Abstract

For decades, conservative political machines have controlled the state governments of the Northeast region by distributing patronage and dominating vast areas of the interior of these states through clientele networks. Most of these governments were turned out in 2006 by leftist opponents, who relied on support in urban centers. The re-election of some of these leftist governors in 2010 coincided with the shifting of support in poor, rural districts away from conservative machines. This preliminary study maps these spatial shifts in three states – Bahia, Ceará, and Maranhão – and tests various determinants of these changes that are exogenous and endogenous to state politics. The study finds some support for the influence of presidential coattails, the strategic use of public spending, and political alliances in the success of leftist incumbents making incursions into territories dominated by conservatives. But conservative incumbents also demonstrated that they could use these resources to effectively defend their bailiwicks and hold onto power.
Conservative rule and clientelist political machines at the subnational level (state and municipal governments) in Brazil have historically relied on incumbency and control over territory. Incumbency guarantees governors in particular access to the patronage they need to dispense to local bailiwicks in return for votes on election day. The more established this exchange relationship is, the more incumbents can be said to control political territory. In this way, conservative rule creates enclaves of political domination, especially in poor and rural municipalities (Ames 2001). In no other region of Brazil has this system worked so well and for so long as in the nine states of the Northeast, an area that has constituted the geographic redoubt of conservative rule and the basis for right-wing influence in national politics since independence (Vilaça and Albuquerque 1988; Mainwaring, Meneguello, and Power 2000; Power 2000; Montero 2011a). Rural areas in Brazil tend to be sparsely populated, making enforcement of vote-buying more low-cost. Face-to-face meetings between political operatives and voters to acquire signals of support in return for material favors are still possible in these areas (Nichter 2009; Gans-Morse, Mazzuca, and Nichter 2010). Nevertheless, such dominance does not guarantee electoral victory. In the 2006 elections, most conservative governors in the Northeast lost to their most dedicated opponents on the left, who mobilized in urban areas to overcome the incumbents’ advantages in poor, interior municipalities. In the 2010 elections, most of these leftist incumbents retained office. Given the loss of incumbency for the right in 2006 and the return of leftists to power in 2010, conservatives’ political control over territory has seemingly eroded in the Brazilian Northeast.

The present study has two purposes. The first is to illustrate empirically the territorial shifts between the 2006 and 2010 contests that suggest how conservative dominance in the underdeveloped areas of the poorest states may be eroding. These patterns are somewhat
tempered by the preservation and even the deepening of right-wing support in states in which the conservative machine was able to survive the change elections of 2006 and utilize incumbency once again to hold onto power in 2010. The second purpose of this study is to conduct preliminary tests using spatial analysis of the causes of these shifts. This section will consider variables involving national (exogenous) effects on state politics and factors endogenous to subnational politics. Consideration of exogenous causes will focus on presidential electoral coattails and social policy. Given President Lula da Silva’s historic popularity, his hand-picked successor, Dilma Rousseff, the candidate of Lula’s Workers’ Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores, PT), may well have helped down-ticket leftists in the 2010 race, undermining conservatives’ positions in their old bailiwicks. Likewise, Lula’s premier social policy, the Bolsa Família cash transfer program, may have undercut the clientele networks of conservatives as several scholars have suggested recently (Fenwick 2009, 2010; Hunter 2010; Borges 2007, 2008). Among the endogenous causes are variations in local partisan alliances, the spatial pattern of public sector spending and the history of clientele networks. Leftist parties retained the alliances that produced their victories in 2006 in states such as Bahia and Ceará, but they split in Maranhão, allowing the incumbent conservative machine to retain power. Incumbency helped leftists in Bahia and Ceará by allowing public sector spending to be targeted to areas of the interior of the state where these candidates would make inroads against the clientele networks of conservatives.

The results in this study demonstrate that leftist incumbents in 2010 were able to make the most substantial inroads into the territories dominated by conservative rule by organizing beyond the urban core, tying their campaigns to the Lula/Dilma government, and gaining more votes in poor areas served by Bolsa Família. Being out of power and without access to patronage meant that conservatives remained in a weakened position but they were not entirely defenseless.
If the option of allying with the incumbent president was available, and credit for securing the attendant resources emanating from that relationship could be co-opted, conservatives could come back to power or remain in office if they were the incumbents.

Since the empirical work presented in this study involves fine-grained spatial analysis, this paper focuses on the three most populous states of the Northeast: Bahia, Ceará, and Maranhão. These states are similar in their socio-economic development as measured by the United Nation’s Human Development Index, urbanization, and demographics (Borges 2008). The urban-rural distribution of federal social spending and public sector dependence across their municipalities is also similar (Montero 2010: Table 1). The three states also reflect a useful variation in electoral results. In the 2010 contest in Bahia and Ceará, leftist incumbents (Jacques Wagner of the PT and Cid Gomes of the Brazilian Socialist Party (Partido Socialista Brasileiro, PSB, respectively) were re-elected in the first round with over sixty percent of the vote. In Maranhão, Roseana Sarney, a conservative ex-governor using the PMDB ticket, who lost to Jackson Lago of the PDT in 2006 only to reclaim gubernatorial office by successfully winning a court case charging her rival with electoral fraud, was re-elected in the first round with just over fifty percent of the vote. In all three states, the changes engineered by leftist oppositions overturned decades-long dominance by conservative political machines (Borges 2007, 2008). Two of the states, Maranhão and Bahia, were run by collaborators of the military during the twenty-one year bureaucratic-authoritarian regime (1964-1985) and they remained dominated during the succeeding democratic period by the largest party of former, pro-military conservatives, the Party of the Liberal Front (Partido da Frente Liberal, PFL; since 2007, known as Democratas, DEM). Ceará was controlled by a pro-business cadre that ran the state using the
apparatus of the *Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira* (PSDB), an effective political machine that held power for twenty years after the transition to democracy.

To appreciate how the 2006 election marked a sea change in the politics of these three states and set up particular challenges for leftist incumbents up for re-election in 2010, it is useful to provide some background on each of these polities. The Bahian case epitomizes conservative rule better than any other in Brazil. Since 1971 when he was first appointed by the generals as governor, Antônio Carlos Magalhães (or “ACM” as he came to be known), ran Bahia as his own personal fiefdom. He created a vast clientele network that parlayed ACM’s own appointments at the federal level and his three gubernatorial terms to employ patronage strategically. The effect was to either co-opt or crush rival factions on the right and eliminate all opposition (Dantas Neto 2006: 248-50). The first democratic president, José Sarney (1985-90) confirmed him as minister of communications, which gave ACM control over the licensing of radio stations – a key patronage resource that he used to extend his political machine well into the federal legislature. Along with his son, Luís Eduardo, ACM emerged as the key patron of the right-wing in support of Fernando Henrique Cardoso’s first term (1994-1998), allying the president’s PSDB to the PFL, the party that ACM was most affiliated with during his political career.\(^1\) At the state level, *carlista* politicians such as Paulo Souto and César Borges organized in the PFL, became governors, and dominated the legislature until 2006.\(^2\) True to the *parentela* logic of traditional elites, ACM’s son, Antônio Carlos Magalhães Júnior, and his grandson, Antônio Carlos Magalhães Neto, are involved in state and federal politics and continue to lead the *carlista* machine in Bahia.
Maranhão evinces several of the same qualities of dominance by a conservative network and traditional parentela. The state was ruled by a single political group organized around federal senator Victorino Freire from 1945 until 1965. The election of José Sarney to the governorship in 1966, a traditional politician who served as an inspiration for Glauber Rocha’s famous political film, Terra em Transe (1967), created a political machine that would remain in power to this day (Cabral da Costa 2006; Reis 2007). Sarney’s own daughter, Roseana, would claim the governorship in 1994 and then again in 1998, in 2009 by court order, and in 2010. Due to rivalries within the ruling elite, the sarneyista machine lost the governorship briefly to the mayor of the capital of São Luis, Jackson Lago of the left-leaning Partido Democrático Trabalhista (PDT), but Roseana quickly reconstituted the group’s dominance by successfully challenging Lago’s victory in the courts and then engineering her own re-election in 2010. In a calculated move that would serve her well in the 2010 contest, Sarney supported Lula’s presidency, causing the PFL to abandon her and leading her to the catch-all Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro, PMDB).

Unlike Bahia and Maranhão, the political machine in Ceará was constructed by a cadre of business leaders who had removed the oligarchic triumvirate of former army coronels who had ruled the state up to the beginning of the transition to democracy in 1985. Tasso Jereissati, the head of the chief business association, the Industrial Center of Ceará (Centro Industrial do Ceará, CIC), gained the governorship in 1986 with the support of the state’s business sector (Bonfim 1999). Jereissati and the PSDB created a political machine dedicated to running the state based on business principles of sound fiscal management, civil service reform, infrastructural investments, and social policy (Moraes 2006; Tendler 1997; Bonfim 1999, 2002). To implement its policy visions, the tucanos (named after the avian symbol of the PSDB) co-opted rivals,
closed off patronage resources, and engaged in an extensive system of buying mayors and voters (Moraes 2006: 300). The result was one of the least competitive political systems among Brazil’s twenty-six states (Borges 2007, 2008; Bonfim 2002: 49-52). Jereissati and the PSDB held the governorship from 1986 to 2006, the longest run of one-party control in the democratic period.

Given how closed these three political systems were to opposition, the fact that the change election of 2006 occurred at all is surprising. The causes of that sea change are analyzed elsewhere (cf. Borges 2007, 2008; Montero 2010, 2011b). The present study conducts a preliminary analysis of what progress leftist opponents of conservative rule engineered between 2006 and 2010 as incumbents in Bahia and Ceará and as a continued opposition in Maranhão. My concern is not primarily with examining the determinants of support for leftist or conservative gubernatorial candidates nor do I define “progress” as re-election. The focus of this study is on shifts in the territoriality of support for left and right and particularly how incumbency may have affected these changes between 2006 and 2010. The next section provides a theoretical justification for focusing on the territoriality of electoral performance in the Brazilian Northeast and a descriptive analysis of how the spatial distribution of support changed over time in Bahia, Ceará, and Maranhão. The subsequent section examines the endogenous and exogenous factors that may explain these changes. The final section offers some tentative conclusions.

The Territoriality of Political Domination

Political control over territory is fundamental in the competition to secure office in Brazil. Given that the exchange of political support for particular, and therefore excludable, tangible benefits to voters is central to clientelism, limiting the domain of the local electorate’s
choices and the availability of alternative material reward systems are crucial to maintain clientele networks. Both the monopoly aspect of the bosses’ control over resources and the dependence of poor households on these goods and services make the threat of withdrawal for failure to commit (or pre-commit) to a political candidate favored by the machine credible to voter-clients. In this way, clientelist monopolies are strongest where local bosses can isolate their subjects, oversee their electoral behavior, and credibly threaten them if they renege on their vote-buying contracts (Magaloni, Diaz-Cayeros, and Estévez 2007; Medina and Stokes 2007). Maintaining this monopoly involves strategic efforts by incumbents to close down resources that might otherwise flow to the opposition; what Gibson (2005) calls “boundary control.” The costs of such strategies are low in areas where the public sector, and therefore patronage, forms one of the only sources of employment and problem-resolution. Typically, poor, rural and isolated areas enhance the capacity of clientele networks and political machines to form and continue (Chubb 1982; Scott 1969). In Brazil, the continuity of these bases have historically guaranteed conservatives a floor of support that has allowed some to create political machines that have lasted decades, under different regime types, and despite the modernization of the economy and further differentiation of the class structure (Montero 2011a). Therefore, breaking these local enclaves is central to the larger effort to increase the political competitiveness of subnational polities. An emerging literature has even identified this task as one of the most neglected areas in the study of democratization in comparative perspective (cf. McMann 2006; Giraudy 2010; Gervasoni 2010).

The long-held symbiosis between local forms of political domination and gubernatorial largesse that has undergirded the sustained influence of conservative political machines in the Northeast has been particularly difficult to defeat and displace. Before 2006, the entrenched
position of conservatives forced leftist challengers to mount offensives on these systems from urban cores. Spatial analysis of the vote in these states demonstrates that leftist challengers moved out from urban toeholds established in earlier elections to capture votes in municipalities surrounding capitals, regional trade hubs, and coastlines, areas with larger and more diverse populations that are difficult for conservatives to isolate into clientele networks and where the left can appeal to organizations such as unions and social movements to garner votes (Ames 2001). These centers also favored the labor-intensive organizational strategies of leftist partisan campaigns, which are more costly to maintain farther from urban centers (Montero 2010). In 2006, these territorial shifts in electoral support coincided with leftists capturing the governorships of most of the states in the redoubts of conservative rule in the Northeast.

But clientelist enclaves in the interior of the poor states do not simply melt away or shift their support to leftist candidates once these become the incumbents. Conservatives in opposition use these places as a base from which they can launch their own offensives to take back state offices. As a result, once they are in power, the main political task of leftist incumbents facing these kinds of conditions must be to use their resources to undercut clientelist political machines. While centrists and populists might simply forge new agreements with the same local bosses that once served conservatives, leftist incumbents come to power by attacking the clientelist system. They embrace pro-poor policies that try to improve the lives of the worse off, breaking the cycle of dependency that empowers local bosses and, in more extreme cases, challenging property rights that serve to lock in poverty and inequality. To that end, leftist candidates offer public goods rather than particularist policies. Having assumed power on such an agenda, the political success of leftist incumbents – namely their task of getting re-elected – is measured differently from the political success of conservatives. While right-wing incumbents measure success
through continuing in power (continuismo) supported by local clientelist machines, leftist incumbents must show that they are making territorial advances by expanding their support base outside of the urban cores and into the interior. Otherwise, they risk conceding the interior as reserved domains of conservative rule.

The main assumption in this analysis is that by undoing local clientele networks, poor voters would plump for incumbent leftist candidates for governor. The ideology of the candidate may not matter, as César Zucco has shown, because less developed places in Brazil tend to register higher rates of governismo (incumbent-oriented voting) in presidential elections (Zucco 2008, 2010a). Zucco finds that this is an empirical regularity that precedes recent presidencies and likely correlates with the dependence of voters and local politicians on transfers from both the federal and state governments (2010a: 6). More important, analysis of survey data between the 2006 and 2010 elections demonstrate that governismo extends to incumbent governors and is strongest overall in the Northeast (Montero 2011a). Given the Brazilian electorate’s weak partisan loyalties and ideological self-identities, we would not expect voters to have many reasons to not support the incumbent.

But the incumbency bias can only go so far, and in 2006, it did not help conservatives retain office at the gubernatorial level. Finding themselves out of power and without easy access to the patronage that fed their political machines for so long, conservatives in the Northeast are especially vulnerable to experiencing erosion of their control over electoral territory. But this fact only underscores their determination to retain their control of the countryside and use it to stage a comeback. As several cases discussed in this paper demonstrate, conservatives in particular will use any means available to them and mobilize the vote from their bailiwicks in the poor interior. Incumbency also does not guarantee that leftists can flip conservative enclaves by virtue of
taking gubernatorial office. In all cases, leftist incumbents can make some territorial incursions but not enough to reorient the nature of politics in the poor interior of their states in one or two electoral cycles.

The 2010 gubernatorial elections provided the right an opportunity to make a comeback in their old redoubts, but with a couple of exceptions, they were not successful. In six of the nine Northeastern states taken by leftist challengers in 2006, four were re-elected in 2010 (Bahia and Sergipe with PT governors, Ceará and Pernambuco with PSB governors). Jackson Lago of the PDT had his mandate revoked by court order in Maranhão, putting the ex-governor and conservative Roseana Sarney back in power. Sarney won in 2010 and the candidate of the main conservative party, the DEM (Democratas, formerly the PFL), won in the sixth state, Rio Grande do Norte. But the total number of leftist governors was largely unchanged with the coming to power of a PSB governor in Paraíba and the election of a PSB successor to a PT incumbent in Piauí.

What the aggregate electoral data cannot say is whether the territorial distribution of support for the left reflected an advance on conservative enclaves in the interior or a continued dependence on urban cores. Drawing on Barry Ames’ *The Deadlock of Democracy in Brazil* (2001), I map the spatial patterns of political competition between right and left forces based upon the above expectations. Ames develops a quantitative score for electoral dominance based on a given candidate’s share of the vote per municipality weighted by the percentage of the candidate’s total vote the municipality represents. Since multiple candidates may run in the first round of a gubernatorial vote and represent leftist or rightist parties, I pooled these candidates’ vote shares per state and election and used them to calculate electoral dominance per municipality. These scores are then divided into a five- or six-category, color-coded legend.
Since the territorial distribution of dominance score gradations are easier to see in a selected group of states rather than all twenty-six, I report the maps of political dominance for the three states that are the focus of this paper: Bahia, Ceará, and Maranhão, and for the elections of 2002, 2006, and 2010.


Although somewhat visually noisy, the resulting maps give an impression of where left and right garner their support. In the 2002 elections, all three states saw the continuation of right-wing political machines in power, led by incumbents, the return of ex-governors, or former advisers of political chieftains (Paulo Souto in Bahia, Lúcio Alcântara in Ceará, and José Reinaldo Carneiro in Maranhão). Unsuccessful leftist challengers garnered large concentrations of their vote shares in urban areas in all three cases, around capital cities and regional trade hubs. Support for the incumbent machines was more widely dispersed throughout the interior of each state, in keeping with what we would expect from the territorial organization of clientele networks in poor, rural areas. This pattern continued in 2006 but with an evident dissipation of dominance in interior municipalities. Leftist challengers, all successful this time, garnered support from urban centers as they did in 2002, but in wider, concentric patterns around these points. They also gained more support in the interior. Cid Gomes’ victory in Ceará reflects this movement into poorer areas, in part due to the fact that he received the conditional support of an important dissident faction of the incumbent political machine prior to the election. In the 2010 contests, leftist incursions into the interior of each state were more acute even as these candidates continued to rely on their position in urban and ex-urban areas. The dominance score maps illustrate that support for the left became more geographically dispersed even as the urban cores and environs remained the hub of their campaigns. Consistent with these findings, the pattern of
conservative dissipation in Bahia became more noticeable. The right retained widespread support in the interior municipalities of Ceará and Maranhão.

The political dominance maps are merely spatial distributions of a weighted score, so the results are visually noisy. A more rigorous method that is easier to interpret for depicting spatial patterns is to conduct an analysis of local indicators of spatial association (LISA) (Mitchell 2005). This involves calculating the cross-product of the standardized value of the first variable at a municipal location, with that of the average for the same or a second variable in contiguous neighbors. LISA analysis allows us to view what Ames (2001) calls “horizontal coverage” - the spatial clustering of support for a candidate. To be sure, contiguous clustering of electoral support among municipalities is not the only or even necessarily the most important predictor of winning elections. However, spatial clustering matters for our purposes due to what it demonstrates about the status of clientele networks. We expect such systems to be pervasive in any municipality of the interior of the Northeastern states, and part of their sustainability is the extent to which resources and voter choices are monopolized territorially. If clients could easily escape the influence of patrons by moving to a nearby town, clientele networks would not be as sustainable as they have been historically and especially in rural and poor areas. Likewise, the clustering of leftist support in these interior municipalities indicates that these networks have been more thoroughly overturned. Another reason why clustering matters to the left concerns the overall concentric pattern of expanding support for these candidates around urban cores. Indeed, such clustering patterns help to explain the change elections of 2006, but it is the clustering in the interior and beyond urban hubs that suggests territorial progress in overturning erstwhile systems of conservative rule. The spatial clustering results of 2010 suggest that leftist incumbents have been able to expand into the poor interior, often using toeholds in medium-sized, second or third
cities in their respective states. This is a key indicator of the effects of leftist incumbency. Being in control of gubernatorial discretionary spending allows these elites to target interior municipalities between elections, though this is one of several causal mechanisms that I consider in the next section.

[Figures 4-6 Cluster Maps of Left and Right Support in BA, CE, and MA]

The univariate LISA cluster maps in Figures 4-6 show the concentration of left and right support for each state in 2010. The clusters are coded positive (“High-High”/“Low-Low”) and negative (“High-Low”/“Low-High”) among contiguous neighbors with all shaded clusters showing localized correlations that are statistically different from spatial randomness. The maps also include a global statistic for the clustering pattern in the entire study area (the state). The Moran’s Index (or Moran’s I) is a measure of spatial autocorrelation that ranges from -1 (complete dispersion) to 1 (complete clustering). Each spatial unit (“polygon”) has a range of contiguous neighbors with either similar or different cross-products on a given variable. Positive and high Moran’s indices indicate clusters of neighbors with similar values while negative and low indices represent high dispersion. Both possibilities can be statistically significant if sufficiently above or below zero to reject the null hypothesis of a random spatial pattern. In each case and for both left and right, the Moran’s I statistic is positive and significant, indicating that the phenomenon of voting for left and right candidates registers spatial clustering in all three states. In other words, the maps confirm that there is a spatial dimension to the distribution of the vote that is not accounted for by a statistical analysis of the pooled electoral data.

What is important for our purposes are the local patterns, and this requires a substantive interpretation of the LISA results. In Bahia and Ceará, high-high support in 2010 for Wagner and Gomes, respectively, clustered not only in urban cores but well into the interior of these states.
The shaded red clusters indicate municipalities that collectively plumped for the leftist incumbents. This includes small towns around Barreiras in the center of Bahia state and west of the capital of Salvador and the southeast of Ceará encompassing Juazeiro do Norte with 3 percent of the state’s electorate. Conservatives maintained clusters focused in less populated, poor, and more rural zones such as the northeast of Ceará and pockets in the interior of Bahia and along the coastline south of Vitória. At the same time, leftist incumbents retained strong clusters around capital cities, including nearby agglomerations such as Feira de Santana (Bahia) and Maracanaú (Ceará). Overall, this confirms the patterns seen in the political dominance maps of incursion into the interior by leftist incumbents and conservative dissipation in these areas coupled with relative weakness in urban centers compared to the results of 2006. Maranhão follows a different pattern with Sarney able to hold onto her enclave in the southeastern portion of the state where small towns located around the small city of Balsas have consistently voted for the machine. She also split the urban vote in São Luis and she benefitted from the division of competing leftists in 2010. Leftists garnered more consistent support in the southwest part of the state in the area surrounding the second city and regional hub, Imperatriz. As I discuss below in greater length, this pattern allowed Sarney to reconstitute her support base in the interior after removing Lago from power. While the conservative in our sample rebuilt her machine in the interior, the leftist incumbents in Bahia and Ceará used their wins in 2006 to displace conservative support in the interior while keeping their dominance in the capital and surrounding municipalities. The next section considers how they might have done it.
Some Determinants of Shifting Electoral Territoriality

This preliminary study tests the effects of some exogenous and endogenous factors in state politics that may explain shifts in the territoriality of electoral performance in the three states of Bahia, Ceará, and Maranhão. It is “preliminary” in the sense that the attempt here is to identify plausible candidates for more systemic testing involving all of Brazil’s states and certainly the other six in the Northeast region.

Among the available variables exogenous to state politics, scholars have tested presidential coattails and the spatial distribution of Bolsa Família Program (BFP) monies as predictors of the territoriality of the vote (cf. Soares and Terron 2008; Montero 2010). Regarding coattails, there is much evidence to suggest that they might play a role. Zucco (2008, 2010a, 2010b) and Hunter and Power (2007) note that Lula was immensely popular in the poorest states of Brazil. In the Northeast, approval ratings exceeded 80 percent for his government. Lula was able to elect his former chief-of-staff, Dilma Rousseff, as Brazil’s first woman president in 2010 in great part due to voters’ association of her candidacy with the continuation of his governing program. It is, therefore, useful to ask without considering policy effects whether Dilma’s share of the presidential vote at the municipal level explains the clustering patterns of left and right support in the three states under study.

[Figures 7-9 Cluster Maps of Dilma’s Share of the Vote with Left and Right Support in BA, CE, and MA]

Figures 7, 8, and 9 depict the cluster map results for the spatial cross-products of Dilma’s share of the vote for president and the down-ticket vote shares going to leftist incumbents and conservative challengers. The global Moran’s I scores support the expectation that the spatial clustering effect is positive for the left and negative for conservatives in Bahia and Ceará. More
important, comparing the LISA findings, the placement of local clusters coincides roughly between those two maps and the maps in Figures 4 and 5. The cross-mapping coincides more clearly in the case of Bahia, which is to be expected given that Jacques Wagner, prior to being elected governor, served with Dilma Rousseff in Lula’s administration. So the connection in voters’ minds between the two was stronger than the Dilma-Cid Gomes link in Ceará. Dilma’s vote shares coincide territorially with Gomes’ in the southeast of the state, though there are more spatial outliers there and in the agglomerations around the capital of Fortaleza. The global Moran’s I results for Maranhão are the reverse, underscoring the effectiveness of Roseana Sarney’s stratagem of eliciting Lula’s support and campaigning for Dilma. Not surprisingly, Dilma’s vote shares reinforce the clustering of right-wing support and her coattails disperse support for Sarney’s leftist challengers. The cluster map of right vote shares coincides well with the clustering of conservative support in Figure 6. Based on these results, the spatial effects of Dilma’s coattails can be orthogonal to ideology and contingent on other factors endogenous to state politics.

Turning to social policy, we may assume that voters support incumbents in response to the tangible benefits they receive from government policies. In the post-2003 period, the Lula government launched an institutionally reconstituted and expanded conditional cash transfer program known as the Bolsa Família Program (BFP). Reaching over 40 million people by the time of Lula’s re-election in 2006, the BFP was credited with a substantial reduction in poverty and even with adding to the economic growth of the poorest states of Brazil. In contrast to the exchange of particular benefits to voters in return for electoral support, the BFP is credited with being a non-clientelist transfer of funds to targeted households based on income. Provision of the funds is conditional on families keeping their children in school and giving them regular access
to healthcare, including vaccinations. Not only has the BFP proved welfare-enhancing, it has allowed the federal government to directly reach voters in underdeveloped, rural areas in the interior of the poorest states as well as the poor in urban centers (Hunter 2010; Zucco 2010a). Municipal disbursement and a universal criteria for eligibility have helped to undercut the influence of clientelist networks in these areas, providing a potentially transformative political effect (Fenwick 2010; Soares and Terron 2008; Borges 2007). The actual mechanism causing recipients of BFP monies to plump for Lula and Dilma, may simply be the shifting of dependence on local bosses to dependence on federal resources and the rewarding of the politician most associated with the BFP, the president (Zucco 2010b; Hunter and Power 2007; Fenwick 2009). Although the effect on behalf of PT and other like-minded candidates at the gubernatorial level has been shown to be much weaker (cf. Figueiredo and Hidalgo 2009; Montero 2010, 2011b), the BFP may have a lagged effect, culminating in securing areas that were previously under conservative rule.

[Figures 10-12 Cluster Maps of Bolsa Familia Program Disbursements and Left and Right Support in BA, CE, and MA]

The results depicted in Figures 10, 11, and 12 that show the spatial cross-products of BFP disbursements, represented as a percentage of individuals per municipality receiving the monthly benefit, and support for left and right in the three states, offer little evidence of a consistent, positive effect for incumbents in Bahia and Ceará and leftist opponents in Maranhão. The expected effects of BFP are strongest in Bahia. Although the distribution of these monies does not cluster positively overall as shown by the insignificant Moran’s I statistic, there are still some effects that reinforce the capacity of Wagner’s share of the vote to move into areas previously dominated by conservatives. Most notably, the localized effects in the center of the state are
positive. This is different from the 2006 results that show positive clustering only for conservatives in these areas (Montero 2010). Also, BFP disbursements reinforce the dispersion of conservative support as noted by the significant, negative Moran’s I. The program tends to more clearly undermine the leftist incumbent in Ceará and the opposition to Sarney in Maranhão. In both states, BFP monies disperse the left’s support base and reinforce the clustering of right-wing territorial dominance. Both the global and localized effects seem more positive for the right in each state. We can speculate about why this occurred in 2010 and why it happened in Bahia in 2006, but fundamentally it has to do with the fact that BFP monies go to more inhabitants per capita in the poorest areas of these states where clientele networks have historically been strongest. The poor and undereducated voters of these areas seem to have no trouble connecting the popular social program and its direct and indirect effects on the local economy to Lula and perhaps Dilma (Zucco 2008, 2010a, 2010b), but making the same connections for down-ticket candidates is more difficult. Recent studies of the Northeast electorate suggest that poor voters in particular can be easily fooled to give credit to politicians claiming authorship for popular policies (Figueiredo and Hidalgo 2009). My own interviews with political party elites in the three states under study suggest that the practice of rivals of the PT appropriating authorship for BFP monies and its salutary effects is widespread in the Northeast. Such campaigns can prove successful as there is some voter focus group data suggesting that voters will split their loyalties to reward the presidential incumbent for BFP but not the gubernatorial candidate most connected to the president or his/her party (Hunter 2010).

The evidence suggests that the two primary factors exogenous to state politics of presidential coattails and BFP disbursements do not have a proximate effect on the territorial, electoral shifts that occurred between 2006 and 2010. Both of these predictors may well have
interacted with variables endogenous to state politics and particularly the nature of political alliances. For example, it seems evident that Sarney’s stratagem of allying with Lula proved effective in undermining her mostly leftist rivals. Her opposition also split their forces prior to the election into two groups, one led by Flávio Dino of the Brazilian Communist Party, who took 30 percent of the vote, and Jackson Lago, who captured 20 percent of the vote. The state-level PT voted prior to the election to support Dino but was ordered by the national executive of the party to endorse Sarney instead, thereby depriving the Communists of the support of the largest leftist party in Maranhão. In the electoral contest of 2006 in Ceará, Cid Gomes, an ex-mayor of the medium-size city of Sobral, was able to secure the support not only of the leftist parties, including the PT, but of the largest party of the center-right, the PMDB. Due to splits in the *tucano* elite that pitted Tasso Jereissati against the former governor, Lúcio Alcântara, Gomes had the conditional support of several former allies of Tasso, Eunício Oliveira of the PMDB and, reportedly, Tasso himself. This gave the leftist unprecedented access to the interior of the state not only in 2006 but as the incumbent governor in 2010. In Bahia, Wagner and the PT stood more clearly in contraposition to the *carlista* machine, but unlike the leftist opposition in Maranhão, he was able to win based on the secure support of the urban core and clusters in the center-interior of the state. Leftist parties formed a more coherent and consistent block in support of Wagner’s campaign, and as already noted, his identification in the voters’ minds with Lula and BFP helped him in 2010.

The history of alliances in each state provides a set of plausible, proximate explanations for the *electoral results* of 2010, but it is difficult to test these explanations with the spatial distribution of the vote. An alternative endogenous explanation is how incumbents used public sector spending to reinforce their chances of re-election. We can assume that conservative
incumbents spend on patronage resources that strengthen their existing clientele networks at the local level while leftists spend on public policies intending to replace these particularistic networks. For both, public sector spending will have the most leverage in municipalities in the interior that are most dependent on these resources. The type of spending and the ideology of the governor are less important than the overall size of the public sector in a given municipality and the local economy’s dependence upon it. Using the measure of the percentage of the economy composed by public sector spending per municipality, I generate cluster maps to test the proposition.

[Figures 13-15 Cluster Maps of Public Sector Spending and Left and Right Support in BA, CE, and MA]

Since the dependence of local economies on the public sector correlates inversely with urbanization and leftists tend to garner more votes in cities, the global Moran’s I scores in Figures 13, 14, and 15 are not substantively significant for them. By contrast, we would expect conservatives to still get more votes in dependent enclaves, even if they are out of power. The positive and significant Moran’s I for the right in Ceará and Maranhão confirm that expectation. Control of local governments and the promise of winning state office still afford these elites influence over their clients in the more isolated municipalities. What interests us in these maps is the extent to which leftist incumbency and the governor’s control over the direction of state resources affects the territorial distribution of the 2010 vote. In this regard, the LISA results in Figures 13 and 14 are more important for our purposes. Comparing these maps with those in Figures 4 and 5, it is clear that municipal dependency on public outlays clusters in key areas for the left. Once again, the crucial space in Bahia is the center-west and in Ceará the southeast. These local indicators of spatial correlation seem to apply to incumbents regardless of ideology.
since the same maps for Maranhão (Figures 6 and 15) also coincide, but for the conservative
governor in this case. These results suggest that leftist incumbents target public sector resources
strategically in ways that help expand territorially their support in the interior while conservative
incumbents focus on deepening their ties with extant clientele networks in poor districts.

To be sure, the causal predictors analyzed here must all be subjected to more rigorous and
systemic testing, but the mapping of exogenous and endogenous factors suggests that several
preliminary conclusions are possible. The results demonstrate that leftist incumbents in 2010
were able to move beyond their urban core support from 2006 to gain votes in particular interior
regions of their states. Jacques Wagner’s campaign seemed to be favored most by the full array
of exogenous and endogenous factors, including Dilma’s coattails, BFP disbursements, the
weakening of the carlista machine, and the strategic use of public sector spending. Cid Gomes’
re-election campaign benefited less from Dilma’s coattails and more from public spending. It
appears that the BFP worked against Gomes and for his conservative opponent. In Maranhão,
where the normal logics of left and right seemed to be overturned prior to 2010, Sarney benefited
clearly from Dilma’s coattails, BFP disbursements, and public sector spending. While the
electoral results there were less a rout than a squeaking through (she won with a margin of less
less than 1 percent of the vote in the first round), the spatial distribution of support suggests that
the sarneyista machine continues in better health than that of the tucanos in Ceará and certainly
the carlistas in Bahia.

Conclusions

Political control over territory is central to electoral competition in Brazil. For decades,
conservative political machines have controlled the state governments of the Northeast region,
producing a rump political force that has allied with national leaders in return for the patronage these machines have needed to keep themselves in power, sometimes over generations (Mainwaring et al. 2000). The twin pillars of conservative rule have been incumbency and control over enclaves in the interior of their states. These were mutually-reinforcing as incumbency opened the door to the patronage that was necessary to maintain clientele networks and provide the electoral dominance at the local level that kept whole swaths of the poor, rural interior loyal to machines. The coming to power of the leftist opposition in most of these states in the 2006 electoral cycle marked the end of incumbency but not necessarily the elimination of enclaves of conservative rule in the interior. These remained areas subject to the logics of clientelistic exchange and, therefore, targets to be steered in favor of the erstwhile machine in subsequent elections. Consolidating the efforts of leftist incumbent governors to change the politics of their states would require making campaign- and policy-based incursions into the interior, far beyond the urban base that these politicians depended upon to win power in 2006. The 2010 contest provided the first test for these reformers, and also a crucial challenge to conservatives who remained in office or who sought to regain power.

The results of the present study demonstrate that leftist incumbents were able to make substantial incursions into conservative bailiwicks in 2010. At least, this was the case in the two cases of leftist incumbencies, Bahia and Ceará. In both cases, leftist parties were able to reach voters situated beyond the urban and ex-urban cores. Factors exogenous and endogenous to state politics help to explain these shifts, though to different degrees across the cases.

Among the exogenous causes, the study considered the coattails of Lula’s hand-picked successor, Dilma Rousseff, and his government’s popular social program, Bolsa Família. Dilma’s coattails were as useful to leftist incumbents in 2010 as were Lula’s in 2006, though in
the latter contest they were more evidently associated with territorial gains in the interior. But Dilma’s coattails were orthogonal to ideology as demonstrated in the case of Maranhão, where voters tended to support her and the incumbent conservative governor, Roseana Sarney. Lula’s landmark conditional cash transfer program, *Bolsa Família*, did even less for leftists. Jacques Wagner, who was the most closely associated with Lula and the BFP in this sample, benefitted as an incumbent in a way he did not while he was in the opposition in 2006 (Montero 2010). The BFP gave Wagner a boost in areas localized in the interior, though overall for the state, BFP monies did not boost the territoriality of vote shares for the left. They did, however, undermine the concentration of conservative vote shares. Like Wagner, Gomes’ candidacy benefited from BFP in localized clusters in the interior. But the overall effect of BFP resources on his vote shares was negative. The program concentrated in areas that voted for conservatives and it was associated overall with a dispersion of support for Gomes. This was also the case in Maranhão, once again, suggesting that credit for a popular social program can be co-opted by other politicians. The best example of the possibilities is illustrated by Sarney’s embrace of Lula’s program and the subsequent clustering of her vote shares in areas that were heavy recipients of these monies.

Factors endogenous to state politics, and particularly the pattern of political alliances prevented the two major exogenous variables in the study to have a consistent, direct effect on the territorial shifts in support between 2006 and 2010. Having the closest personal, ideological, and programmatic connection to a popular president and his successor, Wagner in Bahia enjoyed the benefits of Dilma’s coattails and the BFP. Gomes relied more on expanding his PSB’s range of allies to include center-right organizations such as the PMDB and factions of the old machine.
This allowed him to pursue support well within the interior of Ceará, albeit from secondary cities and regional hubs.

Causal mechanisms that are endogenous to state politics are difficult to operationalize, but one useful measure is public spending. The localized spatial results for municipal dependence on the public sector suggest that both leftist and conservative incumbents use discretionary spending politically. The difference is that leftist incumbents target such spending strategically to acquire electoral territory in former enclaves of conservatives while the right tends to play defense in its bailiwicks. If conservatives moved to an offensive strategy, they would need to divide the urban vote. Divided leftist forces, as evidenced in the Maranhão case, provide a similar effect in favor of conservatives holding onto power.

This preliminary study suggests that much more empirical work should be done on the mechanisms that lead to territorial shifts. We can assume that voters respond to policy-induced redistribution, but how that occurs and whether credit is given to gubernatorial candidates as well as presidents is unknown. There is some evidence in the Northeastern states that voters in 2006 were inclined to reward Lula for Bolsa Família but to plump for the old conservative machine for governor depending on where the voters were (Montero 2010). One fundamental limitation to the kind of data analyzed in this paper is that it must speculate as to how individual voters make their decisions based on where they are located. Household survey data, controlling for location, would provide greater insight into this process and the cues that voters follow in making their choices.
Figure 1: Electoral Dominance Scores for Right and Left Candidates in Bahia, Ceará, and Maranhão, 2002
Figure 2: Electoral Dominance Scores for Right and Left Candidates in Bahia, Ceará, and Maranhão, 2006
Figure 3: Electoral Dominance Scores for Right and Left Candidates in Bahia, Ceará, and Maranhão, 2010
Figure 4: Cluster Maps of Left and Right Support in Bahia, 2010
Figure 5: Cluster Maps of Left and Right Support in Ceará, 2010

Legend

Cluster Types

- State Capital

- Low-Low

- Low-High

- High-Low

- High-High

- Not Significant

Global Moran's $I = 0.3402$, $p = 0.001$

Global Moran's $I = 0.3815$, $p = 0.001$
Figure 6: Cluster Maps of Left and Right Support in Maranhão, 2010
Figure 7: Cluster Maps of Dilma’s Share of the Vote with Left and Right Support in Bahia, 2010
Figure 8: Cluster Maps of Dilma’s Share of the Vote with Left and Right Support in Ceará, 2010
Figure 9: Cluster Maps of Dilma’s Share of the Vote with Left and Right Support in Maranhão, 2010
Figure 10: Cluster Maps of *Bolsa Familia* Program Disbursements and Left and Right Support in Bahia, 2010

Legend

- **Cluster Types**
  - Not Significant
  - High-High
  - Low-Low
  - Low-High
  - High-Low
- **State Capital**

Global Moran’s I: 0.0047, p=0.999

Global Moran’s I: -0.0080, p=0.001
Figure 11: Cluster Maps of Bolsa Familia Program Disbursements and Left and Right Support in Ceará, 2010
Figure 12: Cluster Maps of *Bolsa Familia* Program Disbursements and Left and Right Support in Maranhão, 2010
Figure 13: Cluster Maps of Public Sector Spending and Left and Right Support in Bahia, 2010
Figure 14: Cluster Maps of Public Sector Spending and Left and Right Support in Ceará, 2010
Figure 15: Cluster Maps of Public Sector Spending and Left and Right Support in Maranhão, 2010

Legend
- Cluster Types
  - High-High
  - Low-Low
  - Low-High
  - High-Low
- State Capital

Global Moran’s I: 0.1673 p=0.001
Works Cited


Notes

1 ACM was elected to the governorship of Bahia in 1990 and then the senate in 1994, where he served until his death in 2007. His son, Luís Eduardo, served as president of the chamber of deputies from 1995 to 1997 and in the congress thereafter until his untimely death due to cardiac arrest in 1998. All of these positions were under the *legenda* of the PFL.

2 Politicians of other parties, particularly the PTB, PL, and PPB, were also part of the *carlista* machine.

3 The PT governor of Piauí was re-elected in 2006, so that would be a seventh state led by a leftist after that cycle.

4 Domination \((D_i) = V_{ix}\) where \(i\) is the candidate’s share of all votes cast per municipality \(x\) and then weighted by \(T_{ix}\) percentage of the candidate’s total vote municipality \(x\) contributes).

5 The cluster maps show the location of the *cores* of clusters having either high-high or low-low relationships among cross-products. Where values are inverse (high-low and low-high), clusters are designated as *spatial outliers* that are the converse of the linear relationship.