

# Brazilian Parties According to their Manifestos: Political Identity and Programmatic Emphases\*

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Generally, party programmes are neglected in Brazil owing to their alleged (and assumed) irrelevance. It is argued that given that such documents are designed on order and with propaganda purposes, they could hardly be accepted as depictions of the parties' true political positions. However, such an assessment lacks empirical verification. This article tests the hypothesis that Brazilian parties emphasise distinct questions in their manifestos. This hypothesis is based on saliency theory, according to which parties can be distinguished from one another depending on the themes they choose to prioritise. Content analysis technique was applied to the texts, using an adaptation of the categories of the Manifesto Research Group. The results indicate that the programmes do not have the same content, and neither are the differences in their emphases random. It is possible to distinguish between Brazilian parties not only by the kinds of questions they emphasise more, but also by those that they emphasise less.

Keywords: Parties; Programmes; Manifestos; Emphases; Content analysis.

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## Introduction

**B**razilian parties have been studied from several different perspectives. There is a considerable amount of academic production in Brazil dedicated to examining the functioning, organization and ideology of specific parties,<sup>1</sup> and a fruitful debate about the current party system. However, there is an aspect that has not been given due attention: party programmes, generally neglected due to their alleged (and assumed) irrelevance.

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This assumed lack of significance attributed to party programmes is based on the general view that, since they are made to order and for propaganda purposes, these documents can hardly be seen as a portrayal of the parties' real political positions. However, this a priori evaluation is lacking in any empirical verification. Such verification is the aim of the following sections.

## The Theory of Competition by Emphasis

One of the main concepts utilised in this piece of work is that of political identity, understood here as a combination of preferences regarding public policies that distinguishes one party from the others.<sup>2</sup> Thus defined, the identity of a party is not confused with similar concepts such as ideology, strategy, image, discourse, organisational profile or behaviour.

The identification of the parties' political preferences from their programmatic emphases is an alternate instrument for locating the parties in the political competition arena. Compared to other frequently used indicators, the platform content clearly constitutes the body of officially declared preferences or intentions, whilst perceptions and judgements (by specialists or the electors) are based on observed behaviours. This is equivalent to saying that the image that a party portrays of itself, and publishes in its programmatic documents, is more faithful to its real identity than the image that other political actors or analysts have of it.

The perspective of programmatic emphases (Saliency Theory) was originally developed by David Robertson (1976). It states that parties compete more by emphasising (i.e. manipulating the prominence of) different issues than by taking different positions about the same issues. This is an alternate concept to the Downsian perspective, according to which competition takes place by adopting differing positions on the left-right continuum (Downs 1999).<sup>3</sup>

According to Saliency Theory, what is presented to the electorate is a choice between selected political agendas, not between specific alternative policies aimed at the same items of a universal agenda. By grouping demands into policy packages, parties offer electors a choice and give them the task of deciding which group of issues is more important, rather than deciding specifically what to do about the same issues.

According to this point of view, rather than opposing their adversaries' declarations about the policies they support, during an electoral campaign parties concentrate on themes in which they consider themselves to have an advantage over their competitors. The electorate then has at its disposal not a choice between different answers to the same problems, but a choice between different issues to be prioritised by the future government – the most prominent concerns of each platform.

The assumption is that the expectations about which policies to adopt for each issue are usually universal (all electors prefer lower taxes, increased well-being etc). There is, in theory, one main opinion about each issue, and no need to confront it head-on. What can vary and ends up distinguishing one party from the other is the degree to which each issue is mentioned. Each party may choose to emphasise those issues in which its performance has more credibility.

Thus, according to this perspective, the political preferences of parties are multidimensional, and therefore their measurement cannot be limited to gauging their position in one single dimension – the left-right scale.

At an empirical level, the very idea of an ideological axis with opposing positions might make less sense in today's world, since the discourse and practices of parties of the left and right in many countries have softened as they have moved towards the centre.

In societies in which class conflict-based distributive issues are no longer the focus of political concerns, the emergence of so-called post-materialistic issues (such as ethnic rivalries, national identities and environmental issues, for example) requires that parties no longer seek to differentiate from one another only through a one-dimensional positioning, since ideological differences are now less clear. In order to give the electors alternatives, parties have started to identify with specific issues, selecting themes from the public agenda and offering this selection as their specific agenda through the emphases in their programmes.

Based on Saliency Theory, the Manifesto Research Group (MRG) of the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) was created in 1979. It resulted in a vast database, currently maintained by the Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP) in Berlin, as well as in a number of other subsequent projects and work by several authors.

The propositions made by Saliency Theory about competition between parties have been the object of extensive research involving the content analysis of party manifestos in several countries, and a category scheme for codifying manifestos has also been developed and applied.<sup>4</sup> The prominence attributed to each category, corresponding to each political issue, is measured by the proportion of text dedicated to it in the manifesto. The questions emphasised in these texts might explain issues ranging from the electors' preferences to the governments' budget priorities (Budge and Farlie 1983).

If the perspective of Saliency Theory is correct and applied to the case of Brazil, we should be able to find significant differences between the programmatic emphases of Brazilian parties. Thus, this is the hypothesis that will be tested in the next section: that the themes that different Brazilian parties prioritise in their programmatic documents allow us to identify them, and distinguish them from one another.

## The Programmatic Emphases of Brazilian Parties

According to the perspective of the theory of programmatic emphases presented in the previous section, parties differentiate from one another by the emphases they place on different issues. The aim of this section is to verify if this is the case with Brazilian parties. To this end, seven parties were selected: Partido Progressista (PP, Progressive Party),<sup>5</sup> Partido Democrático Trabalhista (PDT, Democratic Labour Party), Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT, Workers' Party), Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro (PTB, Brazilian Labour Party), Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (PMDB, Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement), Partido da Frente Liberal (PFL, Liberal Front Party)<sup>6</sup> and Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira (PSDB, Party of Brazilian Social Democracy).

The measurement of the parties' programmatic emphases was made through the content analysis of their manifestos. These documents, according to Law 9,096 of 1995, must be registered and published for the party to obtain its register from the Higher Electoral Court.

All seven parties analysed have websites where their programmatic documents are made available. In some cases, these websites contain historical documents and previous versions of programmes, since all parties analysed altered their programmes at least once since they were founded. In other cases, when previous versions were not available on the sites, they were retrieved from the last edition of the work by Vamireh Chacon (1988) on the history of Brazilian political parties. Thus, the body of documents analysed were the following:

**Chart 1** List of the programmatic documents analysed

Document	Source
PDS 1979	Chacon (1998)
PPB 1995 (manifesto and programme)	Chacon (1998)
PP (n.d.) (manifesto and programme)	www.pp.org.br
PDT 1980	Chacon (1998)
PDT 1994	www.pdt.org.br
PT 1980 (manifesto and programme)	Chacon (1998)
PT 1990 Resolution: O socialismo petista	www.pt.org.br
PTB 1979	Chacon (1998)
PTB 2001	www.camara.gov.br/lid.ptb <sup>2</sup>
PMDB 1981	Chacon (1998)
PMDB 1994	www.pmdb.org.br
PFL 1984 (manifesto) <sup>3</sup>	www.pfl.org.br <sup>4</sup>
PFL1985 (programme)	Chacon (1998)
PFL 1986 (Letter of Commitment) <sup>5</sup>	Tarouco (1999)

Chart1. Cont.

PFL 1995	PFL (1996)
PFL 2005	<a href="http://www.pfl.org.br">www.pfl.org.br</a>
PSDB 1988 (manifesto and programme)	<a href="http://www.psdb.org.br">www.psdb.org.br</a>
PSDB 2001	<a href="http://www.psdb.org.br">www.psdb.org.br</a>

1 This text was made public with no date. Here, it will be considered as being in force from 2003, when the name PP was adopted.

2 At the moment when the data were gathered, PTB was the only party lacking its own website, among the parties studied. Its programme and statutes were available at the web portal of the Chamber of Deputies. Currently, PTB does have a website ([www.ptb.org.br](http://www.ptb.org.br)) where it is possible to obtain its programme, though in a summarized version without the introductory text that the version obtained in the portal of the Chamber of Deputies contains. The text available on the party's new website corresponds to just one section of the full version, that subtitled "Policy guidelines".

3 This is the Founding Manifesto launched on 19 December, 1984, after the creation of the Democratic Alliance (in August of the same year).

4 Accessed on 2 June 2006. The new website of the Democratas does not make available the party's historical documents.

5 For the purposes of this analysis, PFL's 1984, 1985 and 1986 programmatic documents were grouped together and treated as "pre-1988 documents".

## The content analysis method

Content analysis is a method of quantitative treatment given to qualitative data. It basically consists in classifying a large quantity of text units (the words, expressions and sentences into which the original text is divided) into categories according to their meaning, so as to produce valid inferences on the original text from its quantification.

The quality of the inferences thus obtained depends on the validity of the variables generated by the classification and on the reliability of the measurement procedure. An analysis is closer to the former the more effectively the categories created for classifying the text units represent the concepts intended for measuring. The latter is attained the more similar the results obtained by different people using the same codification are – or the results by the same analyst at two different points in time. The reliability of the classification must be verified by means of specific testing, especially when manual codification is used, as is the case of this analysis.<sup>7</sup>

At an international level, the main authority on content analysis in Political Science is the CMP, which holds an extensive database on the political positions of 780 parties of 54 countries since the war, estimated from their programmatic emphases. Initially coming together in the MRG, linked to the European Consortium for Political Research, researchers from several countries since the 1980s have mapped the political preferences of parties through the content analysis of their programmes (Klingemann *et al.* 1994; Budge 1999; Budge *et al.* 2001; Laver 2001; Bara and Weale 2006). The classification techniques

developed in the context of the CMP are the methodological references for this work, and will be described in the following section.

The content analysis which the programmatic documents of the Brazilian parties underwent consisted in dividing the texts into sentences and classifying each of them under one of the categories described in Chart 2. These correspond to the categories developed by the MRG (Budge *et al.* 2001) with the addition of group 000 – Sentences not classifiable under any of the categories – and category 306 – Political System Institutions –, created to accommodate the many occurrences of this subject in the manifestos analysed.<sup>8</sup>

**Chart 2** Codification table adapted from Budge *et al.* (2001)

Categories of Domain 1: External Relations	
101	USA: positive <sup>6</sup>
102	USA: negative
103	anti-imperialism
104	military: positive
105	military: negative
106	peace
107	internationalism: positive
109	internationalism: negative
Categories of Domain 2: Freedom and Democracy	
201	freedoms and human rights
202	democracy
203	constitutionalism: positive
204	constitutionalism: negative
Categories of Domain 3: Political System	
301	decentralization
302	centralization
303	governmental and administrative efficiency
304	political corruption
305	political authority
306	institutions of the political system <sup>7</sup>
Categories of Domain 4: Economy	
401	free enterprise
402	incentives
403	market regulation
404	economic planning
405	corporatism
406	protectionism: positive
407	protectionism: negative
408	economic goals
409	Keynesian demand management
410	productivity
411	technology and infrastructure

Chart 2. Cont.

412	controlled economy
413	nationalization
414	economic orthodoxy
415	marxist analysis
416	anti-growth economy
Categories of Domain 5: Welfare and Quality of Life	
501	environmental protection
502	culture
503	social justice
504	welfare expansion
505	welfare limitation
506	education expansion
507	education limitation
Categories of Domain 6: Fabric of Society	
601	national way of life: positive
602	national way of life: negative
603	traditional morality: positive
604	traditional morality: negative
605	law and order
606	social harmony
607	multiculturalism: positive
608	multiculturalism: negative
Categories of Domain 7: Social Groups	
701	labour groups: positive
702	labour groups: negative
703	agriculture and farmers
704	middle class and professional groups
705	underprivileged minority groups
706	non-economic demographic groups

Domain 000: Outlying subject. (Sentences that do not fit into any of the previous categories. Description of the current setting, historical narratives, internal party matters, sentences with very vague content, statistical data.)

6 The original definition of categories 101 and 102 refers to a country with which the home country of the party whose manifesto is under analysis has special relations. The choice of the United States is an adaptation for the research about Brazil.

7 This category is not present in the original classification, but was inserted to accommodate recurring references found in the manifestos of the parties studied.

## The content of the manifestos

Thus, after classifying the sentences of all the manifestos according to the categories above, it was possible to count what proportion of text from each document (measured by the number of sentences) was allocated to each subject. This distribution can be seen in



**Table 1** Programmatic emphases in the manifestos: Percentages of sentences by domain

Party/Manifesto	Domain								
	Outlying subject	External relations	Freedom and democracy	Political system	Economy	Welfare and quality of life	Fabric of society	Social groups	Total (n = 19720 sentences)
PDS 1979	17.4	5.6	5.4	4.5	21.8	25.1	4.2	15.9	100.0
PPB 1995	8.4	4.4	3.6	8.6	24.3	30.0	5.0	15.7	100.0
PP 2003	7.7	4.4	3.7	8.9	24.3	30.3	5.0	15.8	100.0
PDT 1980	14.2	8.2	15.5	0.7	22.3	14.8	5.0	19.2	100.0
PDT 1994	18.9	3.8	2.6	1.9	25.3	22.1	7.2	18.2	100.0
PT 1980	44.1	4.8	20.8	0.0	4.5	7.2	0.0	18.6	100.0
PT 1990	58.6	3.5	15.9	0.4	7.5	4.1	0.1	9.9	100.0
PTB 1979	16.4	7.9	14.7	0.7	21.6	14.7	4.6	19.5	100.0
PTB 2001	22.0	4.8	3.0	3.9	18.1	18.7	2.4	27.1	100.0
PMDB 1981	19.2	0.6	10.1	4.1	28.0	21.6	3.2	13.2	100.0
PMDB 1994	33.5	7.9	4.6	12.2	20.7	10.0	7.1	4.0	100.0
PFL pre-1988	15.3	2.8	13.5	11.1	22.5	18.5	5.9	10.5	100.0
PFL 1995	29.3	3.1	4.4	11	27.4	15.6	3.1	5.9	100.0
PFL 2005	36.9	5.2	11.2	4.5	30.7	9.8	1.7	0.0	100.0
PSDB 1988	25.4	3.4	11.1	12.3	24.8	15.2	0.2	7.5	100.0
PSDB 2001	24.4	6.3	5.7	13.8	22.1	16	6.0	5.7	100.0

Pearson's Chi-square Test = 3972.77; Degrees of freedom = 105; Significance = 0.000.

The data in Table 1 will be discussed in more detail for each party in the following section. However, certain considerations can already be made. The large amount of texts whose units (sentences) do not fall into any category draws attention.<sup>9</sup> This occurs mostly because all the parties include long sections on themes such as the history of the party in their manifestos, for example, usually in the introduction. Such content has no correspondence in the classification categories because the categories refer to issues that may be the object of political proposals by the parties. An example of this is the narrative about the process of re-democratization, present in the first manifesto of all the parties. It can also be observed that all the parties reduced the emphasis dedicated to the theme of re-democratization in the first review of their programmes, which is understandable, given that the regime transition had practically concluded by the beginning of the 1990s, ceasing to be a public agenda issue.

However, in spite of these similarities between parties, the proportions of text dedicated to each domain and measured by the percentage of sentences in the manifestos vary a lot from one party to another. This variation indicates that the prominence of subjects



in the manifestos is neither random nor independent from the party. The significance of the statistical test confirms that the parties differentiate from one another in the proportion of text their manifestos dedicate to each issue.

The distribution shown in Table 1 can be better understood by using residuals analysis, which shows the difference in the number of standard deviations between the number of sentences observed in each combination of manifesto and domain, and the number expected in the case of the null hypothesis of independence between the two variables.<sup>10</sup> The residuals of the distribution of sentences in the manifestos by domain can be seen in Table 2:

**Table 2** Adjusted residuals of the distribution of text among the domains in each manifesto

		Manifestos															
		PDS	PPB	PP	PDT	PDT	PT	PT	PTB	PTB	PMDB	PMDB	PFL	PFL	PFL	PSDB	PSDB
Domain		1979	1995	2003	1980	1994	1980	1990	1979	2001	1981	1994	Pre-88	1995	2005	1988	2001
0		-3.80	-7.98	-8.33	-6.64	-8.74	10.76	25.49	-5.07	-0.38	-3.76	-5.28	-5.28	5.47	6.93	1.52	1.89
1		1.51	-0.18	-0.14	5.60	-3.44	0.20	-1.51	5.21	0.23	-8.19	-2.41	-2.41	-2.41	0.67	-1.34	4.18
2		-2.02	-3.18	-3.14	10.47	-16.55	11.24	10.10	9.51	-2.96	4.95	7.17	7.17	-3.79	3.22	3.86	-2.82
3		-1.46	2.91	3.16	-6.95	-14.99	-5.23	-6.90	-7.07	-1.41	-2.99	6.75	6.75	8.15	-1.05	7.15	17.83
4		-0.89	0.65	0.65	-0.61	4.91	-9.37	-11.09	-1.18	-2.19	5.03	-0.40	-0.40	3.62	3.75	0.99	-1.24
5		5.21	7.08	7.19	-2.84	9.31	-6.05	-10.96	-3.01	0.21	3.81	0.17	0.17	-2.41	-4.54	-1.94	-2.92
6		-1.15	-0.06	-0.02	0.02	9.11	-4.89	-6.72	-0.60	-2.20	-3.69	1.16	1.16	-3.07	-3.19	-5.59	2.28
7		2.21	1.59	1.66	5.53	13.18	3.25	-3.01	5.92	7.43	-0.23	-2.48	-2.48	-7.72	-8.13	-4.29	-11.53

In this analysis, the residuals – and not the percentages – will be used to identify the parties’ programmatic emphases, because this resource allows us to identify in which category of the variables analysed in the table the relationship indicated by the association test (indicated at the end of Table 1) occurs, thus distinguishing the high percentages from those that are statistically significant.

The largest residuals in Table 2 allow us to identify the following relationships:

- PP significantly emphasises the themes of Domain 5 (Welfare and Quality of Life) and devotes significantly fewer sentences to themes outlying the classification (Domain 0).
- The two manifestos of PDT are inverted as far as the treatment they give to the issue of Freedom and Democracy is concerned: in the founding version, Domain 2 was the most emphasised, and in the reformulated 1994 version it came to be the least emphasised theme.

- PDT and PTB have many similarities. In their founding manifestos (1979), both of them emphasised the Domain 2 themes (Freedom and Democracy) more significantly, and the themes relating to the political system (Domain 3) significantly less. Furthermore, in the last versions of their programmes, both parties emphasised Domain 7 themes (Social Groups) significantly more and those pertaining to Freedom and Democracy (Domain 2) significantly less. In a way, these similarities between parties generally classified as having contrasting ideological positions is intriguing.
- PT significantly favours Domain 2 themes (Freedom and Democracy) in its founding manifesto and themes outlying the classification in the Charter of 1990, but in both documents the least emphasised themes are those pertaining to the economy (Domain 4).
- PMDB totally changes its emphases from one manifesto to the next. At the time of its foundation, themes related to the economy (Domain 4) were prioritised, while those pertaining to foreign relations gained the least attention. From the 1994 reformulation onwards, Domain 2 (Freedom and Democracy) became the most significantly emphasised and the proportion of text classed as outlying fell significantly.
- PFL, in the last two documents (those of 1995 and 2005), emphasised Domain 7 themes (Social Groups) significantly less, as did PSDB from 2001. However, the most significantly emphasised themes changed: Freedom and Democracy (Domain 2) in the founding documents, Political System issues (Domain 3) in 1995, and subjects outlying the classification in 2005.
- PSDB kept its main emphasis in both versions on Domain 3 themes (Political System). However, the least emphasised domain changed: from Domain 6 themes (Fabric of Society) in 1988 to Domain 7 themes (Social Groups) in 2001.

The circumstances surrounding the changes of emphasis will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

## The context and the manifestos

The emphases in Tables 1 and 2 show, in almost all documents analysed, a considerable proportion of text dedicated to themes that do not fit into the classification – termed here “outlying” themes.<sup>11</sup> The reading of the manifestos showed that these parts of the texts frequently referred to aspects of that moment in history, such as the re-democratization narrative and the role of the party in the process. In order to better understand this content, Table 3 distinguishes, from all the references coded in Domain 0 (“outlying”), those referring to such contextual elements:<sup>12</sup>

**Table 3** Contextual references among the sentences “outlying” the classification, in the manifestos

Manifesto	Domain 0 (sentences “outlying” the classification)		
	Contextual references	Other questions	N (100%)
PDS 1979	15.5%	84.5%	142
PPB 1995	22.7%	77.3%	44
PP 2003	27.5%	72.5%	40
PDT 1980	23.4%	76.6%	141
PDT 1994	0.5%	99.5%	1129
PT 1980	32.8%	67.2%	195
PT 1990	27.3%	72.7%	502
PTB 1979	10.2%	89.8%	166
PTB 2001	19.2%	80.8%	73
PMDB 1981	14.1%	85.9%	333
PMDB 1994	7.9%	92.1%	403
PFL pre-1988	10.5%	89.5%	124
PFL 1995	11.6%	88.4%	346
PFL 2005	10.3%	89.7%	155
PSDB 1988	11.0%	89.0%	155
PSDB 2001	10.3%	89.7%	561
Total	11.9%	88.1%	4509

Pearson’s Chi-square Test = 381.28; Degrees of freedom = 15; Significance = 0.000.

Table 3 confirms the impression given by the reading: once those “outlying” portions of text are recoded, many can be classified as contextual (referring to re-democratization and the role of the party in this process). The emphasis on contextual aspects varies a lot in the different documents analysed: PDT’s 1979 manifesto and both of PT’s programmatic texts (1980 and 1990) stand out due to the great proportion of this type of content, as do the manifestos of Partido Progressista Brasileiro (PPB, Progressive Brazilian Party) and PP for the same reasons.

These associations must be interpreted carefully, but it seems that the knowledge accrued about the Brazilian party system allows us to point out both the originality of PT’s proposal – whose founding texts insist that the content of the programme itself be open to workers’ participation – and the strategic need that led PPB/PP to reiterate its commitment to the regime transition in 1995, and again in 2003. This was much stronger than in 1979, when the party was still called Partido Democrático Social (PDS, Democratic Social Party), and was divided between guaranteeing its presence in the new democratic order and justifying its former support for the military dictatorship (Madeira 2006).

Another noticeable fact is the reduction in emphasis of the contextual aspects in the reformulated versions of the 1994 programmes of PDT and PMDB. This was possibly due to the perception that the process of democratic consolidation had advanced to the point of replace, in the public agenda, issues pertaining to the transition and to the original aims of the parties. These questions will be addressed in the following section, along with a brief account of the context in which each party issued its manifesto.

### **The PP manifestos**

PDS succeeded the Arena after the party reform of 1979, year in which it registered its first programmatic document. In 1995, it registered a new programme and manifesto, already under the name of Partido Progressista Brasileiro (PPB, Progressive Brazilian Party). PDS had already changed names in 1993 to Partido Progressista Reformador (PPR, Progressive Reformist Party), when it incorporated Partido Democrata Cristão (PDC, Christian Democratic Party), but the same programme was kept until the merger with PP, in 1995.<sup>13</sup> In 2003, it came to be known as PP and made fresh alterations to its programme and manifesto.

The 1979 programme had a tone that alternated between an exultation of the economic victories of the preceding period, and promises of engagement with the re-democratization process. It did not refrain from criticising what it termed “ideological intransigence” or from arguing that the State should use self-defence measures against “possible aggression by revolutionary minorities”, at the same time as it committed to the respect for human rights and the democratization of the electoral processes.

The second programme was launched in 1995, along with the party’s third name: Partido Progressista Brasileiro (PPB, Brazilian Progressive Party). It contained important differences from the previous one. A considerable proportion of text, originally filled with general descriptions and historical narratives, came to be dedicated to themes relating to the political system and social well-being. References to re-democratization gave way to objectives and evaluations for the consolidation of the representation regime. Among the directives outlined for the social field, the themes of education and social welfare were highlighted. The latter was considered to be in need of reform, including having its budget separated from that of other social benefits.

In 2003, its name was altered once again – this time to PP – and the programme was only slightly updated, having remained the same since then.

### **The PDT manifestos**

Founded in 1980, PDT based its first manifesto on the Carta de Lisboa (Lisbon Charter),<sup>14</sup> the document resulting from the meeting in Portugal in June 1979 with the

Brazilian *trabalhistas* of the old PTB.

The original programme was only reformulated in 1994, on the occasion of the 3rd Party Conference. The new programme mentioned the expression “Programme of Government”, but even so it could be considered as being the new party programme, given that in its preamble it was presented as the “expression of proposals by PDT for the construction of a national project”, to be discussed later in order to formulate specific electoral projects. According to the document itself, it would be the result of “an effort to update the founding documents of Partido Democrático Trabalhista, represented by the Carta de Lisboa, the Carta de Mendes (Mendes Charter) and the Party Programme.”<sup>15</sup>

From one version of the programme to another, the most emphasised themes, which in the founding manifesto were those of Domain 2 (Freedom and Democracy), in 1994 became those relating to specific Social Groups (Domain 7).

The support for democracy, which in 1980 occupied a significant proportion of the text, 15 years later became much less significant. In 1994, the PDT programme came to devote much more space to the theme of land reform, rural workers and technological development.<sup>16</sup>

### **The PT manifestos**

Created in 1980, PT has to this day kept the same programme and manifesto,<sup>17</sup> having added only in 1990 the text on a resolution pertaining to the *petista* concept of socialism, approved in the 7th National Meeting and reaffirmed in the 2nd Conference in 1999.<sup>18</sup> Thus, two programmatic documents were considered: the one in force since the foundation in the 1980s, corresponding to the foundation programme and manifesto, and the Charter of 1990 on *petista* socialism, in force from June 1990 onwards.<sup>19</sup>

The largest proportion of text of PT’s programmatic documents corresponds to descriptions of the historical process and declarations that do not fit into any of the categories of this analysis. In the founding documents (1980 manifesto and programme), there is an emphasis (measured by the domain of greatest residuals) on Domain 2 themes (Freedom and Democracy), but in the Resolution of 1990, the themes termed here as *outlying* became the most emphasised ones.

The themes most likely to become the object of policies do not seem very relevant compared to a very party-specific content. They are cast aside in favour of declarations of intention regarding the internal aims and functioning of the party itself. This is a rather intriguing result, as it makes PT stand out very much from the other parties.

However, this peculiar distribution of programmatic emphases is congruent with the argument, within PT, for the precedence of the principle of representation over the principle of direction of the working class (Singer 2001; Montenegro 2002). According to Montenegro (2002), the idea that the primary function of a party is to represent the working class and

its interests (that are intrinsic and non-contrastable with any theories) to the detriment of carrying out a role of education and conduct of the masses (as per the leninist conception) has accompanied PT since its foundation and could be responsible for its “deliberate choice of programmatic fluidity”.

The formulation of a clear project for society and even the very definition of the type of socialism to be advocated by the party maybe were discarded due the priority assigned to the political presence of wide popular contingents in the new democracy. Singer (2001, 40) even states that “To a certain degree, the existence of PT was, up to a point, its own programme”. Thus, the party that has been widely considered in the literature as an example of a programmatic party in Brazil is the same party that assigns the least importance to political definitions in its programme.

### **The PTB manifestos**

Like PDT, PTB also formulated its first manifesto based on the content of the Carta de Lisboa (Chacon 1998). This first document was kept until 2001, when the party issued its new programme.

PTB’s first manifesto is incredibly similar to that of PDT, as both practically reproduced the content of the Carta de Lisboa (Chacon 1998). The founding programmatic emphases are the same: the most emphasised domain is no. 2 (Freedom and Democracy). In the revised 2001 version the emphasis changed to being on themes relating to specific Social Groups (Domain 7). Similarly to PDT’s programme, here the support for democracy gave way to the theme of land reform and rural workers.

### **The PMDB manifestos**

Emerging from the party reform of 1979, PMDB kept its founding manifesto until 1994, when it approved the document called Democracia com Desenvolvimento – Novo Programa Doutrinário do PMDB (Democracy with Development – The New Doctrinal Programme of PMDB) at a national conference.

The differences in emphasis between the two versions of the PMDB programmes are huge. In its foundation, the party favoured economic themes (Domain 4). After the programmatic review of 1994, the proportion of text dedicated to outlying issues increased and the emphasis became mainly on Domain 2 themes (Freedom and Democracy). The interest in themes pertaining to foreign relations, political system and internal order institutions increased, while the references to well-being and social groups decreased. The party seemed to abandon the profile that identified it for a long time – that of a party engaged with the process of democratization and society’s quality of life – to become more attentive to formal aspects and conjunctures of political life.



These changes are contrary to Ferreira's (2002, 166) interpretation, which identifies a continuity and consolidation of the programmatic profile throughout time,<sup>20</sup> based on the presence, in both programmes, of a strong support for the democratic regime and economic development by the State.

### **The PFL manifestos**

PFL emerged in 1984 from a split in PDS. Its first programme dates from 1985, when it officially registered with the Higher Electoral Court. Ten years later, the party carried out a programmatic review from which resulted many political documents, amongst them the 1995 programme. In 2005, after another decade, the last programmatic document was issued. For the purposes of this analysis of programmatic emphases, the documents pre-dating the period of study<sup>21</sup> were grouped under the title "Pre-1988 Documents".

PFL's emphases changed very much over time. The totality of its programmatic documents produced prior to the 1988 Constitution gave greater emphasis to the themes of Domain 2 (Freedom and Democracy). After the first revision, the themes outlying the classification began to make up the larger percentage of text and the most emphasised themes became those pertaining to the Political System (Domain 3).

This new version of the programme, approved in a conference in November 1995, was developed in the context of the Projeto PFL 2000 (PFL Project 2000), which aimed to formulate a new programme of action for the party from debates in four areas: 1) organic law for political parties; 2) modernization of the electoral legislation; 3) restructuring of strategies for the 1996, 1998 and 2000 elections and 4) constitutional reforms (Tarouco 1999).

The result was a programme whose emphasis ceased to be on supporting the democracy (common to the manifestos of the other parties during the regime transition) and concentrated on issues of institutional design of the political system. The large proportion of non-classifiable text remained. This time it was due to the evaluations on the task of re-democratization and economic stabilization fulfilled by the party (and considered successful) and to the description of its own internal process of programmatic reformulation, given the requirements of the new conjunctures.

In 2005, in the document titled *Refundação do PFL* (Refounding of PFL), no other theme was highlighted as much as the part of the text occupied by the issues termed here as outlying. The narrative of the trajectory continued to occupy a significant amount of space, and now statements on the need to change in order to keep up to date with the changes occurring in the world were added. Such a need required a political repositioning of the party and an updating of its ideas.

The great proportion of text dedicated to themes that do not fit into the classification categories is a characteristic that PFL shares with PT. Curiously, these are the two parties



that are generally referred to as being the ones with the most defined political identity.

### **The PSDB manifestos**

PSDB came on the scene in 1988 from the split in PMDB. Its original programme was kept until the 2001 reformulation. Its emphases in terms of domains remained exactly the same since its inception.

Although it apportioned large amounts of its texts to themes that are classified here as outlying, in both versions the emphasis is on themes related to the Political System (Domain 3). In both versions the support for the parliamentary system occupies considerable space, but in the 2001 document there is also a great portion of text in support of a wide reform of the political system, including the adoption of an electoral system with proportional representation by districts.

According to Roma (1999), the content of the founding programme of PSDB (of 1988) contradicts its social-democratic ideology when it makes proposals of a liberal nature. According to him, this dilemma in the construction of the party's identity could be related to its pragmatic and electoral origin.<sup>22</sup> The absence of societal links could have served for it to easily adapt to electoral demands, including adapting through reviews of its political and ideological directives and inconsistent coalitions.

In spite of the predictions of the above model, PSDB has not made use of its “versatility” in its programmatic emphases, kept since its foundation. One possible explanation for this is that the identification of party preferences from the analysis of programmatic emphases does not depend on a one-dimensional positioning on the left-right axis, in which the party can move so as to seek votes. In the example of PSDB, the reiterated interest in the theme of political system institutions does not affect the (liberalising or state-oriented) sense of the policies proposed by the party in other areas.

### **Measurement reliability**

As we saw in the beginning of this section, the use of a manual content analysis technique requires a reliability test. A measurement's reliability is its quality of being free of measurement errors. A variable's degree of reliability can be identified by replicating the measuring process and comparing results. However, in the case of the main independent variable of this piece of work – programmatic emphases – this is not a simple task.

Two manual content analyses of the same text carried out by different researchers are very unlikely to produce the exact same results, even if the same categories are used. This is due to the inherently subjective nature of a personal reading.

In the specific case of the programmatic texts of the parties analysed here, as well

as the analyst's interpretative bias, the classification of the manifestos' sentences can also contain errors due to other factors, e.g. ambiguity in the text's composition, insufficient decision criteria and even inadequate categories for the object in question (Brazilian party manifestos).

As a solution for verifying the reliability of category evaluations, the literature suggests comparing the classifications with those of a second researcher.

The main reference on this is the kappa index, or simply, the k index, proposed by Jacob Cohen (1960). This is a concordance coefficient for nominal scales that removes the effect of random coincidences. That is, it measures the degree to which two or more classifications agree substantially, beyond accidental coincidence, in the (null) hypothesis of complete independence.

The content analysis reliability test of the party manifestos used in this article to measure the programmatic emphases of parties was made with the assistance of a second researcher,<sup>23</sup> who classified a sample of the texts, thus providing an element of comparison.

According to the index k formula, the concordance measurement must only take into account the proportion of occurrences in which both classifications coincide, over the total sample. The cases in which both codifiers were in agreement amounted to 848, which corresponds to 78% of the total. This proportion must then be controlled by the proportion of concordance that one expects to occur by accident, according to the hypothesis of independence.

Index k is calculated as follows:

$$k = \frac{\text{no. of observed concordances} - \text{no. of expected random coincidences}}{\text{Total number} - \text{no. of expected random coincidences}}$$

Index k varies from -1 (when all the classifications diverge) to 1 (when all classifications are identical) and is equivalent to 0 when the proportion of concordances is limited to the proportion of random coincidences (those that would be observed even in the case of independence). The test consists in confronting the substantive coincidence hypothesis against the null hypothesis (k=0).

For the sample in question, index k is 0.743, which is statistically significant.<sup>24</sup> This value is considered good by the literature (Landis and Koch 1977; Bonnardel 2001) and allows us to accept the measurement carried out as reliable.

## Conclusion

The content analysis of the programmatic documents of the main Brazilian parties shows that, contrary to the general expectation among analysts, the texts of the programmes do not have the same content, and the difference in emphases is not random either.

It is possible to distinguish Brazilian parties from one another not only by the types of questions they emphasise more, but also by those they emphasise less.

We could say that, although the themes relating to democracy are the most emphasised in five out of the 16 documents analysed, there are themes that can be identified as specific to each party. Thus, the prominence of questions about the political system (which include the debate about the system of government) can be recognised, as is the case of PSDB's specific emphasis on this matter. This was constant in both of the moments analysed (and in common only with PFL's 1995 programme). It is also possible to identify that the party that most leaned towards themes pertaining to the economy was PMDB in its 1980 manifesto. What is also clear is the choice of Domain 5 themes, relating to welfare and quality of life, by PP, as well as the association between the current PDT and PTB and their emphasis on Domain 7 themes (Social Groups).

Some of these relationships may seem counterintuitive if the usual ideological classification of the Brazilian parties is applied. For example, it might be surprising to see that two parties commonly seen as the most programmatic and emblematic of opposing ideological positions – PT and PFL – are the ones that concede the most space in their programmes to content that does not deal with political proposals (the so-called outlying themes). This is similar to the aforementioned similarity between PDT and PTB. In its turn, the emphasis by PP on issues of well-being seems to go against the expectation based on its classification as a right-wing party. This expectation is based on the commonly made association between a state of well-being and social policies of redistribution; traditional guiding ideas of left-wing parties.<sup>25</sup>

The explanation for these apparently enigmatic contrasts lies in the very concept of party competition. Ideological classification is one-dimensional and intended to distinguish the parties by the proximity or distance between each of their proposals and the left and right poles. Meanwhile, the criterion of programmatic emphases is based on the selection by the parties of different parts of the public agenda, for which each of them formulates their proposals. The left-right counterpoint is frequently made use of in analyses of the Brazilian political system and seems to offer reasonable explanations for some recent processes, but is not sufficient to politically identify the totality of the parties. This article proposed to offer an alternative perspective on the arena of political competition: the multidimensional perspective of programmatic emphases, able to distinguish party identities by the issues the parties choose as priorities, not by the (liberalising or state-oriented) solutions that they can offer to those issues.

This analysis evidently still leaves several important questions unanswered: How can the identification by programmatic emphases be reconciled with ideological classification? How can the variations in programmatic emphases in the programmes of the same party

throughout time be explained? These are challenges to be met on a different occasion.

However, the finding that the Brazilian parties distinguish from one another by their programmatic emphases, and that these can be identified in the text of their manifestos, already points to an important feature of the Brazilian party system, until recently ignored – that the political preferences of the Brazilian parties must not only be sought in the content traditionally attributed to the ideologies of left and right (more or less intervention by the State, more or less market freedom). The inference of the parties' preferences according to their ideological position may have become insufficient to distinguish between the Brazilian parties, as has been the case in other countries.

The research agenda on the institutionalization of the Brazilian party system and on the impact of the parties on many areas (on governments' priorities in terms of public policies, for example) cannot continue to limit the political identity of the parties to their ideological classification. The results concerning the programmatic emphases obtained here also suggest the importance of a review of the debate on the alleged irrelevance of the Brazilian political parties.

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## Notes

- 1 A quick search in the electronic catalogues of the libraries of some political science postgraduate programmes revealed four dissertations about PSDB, four about PFL, one about PDS, two about PPB, five about PMDB and one about PDT, to mention just contemporary parties. Reviews about the vast array of works on PT may be found in Leal (2005) and Ribeiro (2010).
- 2 This definition diverges from that by Janda *et al.* (1995), for whom the identity of a political party corresponds to the image that citizens have of it.
- 3 According to the economic theory of democracy, parties move along the ideological spectrum formulating policy proposals to obtain votes, in search of which they allow themselves to change positions. Under these conditions, parties would formulate policies so as to win elections and not the other way round; in other words, they do not run in elections with the aim of implementing policies. Also according to Downsian theory, parties position themselves in relation to the desirable weight of state intervention in the economy, between the left extremity (full government control) and the right extremity (completely free market). The position assumed could vary according to the expected preference of the median voter, whose vote the parties strive for; in other words, parties position themselves on the left-right scale in order to compete for votes.

- 4 1018 party manifestos from 19 democracies between 1945 and 1983: results published in Budge *et al.* (1987); review, in 1992, of the 54 categories initially formulated: Laver and Budge (1992); comparative research into the relation between manifestos and government expenditure in 10 democracies during the 40 years after World War II: Klingemann *et al.* (1994); mapping of parties', electors' and governments' political preferences in 25 democracies between 1945 and 1998: Budge *et al.* (2001). Enlargement of the database to cover countries of Eastern Europe, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and European Union: Klingemann *et al.* (2006).
- 5 Despite several changes in the party's name and the incorporation of other, smaller parties over the course of the period studied, one is dealing with the same party that used to be called PDS, PPR and PPB, registered at the Higher Electoral Court under number 11.
- 6 One is dealing here with the party currently called Democratas (DEM).
- 7 There exist various computer programs that automate content analysis, thus reducing the time and effort needed for the manual procedure, as well as ensuring full reliability. Neuendorf (2002, 226-35) presents a list of content analysis software, with a description of each, including with respect to accessibility.
- 8 MRG's original classification scheme also includes two categories referent to the European Community (108 – positive and 110 – negative) that were not used and therefore are not on Chart 2.
- 9 In one of PT's documents this proportion surpasses 50% and has a specific explanation that will be dealt with below.
- 10 Frequencies observed that distance themselves more than 1.96 standard deviations from the expected frequency (in the independence hypothesis) have a likelihood equal to or below 5%, which indicates statistical significance.
- 11 The occurrence of sentences that fall without the classification categories is not a problem specific to this work. In the MRG analyses, the proportion of "uncoded" sentences varies from zero to 89% (1973 manifesto of the Danish Ventresocialisterne Party), with values at 50%, such as the case of the 1993 manifesto of the Polish Mniejszość Niemiecka (Germanic Minority) Party.
- 12 I thank an anonymous BPSR peer reviewer for this suggestion, previously made by Pedro Floriano Ribeiro — who I belatedly also thank — at the presentation of a prior version of this work during the 2007 meeting of the National Social Science Postgraduate and Research Association (ANPOCS).
- 13 The decision to consider that the PDS programme remains valid for the PPR even after the 1993 change in name is in line with the findings of Almeida (2004, 55), according to whom despite the confluence of several members of other parties at this moment, the PDS continued to be dominant.
- 14 Reproduced in Chacon (1998).
- 15 Obtained at [www.pdt.org.br](http://www.pdt.org.br), on 2 June, 2006.
- 16 This is the largest document of all those analysed, and contains details of the policies to be advocated by the party in every field, including some repetitions. This suggests that its drafting resulted from the compilation of texts by different authors.
- 17 Like for the other parties, government programmes – launched during each election campaign and supported by the other parties of the alliance in question – were not taken into account, for the interest here is in party programmes.

- 18 *O socialismo petista*, published in Partido dos Trabalhadores (1998) and on [www.pt.org.br](http://www.pt.org.br) (obtained on 5 June, 2006).
- 19 PT has approved various political texts since its founding, over the course of several gatherings and congresses. Considering all of them to be programmatic documents in this analysis, quite apart from being unfeasible, would produce an insurmountable bias in comparison with the other parties. The decision to select the resolution of the 7th gathering (1990) was based on the fact that the party itself presents it as a document that is as important as the manifesto and founding programme, upon publishing it as one of PT's historical documents on its website, side by side with the 1980 programme.
- 20 This divergence in the results is probably owed to the difference in methods employed: the intensity of statements is something that can only be well assessed by means of qualitative analysis, such as that conducted by Ferreira (2002), while the different emphases put on the various subjects can only be measured by quantitative analysis of the content. Furthermore, what the author calls the "programmatic profile" corresponds to the ideological profile and not to the concept of programmatic emphasis employed here.
- 21 Founding Manifesto (1984); Programme (1985); Letter of Commitment (1986).
- 22 Roma (1999) disagrees with the explanations according to which PSDB was formed exclusively on the basis of an ideological and programmatic dissidence within PMDB. The author argues that the creation of a new party was an electoral strategy to make the most of public opinion's sympathy for PMDB while at the same time dissociating itself from the image of the Sarney government.
- 23 Yuri Kasahara, then researcher at Núcleo de Estudos do Empresariado, Instituições e Capitalismo (NEIC-IUPERJ) and currently research fellow at the Centre for Development and the Environment – University of Oslo, for whose valuable contribution I am grateful.
- 24 Kappa measure = 0.743182; standard error = 0.014643; T = 61.14063; significance = 0.000; N = 1087. Krippendorff (1980) proposes the  $\alpha$  index, calculated inversely, i.e., using the expected and observed frequencies of divergences among the codifiers, which produces exactly the same result:  $\alpha = 1 - (\text{divergences observed} / \text{divergences expected by chance}) = 1 - (239 / 930.62) = 0.743182$ .
- 25 However, this association must be pondered by the consideration that there are different Welfare State models, and that the redistributive principle is not present in the residual models, for instance (Esping-Andersen 1991). I thank a BPSR anonymous peer reviewer for drawing my attention to this question.

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