as a methodological challenge but also as an interesting analytical opportunity, for it conveys fascinating information about how legislators relate differently to a single ideological scale. This variation is not always statistical noise—later in the text we document some nonrandom patterns in the way Brazilian legislators from different ideological persuasions tend to answer surveys. From the standpoint of mapping ideology, however, it is important to distinguish between the perceptual differences among respondents (which we interpret as ideology) and the idiosyncratic use of the scale by different individuals.

Although this phenomenon has been known to survey researchers for several decades, first explicitly discussed by Aldrich and McKelvey (1977), researchers who rely on perceptual data often overlook it. Drawing on the insights of our predecessors, we present a brief example, using three real respondents from the 1990 survey (identified by pseudonyms but with the actual parties and states) to illustrate the point: Fulano (PT–São Paulo), Beltrano (PFL–Mato Grosso do Sul), and Sicrano (PMDB–Pernambuco). All three respondents answered the survey question in which they were asked to locate the main political parties on the left-right scale. The ordering in which they placed the parties was very similar, but each respondent used the scale in a considerably different way. Fulano spread the parties out from one to ten (with considerable distance between the rightmost parties and the rest), Beltrano used only the lower half of the scale, and Sicrano's answers notably shied away from extreme values.

Patterns of answers such as these suggest that sometimes legislators disagreed more on the meaning of the ten-point scale that was presented to them than on the ordinal placement of parties on a left-right continuum. To deal with this problem, we use the legislators' placement of all parties to estimate the "true" party positions as well as the individual-level scale distortion effects. We then take the latter estimates and use them to transform each legislator's reported self-placement. This, in turn, produces rescaled ideological placements that account for idiosyncratic uses of the original ten-point scale. Note that this is not a procedure to estimate legislators' positions directly from the data but a method to estimate parties' positions and legislators' scaling effects. If desired, the scaling effects can be applied to the legislators self-reported placements

Table 2 *Examples of Individual Scale Effects*

Left of center				Center		Right of center		
Fulano PT-SP	PT	PCdoB PCB	PDT	PSDB	PMDB	PFL, PDS, PRN, PTB, PL, PDC		
	1	PSB	5	4	6	10		
Beltrano PFL-MS	PT	PCdoB	PDT	PSDB		PFL, PDS, PRN, PTB, PL, PDC		
		PCB	PSB	PMDB	3	5		
Sicrano PMDB-PE	PT, PCdoB, PCB			PSDB		PTB	PFL	
	PDT, PSB			PMDB		PL	PDS	PRN
		3		4		5	PDC	8
						6		

Notes: Numbers below parties or cluster of parties are the respondent's actual answer to the survey. Labels "left of center," "center," and "right of center" are merely illustrative and were not part of the survey. The three legislators are identified by numbers 246, 230, and 199, respectively, in the survey.

to obtain rescaled individual placements. After applying this procedure separately to each survey, we then deal with the related issue of making party estimates comparable across time.

THE METHOD

As we make explicit here, our estimation technique requires the assumption that each party has an objective ideological location. This location is unobservable to the analysts but observed by the elite survey respondents. Hence, even though each individual respondent might see the parties in different positions as a result of error and interpret the scale in different ways, both the "objective" position of parties and the idiosyncratic rescaling factors of each legislator are revealed when individuals place different parties on the left-right scale provided to them.

Each survey yields a matrix of party placements and a vector of individual self-placements on a left-right ideological scale.² Formally, let $P_{ij} \in$

2. The answers to the ideological placement questions in the surveys exhibit two different types of missing responses: either the actual legislator self-placement or one or more placements of parties were missing. Although none was too pervasive, we opted to deal with both issues instead of simply dropping the observations because of incomplete data. In the few cases of the first type, we assumed legislators would have placed themselves where they placed their parties. Only if that information was missing too—because the legislator either did not state or place his or her party—was the legislator dropped from the sample. Missingness in the party placements, in contrast, was dealt with by use of a simple

$[1, \dots, 10]$ be the placement in any of the surveys, of party j ($j = 1, \dots, M$) by legislator i ($i = 1, \dots, N$). The spatial model we use is simply

$$P_{ij} = \alpha_i + \beta_i \pi_j + \varepsilon_{ij}, \quad (1)$$

where π_j is the “true” position of each party, α_i and β_i are legislator-specific shift and stretch rescaling factors, and ε_{ij} is a well-behaved disturbance term.

Next, define $P_{ij} \in [1, 10]$ as the self-placement of legislators. Assuming that each legislator uses the same scale to place himself as he used to place all the other parties on the scale, each legislator’s placement onto the common scale (π_i) is defined as a simple linear transformation of the raw answer to the self-placement question (P_{ii}), as follows:

$$\pi_i = \frac{P_{ii} - \alpha_i}{\beta_i}. \quad (2)$$

It is straightforward to calculate π_i , once the parameters in Equation 1 are estimated. The problem, however, is how to estimate this equation. Note that because π_j is not observed, it must also, along with α_i ’s and β_i ’s, be estimated from the data. This problem is akin to a regression without an independent variable and consequently cannot be estimated directly by ordinary least squares (OLS).

We approach the problem through a maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) framework.³ Assuming the disturbance term is standard normally distributed, the probability of any observation is

$$Pr(P_{ij}) = \phi \left(\frac{P_{ij} - \alpha_i - \beta_i \pi_j}{\sigma} \right) \frac{1}{\sigma}, \quad (3)$$

where ϕ is the standard normal density. After transformations to improve computational speed, the log-likelihood function to be maximized can be written as follows:

imputation algorithm. Because these are, in effect, averages, the imputation does not affect the estimation of the party position nor the individual rescaling parameters while allowing us to use all the information effectively available.

3. Alternatively, one could extract the first principal component of the party placements matrix to obtain the “true” party positions and regress the observed party placements by OLS on these positions (Aldrich and McKelvey 1977; Poole 1998, 2005). This procedure yields the exact same estimates (up to a linear transformation), but we believe that MLE is more transparent.

$$L(\alpha, \beta, \sigma, \pi) = \sum_i \sum_j -\log(\sigma) - \frac{1}{2\sigma^2} (P_{ij} - \alpha_i - \beta_j \pi_i)^2 \quad (4)$$

Estimates of the positions of very few respondents took on extreme values, which was generally caused by unusual patterns in the responses. We dealt with these few cases by truncating the estimates.⁴ The estimation procedure was conducted for each of the five surveys individually and produced both individual and party-specific estimates.

Although it might be tempting to compare actual party estimates across the five survey waves, these values are not directly comparable. Recall that the rescaled placements are relative measures (valid only for respondents within a given wave or year), and that there is no intrinsic metric to this scale. Therefore, one could only compare estimates across surveys if there were fixed points on which to anchor them.

In this respect, only legislators who answered more than one survey convey any information on how each year's scales relate to one another. The surveys, however, were all anonymous. So even though many legislators must have answered more than one survey, their names were not recorded. We dealt with this problem by using additional information in the survey to identify respondents. Using responses to questions such as previous party affiliations, political careers, terms in office, and age, we were ultimately able to identify about 40 percent of the respondents in each survey. Of these, eighty-five respondents answered more than one survey, producing a data set of overlapping respondents with a total of 182 observations.⁵

This data set consists of a matrix of legislator's placements π_{it} and a matrix of party estimates π_{jt} , where i and j are defined as before, and surveys are indexed by $t = (1, \dots, T)$.⁶ Recall that the estimation described in the previous section yielded party and individual estimates for each survey, hence, subscript t . With this data set, we followed the work of Groseclose,

4. Truncation affected less than a handful of legislators in two surveys and has no effect on party estimates.

5. We have considered whether this is a biased subset of the legislature. One might claim that a specific type of legislator is likely to remain in congress for more than one term, and that therefore our subset includes more "successful" legislators. First, successful legislators are likely to move to more prestigious jobs in the executive branch (Samuels 2003). If that were not the case, it would also not be clear whether more successful legislators are systematically different from less successful ones in ideological terms. Finally, even if the potential pool of legislators to be sampled were biased in any way, our method for identifying legislators is sufficiently randomizing, as it depends on a combination of more than fifteen variables.

6. Until now, we have used Greek letters to represent parameters to be estimated and Latin letters for data. Even though π_{ij} and π_{it} are treated as data in this section, we retain the Greek letters for consistency of notation with the previous section, where we estimated these values.

Levitt, and Snyder (1999) and estimated a mean preference parameter across all years ($\hat{\pi}_i$). As in the previous estimation, we assumed that this $\hat{\pi}_i$ is shifted (γ_t) and stretched (δ_t) each year to produce the observed positions π_{it} . This implies that all legislators are subject to the same yearly shocks and can be formally stated as:

$$\pi_{it} = \gamma_t + \delta_t \hat{\pi}_i + \varepsilon_{it}. \quad (5)$$

The estimates of the year effects γ_t and δ_t can then be used to map both legislators' (π_{it}) and party (π_{jt}) position estimates in each survey into a common space. These new common-space estimates, denoted by an asterisk, are obtained computing the following:

$$\pi_{it}^* = \frac{\pi_{it} - \gamma_t}{\delta_t}, \text{ and } \pi_{jt}^* = \frac{\pi_{jt} - \gamma_t}{\delta_t}. \quad (6)$$

Equation 5 is analogous to Equation 1, and can be similarly estimated by maximum likelihood. Estimates of the year effects—not shown here due to space constraints—were obtained after setting the 1990 as the base year, with $\gamma_1 = 0$ and $\delta_1 = 1$.⁷ Estimates for δ_t , which represents the stretch factor, are always statistically significant but those for γ —the shift factor—are not.⁸ Hence, the overall picture is that the scale does in fact vary across years, as it is stretched or compressed by respondents. Therefore, inference about polarization should only be carried out after year effects are accounted for.

RESULTS

It is important to note that this method yields estimates of ideology both for individuals and for parties. It would be conceivable to use the individual-level estimates to generate mean values and dispersion estimates for each party. In the remainder of this research note, however, the individual values are used only for the purpose of estimating the position of the median legislator in the chamber (figure 1).⁹

7. Note that this model still requires the estimation of $t - 1$ γ 's, $t - 1$ δ 's, σ , and N $\hat{\pi}_i$, which in the present case means estimating 94 parameters using 182 observations. We used different numeric techniques, including repeating the maximization with randomly generated start values, to ensure that local minima did not produce results.

8. Estimated year effects are reported in the Web appendix.

9. We chose to concentrate on the party estimates because it is the case that for some parties the number of respondents is very small, and there is no guarantee they are representative of the party. Hence, there is much more certainty in the party estimates (P_{jt}) than in the individual specific parameters (α_i and β_i) that are used in the computation of the rescaled self-placements of individual legislators (P_{it}).

Table 3 Rank Ordering of Parties from Left to Right

Year		R ²
1990	PCdoB PT PCB PSB PDT PSDB PMDB PTB PL PDC PRN PFL PDS	0.91
1993	PCdoB PT PSTU PSB PPS PDT PSDB PMDB PP PTB PL PFL PPR PRN	0.88
1997	PCdoB PT PSB PPS PDT PMDB PSDB PTB PL PFL PPB	0.98
2001	PCdoB PT PSB PDT PPS PMDB PSDB PL PTB PFL PPB	0.86
2005	PCdoB PSB PT PPS PDT PMDB PSDB PTB PFL PL PP	0.79

Notes: Stacked parties, in any given year, indicate that the differences between their respective estimated positions are not significant at the 0.05 level. The significance test of the differences between all other adjacent parties has a *p*-value of < 0.05. The R² indicates the fit of the model (Equation 1) to the data.

Year-by-Year Estimates

Table 3 shows simple rank orderings of parties in each survey, as well as a simple measure of how well the estimated model fits the data. Parties that are undistinguishable from one another are stacked.¹⁰ As table 3 shows, in most cases one can be confident that adjacent parties are, in fact, different, but more parties have become indistinguishable in recent years. In terms of fit, the high R² suggests that the one-dimensional model of politics fits the Brazilian legislature rather well, even though this value fell in the last period studied.

It is also interesting to note that there have been few changes in the rank order of parties over time. The PPS (formerly the PCB) moved gradually to the right, changing positions with the PSB in 1993 and then with the PDT in 2001, though this last move was undone in 2005. The PSDB today is to the right of the PMDB, and the PTB and the PL have switched positions twice and presently are indistinguishable from each other. In addition, the dyads PT/PSB and PFL/PP have also become indistinguishable.

Comparable Estimates over Time

The transformed estimates in figure 1 show the median legislator in the legislature shifted slightly (and nonmonotonically) to the left over the

10. Difference in the parties' position was tested directly through bootstrapping, not by simply observing whether the confidence interval on party estimates overlaps. This is because there is covariance in the estimates, introduced by the fact that one legislator is arbitrarily fixed. Although they are a valid measure of our uncertainty regarding individual party estimates, the regular confidence intervals understate our ability to differentiate between the location of two parties.

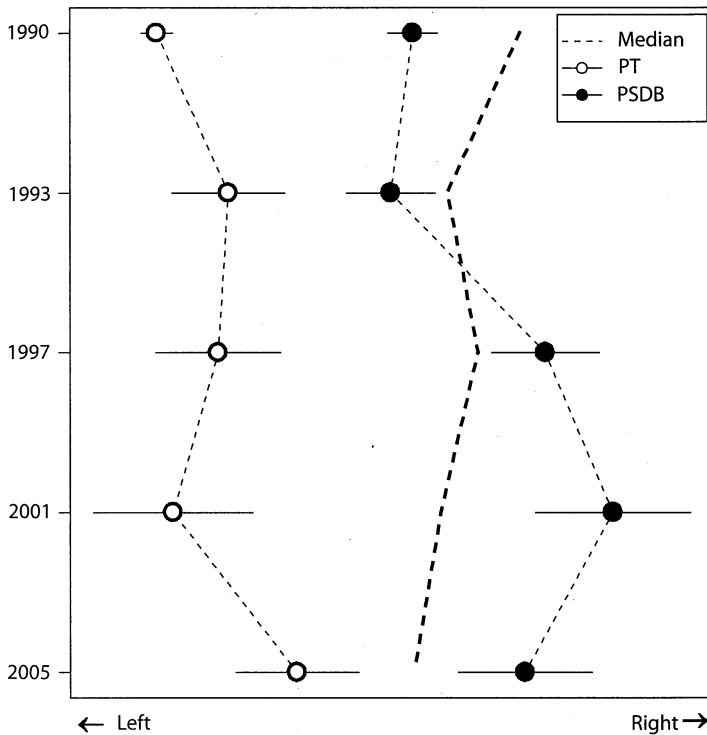


Figure 1 Time Trends: Median Legislator and Selected Party's Position

course of the past fifteen years. This could be explained simply by reference to electoral results: the share of seats controlled by leftist parties has increased considerably over this period. If we take the five most prominent left-wing parties (PT, PDT, PSB, PPS, and PC do B) in the current democracy, we note that they jointly controlled only 12 percent of congressional seats in 1990 but increased their presence to more than 28 percent by 2005.

More interesting, though, is to observe the estimates for the positions of the PT and the PSDB, undoubtedly the two most important political parties in the period analyzed. In the first survey in 1990, even though the PSDB and the PT were not very close in ideological terms, they were both clearly left of center. This situation persisted during the Collor-Franco years (1990–1994), a period in which the two parties still routinely cooperated at the subnational level. Their membership in a common family is consistent with the fact that the PSDB was created in 1988 by dissidents from the PMDB's progressive wing. The core PSDB leaders were from São Paulo, and ten years earlier—in the twilight of military rule—they had supported the same local union-based protests that gave rise to the PT. Leaders of both parties occasionally (and selectively) recall these common origins. As Lula

da Silva remarked at the Ibero-American Summit in Santiago, Chile, in November 2007, "We had a historical relationship with the PSDB. When no one was PSDB, and no one was PT, we were all just friends" (*O Globo* 2007).

Figure 1 also suggests that in 1993 the PSDB and PT were as close as ever on the ideology scale. The Itamar Franco presidency (1992–1994) was, in fact, the period in which a national-level alliance between the two parties came closest to being realized. Franco propelled the PSDB to the front stage of Brazilian politics by appointing Fernando Henrique Cardoso as his finance minister, but he also invited the PT to join the cabinet. The PT at the time rejected the offer but later regretted it.¹¹ Lula himself reckoned this as one of the party's greatest mistakes in its first twenty years, one that might have locked it out of power for the following ten years (*Jornal do Brasil*, February 10, 2000).

Between 1993 and 2001, the PSDB took a sharp turn to the right. This coincides with the period in which the party won the presidency, secured the country's economic stabilization, and then became the promoter and defender of neoliberal reform. At the same time, the PT established itself as the main opposition party. In Cardoso's second term (1999–2002), the legislative contingents of the PT and PSDB were as far apart as they would ever be (figure 1). With Lula's victory in the 2002 elections, the PT began to exhibit a much more centrist character.

The conventional wisdom regarding the PT is that the party gradually moved to the center over the years. Figure 1, however, suggests that this movement was not continuous. While in opposition to Cardoso, the PT was perceived as, and perceived itself as, aggressively standing its leftist ground. The general trend is that both parties moved markedly to the right while in government and tended to move to the left while in opposition. Today, although the PSDB and PT have become closer in ideological terms, they have also established themselves as the main forces on either side of the political center—in fact, figure 1 shows that by 2005 the median Brazilian legislator stood almost perfectly equidistant from these two influential parties, which have fought the last four presidential elections between them. Although an alliance between these two parties would no longer be difficult in ideological terms, it is all but impossible because of a well-established electoral rivalry that has become the main axis of national politics. In the 2006 presidential election, the PT and PSDB jointly received 90.3 percent of the first-round vote, a monumental achievement in one of the world's most fragmented party systems.

Figure 2 shows that after an increase in polarization in the 1990s, politics in Brazil has become more moderate, as both parties on the right and

11. Former São Paulo mayor Luiza Erundina accepted Franco's offer to join the cabinet and, as a result, was temporarily suspended from the PT. The experience led her to move to the rival PSB.

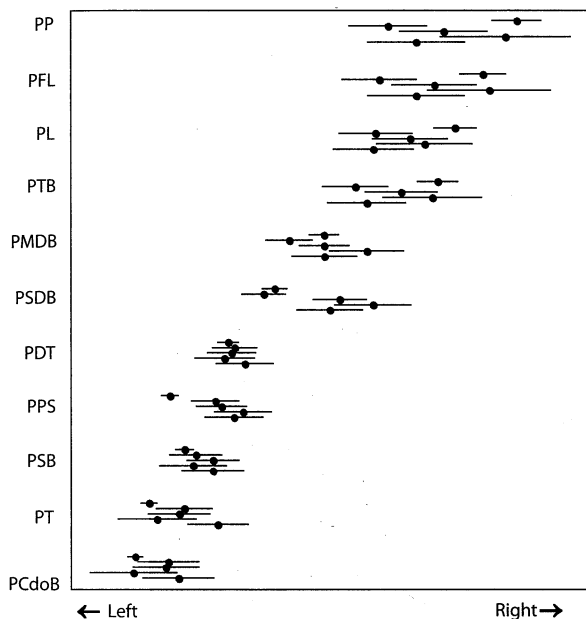


Figure 2 Comparable Party Position Estimates—All Years

Notes: The five estimates for each party are chronologically ordered from top to bottom. Confidence intervals (90%) are shown about the estimates. Estimates and standard errors are reported in the appendix.

on the left have moved toward the center between 2001 and 2005. The parties on the right have wavered back and forth, ending up left of where they started. Parties on the left and center-left are today significantly more to the right than they originally were, with the most conspicuous cases being the PT, PPS, and PSDB.

The z pattern exhibited by some parties—most notably those on the right—is a feature not of the method but of the data. Although some of this wavering should be discounted because of the size of the confidence intervals, it does seem plausible that the period between the second and fourth surveys (1993–2001) was, in fact, one of increasing political polarization. In this period, the center-right parties supported and advanced a very aggressive agenda of market-oriented reforms, which the leftist parties opposed fiercely—though not very successfully. It is clear, however, that such increased polarization did not considerably alter the ideological structure of the Brazilian party system.

In a nutshell, the story told here is one of relative stability. There has been a slight decrease in polarization in recent years, caused mainly by the rightward drift of leftist parties, and it has become slightly more difficult to distinguish between adjacent pairs or parties. Still, overall the

main observation is that the rank ordering of parties has been fairly persistent across time.

Reliability of the Estimates

Other sources of perceptual data on Brazilian political elites do exist, and comparison of our results with two of these sources suggests that our estimates capture a broadly shared perception of the relative ideological positions of parties in Congress. In this rather cursory exercise, we use data from an important survey of Brazilian state deputies carried out by Maria D'Alva Gil Kinzo in 1989 (Kinzo 1989–1991) and data from the Brazil module of the 2005 edition of the Latin American Parliamentary Elites Project conducted by the research team at the University of Salamanca led by Manuel Alcántara (Alcántara 1994–2005), in an effort to cross-evaluate the first and last of the Power survey waves. The structure of the data and the questions of interest are identical in all surveys, and all reflect the perceptions of political elites. The fact that Kinzo interviewed subnational and not federal legislators is not a problem for our analysis of parties, because she asked her respondents to classify Brazilian parties *em âmbito nacional* (at the national level). Moreover, subnational elites frequently become national elites: from what we know about patterns of Brazilian political recruitment (Samuels 2003), dozens if not hundreds of Kinzo's respondents would have moved on to the Brazilian National Congress in the 1990s, with many presumably ending up in the Power survey samples as well.

Kinzo's 1989 survey was administered to 684 state deputies and asked them to classify themselves and twelve prominent parties on the already familiar ten-point scale. In the Salamanca 2005 survey, question 13 asked legislators to place the six main parties in the country on a ten-point scale. Although legislators were not asked to locate their own parties, they were asked to do so further along in the survey (question 59), and were also asked to place themselves on the same scale (question 58).¹² We obtained estimates of the party positions by applying the rescaling procedure previously described to these alternative data sets. Figure 3 plots these estimates against those obtained from the Power survey data. As illustrated in the figure, the rescaled estimates in all three data sets are highly correlated.

12. In this survey, legislators were also asked to place six high-profile party leaders on the same scale (question 14). The leaders were identified by their names only and presented in a different order than the parties in the previous question. The rescaled party placements reported in figure 3b include these extra data in the estimation process. The additional data do not substantively affect the point estimates, but they do help reduce the standard errors around the party means. It is interesting to note that party leaders line up almost perfectly with their parties, with Renan Calheiros being slightly to the right of his PMDB and José Carlos Aleluia slightly to the left of his PFL. Actual estimates are reported in the Web appendix.

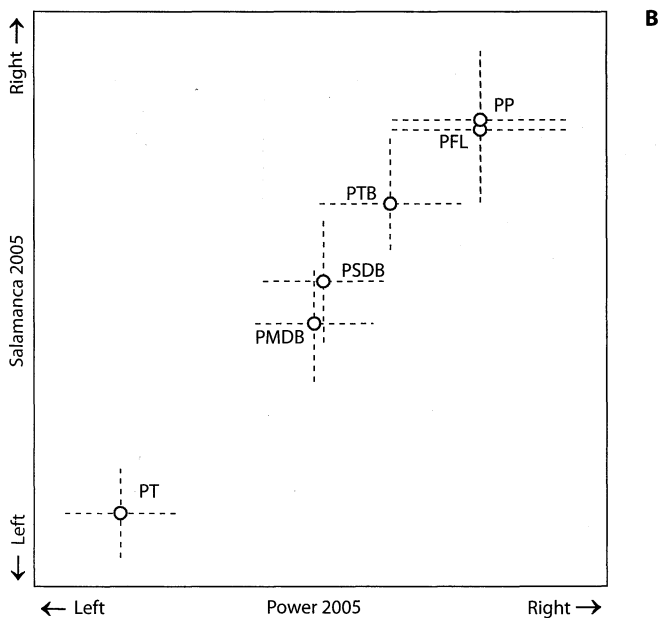
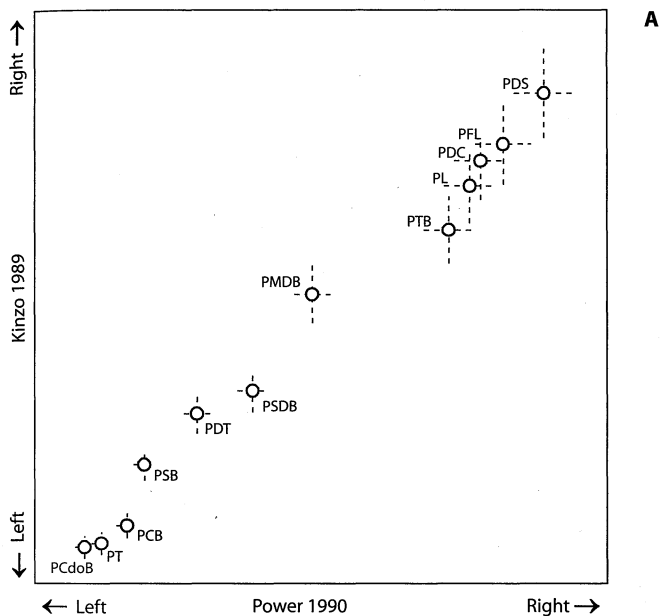


Figure 3 Comparing Party Position Estimates from Different Data Sources

(a) *Power 1990 and Kinzo 1989*

(b) *Power 2005 and Salamanca 2005*

Notes: Figures compare estimates obtained from Kinzo's 1989 survey and the 2005 Salamanca survey with estimates from the correspondent Power surveys. Figures show point estimates with 90% confidence intervals.

Our party position estimates for 2005 can also be compared with those obtained from a still-unpublished expert survey conducted in 2007 by Nina Wiesehomeier and Kenneth Benoit (2007). This survey reports the positions of fourteen parties on a twenty-point left-right scale, which are the average placement of the party made by approximately twenty-five social scientists who closely follow Brazilian politics. Although individual response data is not yet available to allow for the rescaling of the responses,¹³ a comparison between the mean placements in the Wiesehomeier-Benoit survey and our rescaled estimates for the 2005 Power survey reveals only two differences among the eleven parties which appear in both studies. Experts placed the PPS further to the right than political elites did, and experts perceived a greater distance between the PMDB and the PSDB than did members of Congress.

However, the end result of this exercise is that both the first and the fifth waves of the Power surveys find strong external validation among other data sets that have measured the ideology of Brazilian parties and/or legislative elites.

THE DIREITA EVERGONHADA REVISITED

As noted in previous studies of the Brazilian political class, elites tend to place themselves to the left of where they “really” are, and the label of “right” is one that politicians studiously avoid. Since the late 1980s, this phenomenon has been nicknamed the *direita envergonhada* (literally, the “ashamed right”), referring to political conservatives who do not wish to identify themselves as such (Souza 1989). Although this pattern was visible in campaign rhetoric as early as 1985 (Pierucci 1987), Leôncio Martins first detailed it empirically in 1987. When Rodrigues asked 428 federal deputies to classify themselves ideologically on a five-point scale, he found that not a single deputy would accept the label “radical right,” and that only 6 percent considered themselves center-right. The rest of the deputies claimed to be of the center (37 percent), center-left (52 percent), and radical left (5 percent) (Rodrigues 1987, 97). Another survey conducted by the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*, which used almost the same categories as Rodrigues, obtained the same results: again, only 6 percent of members of Congress would classify themselves as anywhere right of center (quoted in Rodrigues 1987, 99). These surveys led Rodrigues to conclude that “judging by the political self-definition of the deputies, Brazil is a country without a right” (Rodrigues 1987, 99).

Rodrigues’s findings were later extended by Power (2000) and Mainwaring, Power, and Meneguello (2000), but both of these studies speculated that

13. One would imagine that distortion effects should be much less pronounced among experts than among politicians.

the phenomenon of the *direita envergonhada* might dissipate over time. It was hypothesized that the Brazilian right might become less evasive and obfuscating as memories of the repressive 1964–1985 military regime faded and conservative parties carved out a new political identity under the aegis of neoliberal reform. However, our analysis of five waves of survey research shows that far from being a period effect (i.e., a fleeting symptom of a post-authoritarian hangover), the phenomenon of the *direita envergonhada* is a remarkably durable facet of elite political culture in Brazil. For brevity, in the subsequent analysis we show results only for the first and last surveys. Results are similar for all surveys and are reported in the Web appendix.

The mosaic plots in figure 4 show that between one-fifth and one-half of legislators place themselves to the left of where they place their party (darker shading in the figures), and that most of these legislators are from rightist parties. These figures are always larger, and frequently much larger, than the number of legislators that place themselves to the right of where they place their own party (lighter shading in the figures). It is also clearly the case that the reporting bias is not simply a matter of depicting oneself as more centrist than one's own party. Typically, a much greater share of right-party members place themselves to the left than the symmetrical opposite.

Figure 5 dispels any doubts about the nature of the ashamed-right syndrome. Although almost all Brazilian legislators regard themselves to the left of what their peers understand to be the accurate location of their parties, this behavior is more prevalent among legislators from rightist parties (darker shading in the figures).

We are not the first analysts to call attention to the *direita envergonhada*, but we do so here for two reasons. The first is methodological: the widespread tendency of politicians to shift themselves to the left means that researchers should simply not rely on self-reported ideology data. Our individual rescaled self-placement scores correct for this problem. Figure 6 compares the raw answers to the self-placement question in the survey and the rescaled placements. The most conspicuous pattern is that the raw answers exhibit a distinctive leftward skew with a long tail to the right, while the distribution of rescaled placements is much more symmetrical. This suggests that our rescaling procedure does capture the tendency of legislators to overstate their leftism. Second, we draw attention to the *direita envergonhada* to show that, contrary to what some analysts quite reasonably expected, the phenomenon is alive and well more than twenty years after the demise of right-wing authoritarianism.

Although an explanation for this persistence is beyond the scope of this research note, we see two plausible possibilities. One is that the *direita envergonhada* was never truly a postauthoritarian phenomenon—that in reality it is much older (although we lack historical data to test this) and simply reflects a rational elite desire to shirk responsibility for Brazil's shocking social inequalities. Another possibility is that the *direita*

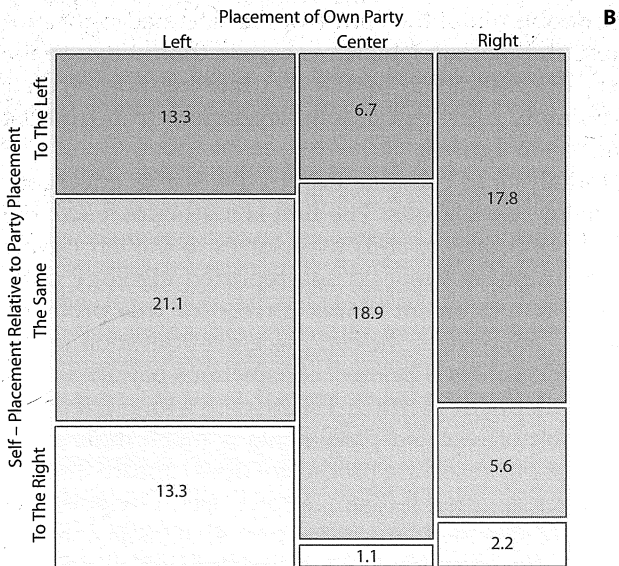
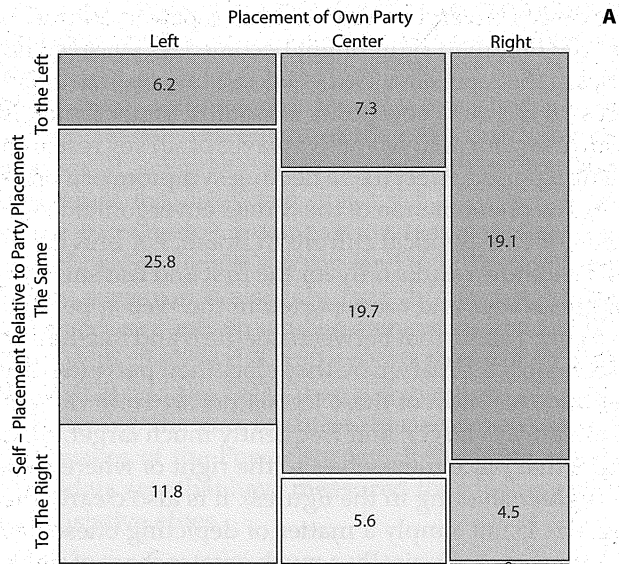


Figure 4 Raw Self-Placement and Placements of Own Party
 (a) 1990 Survey
 (b) 2005 Survey

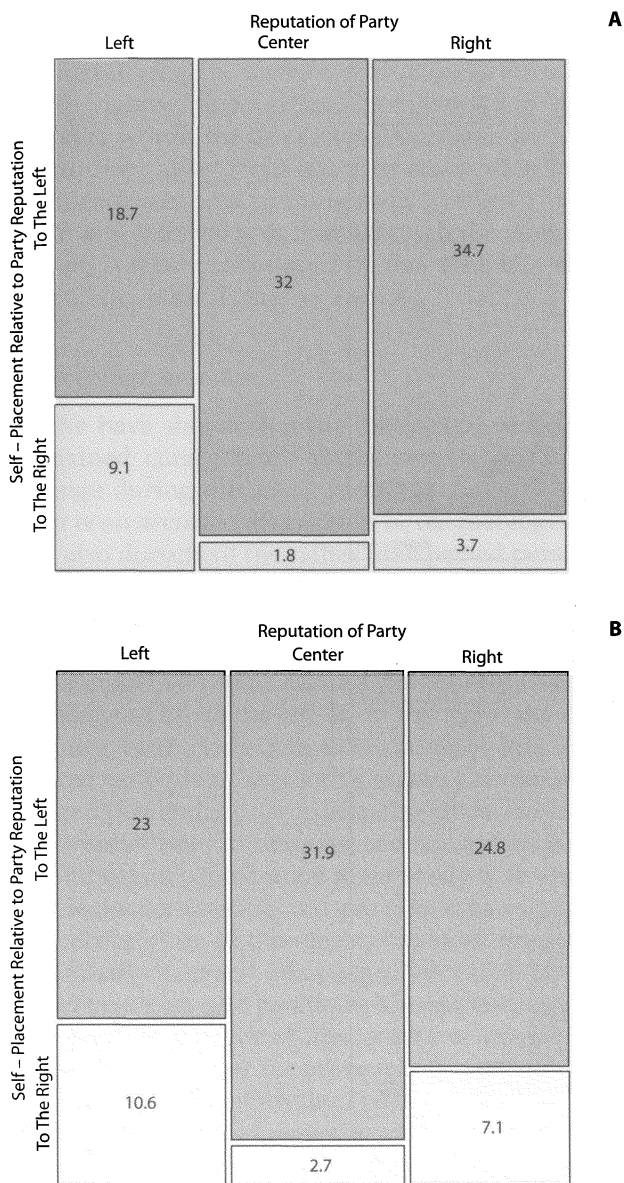


Figure 5 Placements of Own Party and Party Reputation among Nonmembers
 (a) 1990 Survey
 (b) 2005 Survey

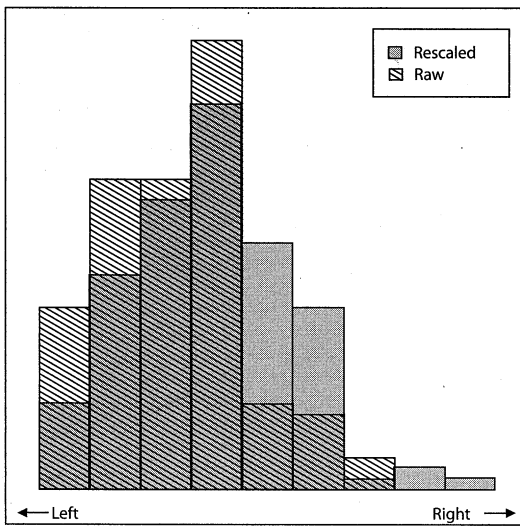
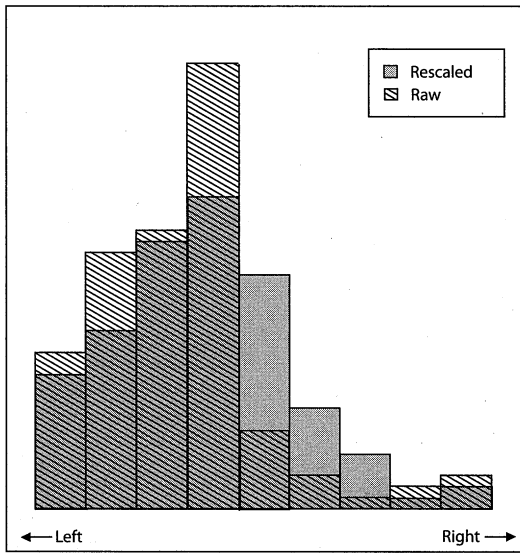


Figure 6 Raw and Rescaled Self-placements—All Surveys
 (a) 1990 Survey
 (b) 2005 Survey

envergonhada really was an attempt to hide past associations with dictatorship in the 1960s and 1970s, but that, rather than reinvent their images by identifying themselves with the neoliberal economic reforms of the 1990s, right-wing politicians have learned to shun this association as well. In other words, the *direita* *envergonhada* could simply mean that instead of running away from one past association (military rule), conservative politicians are now running away from two.

In any case, we note that although the tendency to exaggerate progressivism is most pronounced on the right, it is also a general feature of the Brazilian political class as a whole.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

We have shown that the ideological ordering of parties in Brazil has remained considerably stable, despite significant social and economic change during the past two decades, and that a single left-right dimension is an accurate description of the ideological landscape of the country. We also document the rather unexpected persistence of *direita* *envergonhada*, by which legislators attempt to avoid being labeled rightist.

It must be noted, however, that we base our analysis solely on the self-perceptions and reciprocal perceptions of legislators, so our findings imply simply that politicians recognize and share the understanding of what it means to be on the left or on the right. We do this without attempting to identify the substantive meaning of this underlying dimension and, moreover, without assuming, stating, or measuring how important these shared perceptions are to actual political behavior.

Despite these limitations, the revised estimates of party ideology are an important contribution to the study of the Brazilian party system. Both the legislator-specific and party estimates provide an accurate and detailed depiction of the ideological structure of Brazilian politics and can potentially help test other arguments that make predictions about or depend on ideological positions. The appendix to this research note presents the party means for all five waves of the Power surveys, and we make these data available for other scholars to use as independent variables in both static and longitudinal research designs. These data could be used, to cite only a few examples, to explain changing political support for neoliberal reforms over time, to account for the construction of interparty alliances in Brazil's coalition-based presidential system, to assess the quality of political representation by estimating the distances between mass and elite ideological preferences, or to examine how well legislative behavior matches ideology. The method implemented here can be applied to similar data from other countries, which can contribute to a clearer picture of how ideology evolves over time.

APPENDIX

Table 4 Party Information

Party	Party size [†]	Orientation and background	Principal leaders in 2008
PMDB, Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement, founded 1966	95	Front party opposing military regime of 1964–1985; began democracy as center-left, but lost many social democrats to PSDB in 1987–1988; currently centrist, catchall, decentralized, many feuding owners	José Sarney, former president 1985–1990; Sergio Cabral, governor of Rio; Renan Calheiros, president of Senate; Anthony Garotinho and Orestes Quércia, former governors; numerous leaders and factions
PT, Workers' Party, founded 1980	79	Prior to 2002: left-wing; grew out of labor unrest in late 1970s; radically democratic and anticorporatist; strong support from intellectuals, workers, state employees; best-organized party in Brazilian history. Since 2003: sharp centrist turn, alliances with right parties, status quo economic policy, practices politics as usual in Congress	Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, five-time presidential candidate and incumbent since 2003; Ricardo Berzoini, party president; Dilma Rousseff, presidential chief of staff; Aloízio Mercadante, senator; Jaques Wagner, governor of Bahia; numerous intellectuals and cultural figures
PSDB, Party of Brazilian Social Democracy, founded 1988	58	Former progressive wing of PMDB; originally Western European-style social democratic; leaders influenced by European third way; champion of 1990s promarket reforms; supports parliamentarism; principal force of the modernizing center	Fernando Henrique Cardoso, former president 1995–2002; Aécio Neves and José Serra, governors; Tasso Jereissatti, senator and party president; Geraldo Alckmin, defeated presidential candidate in 2006
PFL, Party of the Liberal Front, founded 1984, renamed Democrats (DEM) in 2007	53	Conservative; last-minute defectors from military regime; pragmatic, clientelistic party of power; core leaders supported every president from 1964 to 2002, military or civilian	Rodrigo Maia, party president; Marco Maciel, former vice president of Republic; Jorge Bornhausen, former senator; ACM Neto, deputy; many experienced notables

PL, Liberal Party, founded 1985, renamed Party of the Republic (PR) in 2007	43	Center-right; originally Thatcherite in economics, later catchall and nondescript; in 2002 allied with PT on a progrowth platform; grew substantially with Lula's victory. In 2007 merged with PRONA, becoming the Party of the Republic.	Blairo Maggi, governor; Luciano Castro and Valdemar Costa Neto, deputies
PP, Progressive Party, founded as ARENA in 1966	40	Conservative; the promilitary party in 1964–1985. Originally founded as ARENA in 1966, became the PDS in 1979. After a merger with the PDC in 1993, the party switched its name to PPR. Subsequently it merged with the <i>previous</i> PP, becoming the PPB. In 2003 the party relabeled itself PP. The PP that existed between 1993 and 1995 was itself the product of a fusion of the PTR and PST. This is not to be confused with the Popular Party (PP), which existed between 1980 and 1981.	Paulo Maluf, ex-governor; Severino Cavalcanti, former president of Chamber
PSB, Brazilian Socialist Party, founded 1985	29	Leftist party usually in orbit of PT. Although rooted in the PSB that existed prior to the military government, the party was dominated during much of the current democratic period by Miguel Arraes, governor of Pernambuco.	Ciro Gomes, deputy; Luiza Erundina, former PT mayor of São Paulo; Eduardo Campos, governor of Pernambuco
PDT, Democratic Labor Party, founded 1980	25	Center-left; personalistic; on-again, off-again partner of PT in 1980s and 1990s; mostly restricted to Rio de Janeiro and Rio Grande do Sul; fading since Leonel Brizola's death in 2004	Miro Teixeira, deputy; Cristovam Buarque, former PT governor of Brasília

(continued)

Table 4 (continued)

Party	Party size†	Orientation and background	Principal leaders in 2008
Brazilian Labor Party (PTB), founded 1980	20	Center-right; clientelistic; as a party for rent has had unstable leadership; grew dramatically after 2002 as repository for opportunistic center-right politicians wishing to support Lula	Roberto Jefferson, former deputy; José Múcio Monteiro, floor leader of Lula government in Chamber
PPS, Popular Socialist Party, founded 1922, renamed 1992	15	Descended from Moscow-line Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) founded in 1920s; abandoned Leninism and supported Gorbachev in 1980s; now center-left	Roberto Freire, party president and former deputy and senator
PV, Green Party, founded 1986	14	Pragmatic environmentalists, active in local politics; held environment ministry 1999–2002 under Cardoso	Sarney Filho, former environment minister; Gilberto Gil, culture minister for Lula; Fernando Gabeira, deputy
PC do B, Communist Party of Brazil, founded 1962	13	Prior to 2002: hard left, unreconstructed Leninists; defected from PCB in 1962 during Sino-Soviet split, later pro-Albanian until end of Cold War; after 1989 mostly satellite of PT; dominated national student union. Since 2003: pragmatic, reliable Lula ally	Aldo Rebelo, former president of Chamber of Deputies; Inácio Arruda, senator
PSOL, Party of Socialism and Liberty, founded 2004	3	Former radical left faction of PT, founded by dissidents unhappy with centrist policies; key leaders were expelled from PT in 2003. Presented its own presidential candidate in 2006.	Heloísa Helena, former senator; Luciana Genro and Chico Alencar, deputies
PSTU, Unified Socialist Workers' Party, founded 1993	0	Small Trotskyist group, initially the Socialist convergence faction of the PT, allied with PSOL in 2006	José Maria de Almeida, metalworker and union leader

†Number of seats in lower house as of July 2008. Parties in table account for 487 of the 513 seats in the current Chamber of Deputies.

Table 5 Comparable Party Placements

	Party position estimates				
	1990	1993	1997	2001	2005
PC do B	1.704 0.067	2.192 0.269	2.153 0.293	1.678 0.387	2.340 0.314
PT	1.908 0.069	2.424 0.247	2.350 0.274	2.025 0.348	2.917 0.269
PSTU		2.431 2.431			
PSB	2.431 0.077	2.595 0.232	2.847 0.232	2.555 0.298	2.843 0.274
PPS	2.219 0.074	2.881 0.212	2.974 0.224	3.287 0.254	3.153 0.258
PDT	3.072 0.091	3.165 0.198	3.120 0.215	3.017 0.265	3.315 0.252
PSDB	3.752 0.108	3.594 0.194	4.706 0.236	5.193 0.339	4.559 0.293
PMDB	4.478 0.129	3.967 0.207	4.478 0.221	5.102 0.330	4.483 0.287
PTB	6.142 0.181	4.934 0.290	5.606 0.320	6.064 0.439	5.101 0.345
PL	6.397 0.189	5.235 0.324	5.738 0.334	5.951 0.426	5.199 0.356
PP [†]		4.659 0.261			
PDC	6.530 0.193				
PFL	6.806 0.202	5.292 0.331	6.094 0.374	6.899 0.548	5.828 0.431
PP [‡]	7.301 0.218	5.416 0.346	6.231 0.390	7.136 0.580	5.830 0.431
PRN	6.537 0.193	5.673 0.378			

[†]Party that existed briefly between 1993 and 1995 as a product of the fusion between the PTR and PST.

[‡]Party formerly known as ARENA, PDS, PPR and PPB.

Notes: Estimates were rescaled so that individual legislators are placed in ten-point scale, as in the original survey. Standard errors are shown below estimates and reflect uncertainty within and across surveys (see Web appendix for details). Hence, standard errors for estimates from the same individual survey are smaller.

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