Their Separate Ways:

Leftist Mobilization and Clientelist Continuity in Brazilian Subnational Politics

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Abstract

This study explains the erosion of conservative rule and the rise of leftist oppositions at the gubernatorial level and particularly in the Northeast region during the 2006 electoral cycle. Compared against explanations based on economic modernization and social spending, the data best support the hypothesis that the organizational and spatial dimensions of leftist mobilization in these states have shifted to the detriment of conservative machines. Specifically, urban mobilization of leftist supporters has determined the electoral success of these oppositions.
The 2006 Brazilian elections represented a continuity of government at the presidential level with the re-election of Inácio Lula da Silva, but it was marked by notable discontinuity at the subnational level in gubernatorial and state legislative races. Nowhere was this discontinuity more significant than in the states of the Northeast region, where several erstwhile conservative political machines were replaced by leftist opponents. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate these transformations by demonstrating how new leftist governorships came to power in the old redoubts of conservative rule between two electoral cycles.

Conventional explanations for the political shifts in the Northeast include arguments that voters “rewarded Lula” by helping down-ticket leftists who tended to be from or allied to the president’s Workers’ Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores, PT). Lula’s coattails, then, carried like-minded leftists to power in gubernatorial offices especially where the personalism of Lula could rub off on individual candidates. Lula’s policies might also have had a role, and somewhat independent from Lula’s campaigning. Most prominent is the suggestion that the conditional cash transfer program, Bolsa Família (Family Grant, BF), had both direct and indirect effects in causing voters to plump for leftists (Borges 2007; Souza 2009; Soares and Terron 2008: 281).¹ The Lula government’s overall spending on the Northeast, which involved a sizable increase in the minimum wage and outsize allotments for infrastructure, are seen as having supported the president’s success in gaining widespread support for re-election (cf. Sola 2008; Hunter and Power 2007; Zucco 2008; Marques, Leite, Mendes, and Ferreira 2009). Conceivably, such policies might have aided down-ticket co-partisans and other leftists indirectly by lifting more households out of poverty and expanding formal sector employment. Drawing on erstwhile insights from the literature on modernization theory and political machines, some observers have claimed that such economic transformations have weakened clientelism and thereby freed voters
to elect the opposition (Hunter 2010b; Silva, Braga, and Costa 2010; Shikida, Monasterio, 
Araújo Jr., Carraro, and Damé 2009; Soares and Terron 2008).

[Figures 1 and 2 here]

Recent research, however, suggests that the success of subnational oppositions in the Northeast and elsewhere in Brazil are the result of more differentiated patterns of support for change by the poor. Zucco (2010) reports that presidential incumbents prior to Lula’s re-election in 2006 enjoyed a strong incumbency effect (governismo) among poor voters in poor, interior regions (os grotões), while they struggled to acquire the support of the poor in rich places. Lula’s base of support came from the poor in both poor and rich places. These findings require further work on the demography of the vote, and particularly on the spatial dimensions of political behavior at the subnational level. On their face, the results for 2006, if proof of an ongoing governismo effect, cannot explain votes for the leftist opposition in 2006 in the old redoubts of conservative rule.

Understanding the spatial elements of the 2006 vote will shed more light on the actual patterns of governismo that emerge in the Northeast. While most voters in these states plumped for Lula and perhaps rewarded him for his good social and economic policies in the region, many of these same voters supported conservative incumbents. The evidence shows that these voters tended to be located in the interior of the Northeastern states, far enough away from urban centers that they remained well within the influence of local clientelist networks working in favor of conservative incumbents (Montero 2010). By contrast, in urban areas, the leftist opposition was able to mobilize voters, including the poor. But urbanization is not the same as rich places. The evidence demonstrates that leftist opponents to conservative rule depended not on richer places for their base but on urban centers. The distinction made here is between
modernization effects, which are shown to be weak, and organizational-mobilizational effects in urban areas, which are shown to be strong.

The spatial patterns of voting depicted above reflect larger tendencies that have developed for some time in the Northeast and that explain the watershed moment that was the 2006 electoral cycle. Tables 1 and 2 illustrate the historical trends during the New Republic. These aggregate data suggest that the tendencies discussed here predate many of the national-level factors (e.g., Lula’s presidency, *Bolsa Família*, and the recent period of commodity-led export growth) that many studies argue explain the rise of leftists. That the North and Northeast especially figure so prominently in *both* the erosion of the right and the ascendance of the left in subnational politics requires further explanation. In the case of the Northeast, no other region of Brazil has afforded the political right the high levels of domination for as long as conservatives have enjoyed them. Under these circumstances, center-right and even center-left partisans have had little choice but to form alliances with conservatives to gain access to the patronage of government (Souza 2009; Dantas 2006; Lewin 1987). Historically, this has reduced the support base of leftist parties to toeholds mostly in urban areas where organizational allies such as unions and consumer groups provide these parties with rank-and-file members (Ames 2001:100). The expansion of the mobilizational capacity of these leftist parties during the 1990s and 2000s built an infrastructure that set the stage much earlier than 2006 for the watershed election. These parties were built around the gradual expansion of a rank-and-file base. But being limited in their capacity to sustain contacts in the interior due to distance, poor transport and communication systems, leftist organizations in the Northeast tended to expand their base in concentric patterns around urban centers. This relegated interior districts to political machines and their clientelist monopolies.
Given these historical and spatial patterns of partisan mobilization, neither the president’s coattails nor targeted social policies can fully explain conservatives’ electoral decline or the success of leftists in subnational contests in 2006. Differences in the organizational strategies of conservative and leftist parties in the Northeast provide a more accurate and proximate set of explanations. In this region, the fundamental differences between conservative organizations’ dependence on access to government patronage and leftist organizations’ dependence on grassroots mobilization are sharpest. In the next section I discuss these erstwhile organizational patterns in theory and in the Brazilian experience. To contextualize these arguments further, I call upon original data gathered from interviews of presidents, general and organizational secretaries of the main parties in the three largest Northeastern states: Bahia, Ceará, and Maranhão. The subsequent section tests statistically the urban-mobilizational argument emanating from this work against conventional predictors of the 2006 gubernatorial elections discussed above. The penultimate section provides spatial analysis in the case of Bahia to illustrate further the utility of the urban-mobilizational explanation. The final section concludes the study.

Their Separate Ways: Capital-Intensive Conservatives, Labor-Intensive Leftists

Leftist and conservative models of parties in Brazil reflect two distinctive forms of organization that are captured by two typologies, one relating to the origins of parties and the other to their mobilizational strategies. The importance of origins is that the circumstances in which a party first organizes a support base shape its subsequent behavior. Martin Shefter (1994) elaborates on this point in making a distinction between “externally” and “internally” mobilized
parties. Internally mobilized parties are founded by elites within the established regime. In the case of Brazil, these are the parties that emerged from the bureaucratic-authoritarian regime’s party system, particularly the “official” parties that were either pro-regime (PSD and its main offshoot, the PFL) or anti-regime (PMDB and its main offshoot, the PSDB) (Power 2000). Externally mobilized parties are created by regime outsiders. The PT and other leftist parties (i.e., PPS, PSB, and PCdoB) clearly fall into this category (Meneguello 1989; Mainwaring 1999: 165-66). Shefter (1994: 30-31) argues that internally mobilized parties, having been spawned by regime insiders, build a mass base through the dispensation of patronage, while externally mobilized parties, having been closed out of the state, must develop a grassroots base.

Differences in origins produce distinct mobilizational strategies that are captured by Kaare Strøm’s (1990) typology of “labor-intensive” versus “capital-intensive” organizations. Brazil’s conservative and center-right catch-all parties, the PMDB and the PSDB, are inclined to pursue capital-intensive campaigning through the distribution of material rewards in the form of a combination of public and private goods in payment for past and future support (Mainwaring 1999: 167). The costs of patronage trade off with greater certainty that supporters will show up at the polls and vote for their patrons. Leftist parties, by contrast, pursue “labor-intensive” strategies. These organizations require more extensive networks of supporters and more elaborate organizational mechanisms linking rank-and-file and the party directorate. The leaders of these organizations must buy the services of their activists, and if they are like the leftist parties in the Brazilian Northeast that have spent more time out of power than in office, they do so based on the promise of future policies if they win. Party leaders must make such commitments credible if they are to retain the services of activists in future campaigns. And one of the principal means of doing so is by increasing activists’ sunk investments in the party by
integrating the rank-and-file into the internal governance of the organization. This may be accomplished through the decentralization of responsibilities and the enhancement of upward organizational mobility. Leaders must remain more accountable to their rank-and-file just as activists take on more responsibility themselves.

The organizational differences between leftist and conservative parties in Brazil follow the two typologies regarding origins and mobilizational strategies. The leftist parties in Brazil, and particularly the PT, have the organizational imperatives Strøm (1990) ascribes to unified parties and Shefter (1994) applies to externally mobilized ones: they gather information about the electorate and its interests, they mobilize supporters during campaigns, and they implement party policy in institutions to which the organization gains access. Of these, the mobilizational function is most important. The Workers’ Party represents the archetypal case as it is well organized and highly institutionalized but its leadership has little autonomy from the rank-and-file (Samuels 2004; Mainwaring 1999: 166; Keck 1992). High levels of internal participation by rank-and-file members of the party coupled with low levels of leadership autonomy reinforce the use of mobilizational campaign tactics. So party leaders share with grassroots activists the operating principle that empowering citizens through participation in politics is effective in undercutting clientelistic dependency (Nylen 1997: 430-432; Hunter 2008, 2010a). The day-to-day influence of rank-and-file partisans imprints on the PT a tactical preference for mobilization. Comparatively, the leftist parties enjoy a strong connection between the grassroots and the partisan leadership, albeit with varying degrees of leverage by rank-and-file partisans over their leaders (Lacerda 2002: 41-42).

As capital-intensive, internally-created organizations, conservatives rely on access to patronage and the maintenance of clientele networks to mobilize supporters around elections.
These networks are decentralized, with ties being delegated to local officials. These ties are also largely informal and long-term, relying on previous personal and fraternal contacts that are periodically reinforced by the distribution of patronage (Lewin 1987; Chubb 1982). Gaining and keeping control of the state apparatus is the *sine quo non* of conservative rule. Without it they have little capacity to protect their bailiwicks between election cycles.

How origins and mobilization types explain partisan behavior can vary over time but also over space. In decentralized democracies such as Brazil, the evolution of party organizations is not exclusively national but involves subnational trajectories, some advanced and others lagging. Externally created parties, once intense in their ideology and founding myths due to the fact of their exclusion from power, will moderate once they move into positions of governing and become more tempted by the same incentives that organize internally created parties. This process will vary geographically as externally created parties in some states and regions take governorships while branches of the same organization remain excluded in other places. This pattern is evident in tables 1 and 2, which show the Northeast in particular as the region of Brazil in which conservatives have been most politically dominant. In contrast to the South and Southeast, where leftists faced less entrenched conservative positions, leftist oppositions in the Northeast have been excluded from executive office during most of the New Republic. This extended exclusion has made these organizations even more dependent on labor-intensive grassroots mobilization and it has preserved some of the ideological glue within these organizations that has long since eroded in their southern branches.

Based on a series of interviews I conducted in June-July 2009 with the presidents and general secretaries of the major parties in the three largest Northeastern states – Bahia, Ceará, and Maranhão – it is possible to generalize about a set of norms that animate leftist and
conservative organizations in the region. Leftist party leaders use as the backdrop to their discussions about politics a clear, historical understanding of the incumbent forces arrayed against them. They discuss their organizational tactics as part of a larger strategy to undermine existing clientelist machines (e.g., carlismo in Bahia, tassimsmo in Ceará, and the sarneyista machine in Maranhão). The immensity of the task requires that these organizations form lasting alliances that make common cause across leftist parties (*ampliar frentes políticas*). The glue linking these parties is an embrace of program-oriented mobilization, especially campaigns to improve education, sanitation, and rural development. Leftist respondents imbed these themes in party-centered strategies that call on rank-and-file members of the organization to organize face-to-face and collective meetings in cities and interior towns where the party seeks to maintain a consistent presence.

By contrast, conservative respondents hardly mention partisan organization at the grassroots level. My conversations with these leaders were dominated by discussions of *particular individuals* and speculation concerning whether this or that politician would side with another or a group in the forthcoming election cycle. Conservatives emphasize personal loyalties and the ability of mayors, especially, to mobilize the vote on behalf of the incumbent (conservative) governor or the king-maker within the dominant party faction or group. The history of state politics as told by these leaders barely refers to the machine, and does so most concretely only when the subject turns to the machine’s obvious erosion of electoral support. By contrast, leftists speak less about the personalities of political notables in their state and their particular preferences for alliances with individuals, factions, or parties.

The geographic dimensions of mobilization and clientelism highlighted above emerge clearly in my interviews of partisan organizers in the Northeast. Leftist respondents speak of
having a more recent history of expanding their rank-and-file operations from urban toeholds. Having relied on these centers and organizational allies such as unions and social movements that are based there, leftist parties must increasingly contend with their limited history of maintaining a consistent presence in the interior. Leftist organizers complain about poor communications with these far-flung locations and a history of clientele networks controlling airwaves and social programs in these localities. They hold out the hope that federal spending (under Lula) can make voters more receptive to their campaigns on behalf of their gubernatorial candidates. Conservative respondents brush away such programs as assistencialismo - the practice of making the poor dependent on public handouts. When prompted to discuss tactics, conservatives focus on the governor’s relationship with mayors and other local notables that are capable of delivering votes on election day. They frame this discussion in terms of loyalty for work done by the incumbent governor in the locality and presumably on behalf of the mayor politically. The description that emerges in these conversations is of an already decentralized political network that maintains only intermittent contacts with the capital where party headquarters are nominally located.

Historical origins of parties and clientele networks, mobilizational strategy, and the spatial dimensions of how these forces shape the composition and performance of the left and the erosion of conservative rule in the Northeast explain the particular concentration of leftist victories in recent elections in that region. Given that leftist parties have built their organizations over time, the results for 2006 represent a cumulative effect of this effort. That it occurs late in the New Republic is a reflection of the inertial strength and entrenched position of conservatives in the first decade of the new democracy (Power 2000). This analytical framework explains a shift that is less a wave than an incremental, spatial development, with evidence of the continuity
of clientele networks in the interior of these states and the gradual, concentric expansion from urban centers of leftist opposition.

The alternative explanations for the erosion of conservative rule and its replacement by so many leftists in the 2006 contest emphasize systemic (national) and more recent causes. A governista vote for Lula supported a turnover in governors’ races down-ticket. The president’s record of good policies in the poor states supplied the reasons. So recipients of Bolsa Família and areas with improved socio-economic conditions “rewarded Lula” and like-minded candidates on the ballot. As the evidence demonstrates in the next two sections, these factors provide less consistent predictions of the support for conservatives and their oppositions than the urban-mobilizational argument presented above.

The Statistical Analysis

The urban-mobilizational hypothesis and its alternatives can be tested using both statistical and spatial methods. In this section, I use a cross-sectional analysis of data pooled across all Brazilian municipalities to predict the distribution of support for leftists and conservatives at the gubernatorial level. Gubernatorial candidates are coded “leftist” if they are members of the main leftist party organizations -- PT, PDT, PPS, PCdoB, and PSB. These parties all have rescaled ideological scores below 4 on the Power-Zucco gamut of party position estimates (Power and Zucco 2009). Although their gamut is based on surveys of members of congress, one can assume a great deal of congruence with subnational party positions given the influence of governors over the political careers of deputies (Samuels 2000, 2003). Conservative gubernatorial candidates have average Power-Zucco party position estimates of 5.8, well above the center-right position of the PMDB and PSDB that have scores of 4.5 in the latest survey. The
main conservative parties are the PFL (DEM), PP, PL (PR), and PTB (Mainwaring, Meneguello, and Power 2000). In addition to partisanship, I coded the cases “by hand” in the 2002 and 2006 cycles to make finer distinctions between center-right parties that displaced conservatives and created machines (e.g., the PSDB in Ceará) and conservatives that switched to center-right parties (e.g., Roseanna Sarney and the PMDB in Maranhão) in order to continue to run conservative machines. Candidate biographies and former partisan affiliations were used whenever possible to verify the correct coding of less recognized candidates.4

The models test the scope of Bolsa Família in each municipality, socio-economic controls, and the effects of Lula’s coattails. The scope of BF coverage per municipality is measured as a percentage of the local population that are designated beneficiaries based on Ministry of Social Development data for household recipients and actual family size per municipality as determined by the IBGE.5 Previous electoral support is controlled on the premise that past voting should affect future choices. Socio-economic controls (the natural log of GDP per capita, economic growth, and inequality as measured by the municipal Gini coefficient) and Lula’s share of the vote in 2006 are included in the models. If a pattern typical of the left’s support in the more industrialized and developed areas of Brazil holds, per capita incomes should correlate positively with leftist support. Drawing from modernization theory expectations, economic growth should favor increased political competition. And the left should do better in more equal and more competitive polities. The estimation technique used here is ordinary least squares (OLS) with robust standard errors to correct for heteroskedasticity in the disturbance terms.6

The effects of urban mobilization in the Northeastern states are introduced in models 2 and 3, after a base model (Model 1) is reported without these factors. Model 2 adds a simple
regional dummy control and Model 3 interacts this dummy with urbanization rates per
municipality. Urbanization rates represent the percentage of the population that lives in urban
areas as defined by the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE). The chief
expectations are that regional and urbanization patterns should positively affect support for the
left. Following the results in Tables 1 and 2, the left should receive a uniquely high level of
support in the Northeast. Consistent with the urban-mobilization argument, the role of
urbanization in the Northeast in particular should bolster the leftist vote more than the other
political predictors and the controls.

Table 3 reports the results for the leftist opposition’s share of the gubernatorial vote in the
2006 cycle. Overall, the results demonstrate that Lula’s coattails are robust predictors of the
leftist vote, as one would expect. Yet Lula’s landmark social policy - Bolsa Família – supports
the left only in the base model. When the Northeast regional control is added in Model 2, the
sign flips, indicating that BF recipients were less likely to vote for the leftist candidate. More
importantly, when the urban-mobilizational proxy in the Northeast is added in Model 3, the BF
factor ceases to be significant. These results underscore Lula’s coattails effects on down-ticket
leftists, but they suggest that social policy was not the primary reason. Models 2 and 3 highlight
the role of region-specific and locational effects within the Northeast.

[Table 3 here]

Analysis of the marginal effects of the predictors underscores the weight of region and
the urban-mobilizational proxy. First, the performance of leftists took on a different dynamic in
municipalities situated in the nine states of the Northeast region. Based on Model 2, the
placement of a municipality in the poorest region increases the predicted percentage of the leftist
candidate’s share of the gubernatorial vote by 16.5 points in comparison to the mean effect of
what it would be in the other four regions of Brazil. Compared to the effects of Lula’s coattails overall, the regional impact is notable. A one standard deviation shift above the mean of Lula’s share of the vote predicts only a 5.1 percentage point shift in the leftist candidate’s share of the gubernatorial vote. Second, the location of the left’s support matters in the Northeast. A movement of the urbanization rate in the region of one standard deviation above the mean produces a shift of 5 percentage points in favor of the leftist candidate. This amount is virtually the same as the independent effect of Lula’s coattails.

Though the effects of Lula’s coattails seem to support the conventional explanation that his vote shares would help down-ticket leftists, one reason given for the pro-Lula vote, that the incumbent president enjoyed some of the advantages of governismo - the tendency for voters to plump for the incumbent – does not jibe with the down-ticket effect. If governismo was at play, why would voters, who do not tend to follow consistent ideological cues, prefer to re-elect the president but not conservative incumbents? One possibility, already suspected by Zucco (2010) is that governismo does not work the same way across all voting populations. In fact, some statistical evidence exists for a differentiated vote in favor of Lula and conservative incumbents. Figure 3 plots two lowess smoothed lines for right and left candidate vote shares for governor in the Northeastern states in 2006. Lula’s coattails aid down-ticket leftists to a point and then curve downwards while right-wing support curves upwards. The graphic shows that at the highest levels of support for Lula, voters were as willing to vote for conservative incumbents as leftist challengers who were closer to the president on policy. This suggests that Lula’s coattails may well have had different effects in distinct locations, a conjecture that will be taken up more fully in the next section.

[Figure 3 here]
Concerning the results for conservatives’ share of the gubernatorial vote in 2006, Table 4 demonstrates some consistency in the behavior of the main predictors. Lula’s coattails and urban districts reduce support for conservatives, though the latter is significant only at the 90 percent confidence interval. Notably, the BF does not undercut conservative support; it enhances it. Again, this may indicate that location matters, but in a way that is different for conservatives. While the left can be expected to mobilize better in urban areas, clientele networks that are localized in interior and more rural municipalities should be expected to receive more Bolsa monies and support conservative incumbents. The governismo effect in this case would be consistent with Zucco’s (2010) findings that poor people in poor places may be more inclined to plump for the incumbent at the national and the subnational levels.

[Table 4 here]

Nonetheless, not all dimensions of the governismo effect are evident in the statistics. While it may be that poor people in poor places vote for the incumbent, it is not clear that poor people in rich places vote for leftists or against conservatives. After all, the GDP per capita terms were negative and significant in five of the six models predicting vote shares. Income inequality, as measured by the Gini coefficient, correlates positively with districts supporting both left and right. The results suggest that richer and more equal places were not the primary source of leftist support in the 2006 cycle. If anything, leftists lost ground in the developed states of the South and Southeast (Hunter and Power 2007). Richer places are not the same as all urban zones. In Brazil especially, urban areas contain disparities of wealth and concentrations of poor populations that are much greater than in the rural interior. These are the very social strata that are the focus of sustained mobilization efforts by leftist parties, and particularly in the Northeast. It would stand to reason that leftists received more of their support from these areas than the
conservatives did, who relied on the poor and rural interior districts more likely to have a greater percentage of households receiving BF than the urban and richer coastal areas of the Northeastern states. A closer look in the next section at the spatial distribution of the key variables in the state of Bahia corroborates my expectations that location matters in the organization of political support for right and left in the Northeast.

Spatial Analysis in the Bahian Case

A couple of puzzles raised by the results of the statistical analysis can be further explored in a focused analysis of Bahia, the largest state of the Northeast and one with characteristics that should favor the conventional explanations for the distribution of conservative and leftist support. The previous section showed that Lula’s coattails might be positively correlated with conservative voting in particular locations, underscoring a locational aspect to the governismo effect. The overall positive correlation between BF coverage and conservative support as well as the evidence for the urban-mobilizational explanation of the left’s share of the vote in the Northeast, suggest that demographic and spatially imbedded factors are at play in the distribution of the vote in the Northeastern states. Consistent with my expectations concerning differences in party origins and mobilizational strategies, leftist organizations should rely on concentric circles of support around urban cores while conservatives depend on localized clientele networks in poor and rural municipalities in the interior; places far afield from the mobilizational capacities of leftist parties. As the evidence in this section will demonstrate, these expectations are borne out in the geographic distribution of the vote in 2006 in Bahia.

The victory of the PT’s Jacques Wagner in the gubernatorial race of 2006 in the state of Bahia was emblematic of the political shifts occurring throughout the region. Long the domain of
the archetypal conservative machine led by Antônio Carlos Magalhães (ACM), leftist opposition remained in the political wilderness during most of the New Republic. The *carlista* network, that first came to power with military support during the late 1960s, remained vibrant enough and organized mostly through the PFL (DEM) during the democratic regime (Dantas Neto 2006). In 2006, former governor, Paulo Souto, was the machine’s incumbent. Souto had already beaten Wagner in 2002, but Lula’s presidential victory then and ACM’s previous estrangement from President Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1994-2002) during his second term complicated Souto’s re-election since the *carlistas* no longer retained privileged access to federal coffers. At the same time, Bahia’s importance in federal legislative politics remained a strong incentive for the PT to wrest control of the governorship. As a trusted *lulista* associated with the popular BF program, Wagner’s candidacy had strong national-level support. Wagner was himself closely tied to the president, having served him as an advisor in the Planalto during the difficult months of the corruption scandals of 2005. Wagner was also connected to Lula’s social agenda, giving him the benefit of sharing in the credit-claiming regarding *Bolsa Família* that some scholars associate with strong support for Lula.¹⁰ Thus advantaged, the challenger was lifted to victory against a spent conservative machine led by one of ACM’s closest protégés. Nevertheless, spatial evidence on this case will show that neither Lula’s coattails nor the BF sufficiently cut into conservatives’ bailiwicks. Wagner’s victory was due to the organizational abilities of his supporting alliance of leftist parties to mobilize and expand the urban vote.

Wagner’s mobilization of the vote in urban zones was apparent in the two electoral cycles he ran for governor. Figures 4 and 5 demonstrate this by mapping the spatial bivariate relationship between vote shares and urbanization. These cluster maps employ Local Indicators of Spatial Association (LISA). LISA calculates the cross-product of the standardized value of the
first variable at a municipal location, with that of the average for another variable in contiguous neighbors. The shaded clusters are coded positive (“High-High”/“Low-Low”) and negative (“High-Low”/“Low-High”) and they show localized correlations that are statistically different from spatial randomness. Unshaded districts are not distinguishable statistically. Where values are inverse (high-low and low-high), clusters are designated as spatial outliers that are the converse of the linear relationship. Furthermore, the Moran’s I is given for the entire state. This coefficient is a measure of spatial autocorrelation that ranges from -1 (complete dispersion) to 1 (complete clustering). Positive Moran’s indices for the entire study area indicate an overall spatial clustering while negative coefficients indicate overall dispersion. In this case, the figures show similar overall and localized spatial distributions across the two election cycles with leftist support clustering high-high in and around the capital of Salvador and down the coast where large urban populations live. Conservatives cluster their support in the interior districts. Figure 5 adds the urbanization term in the 2006 race to demonstrate positive spatial clustering in that particular cycle. The overall Moran’s I for the left is positive, which is expected given the urban pattern of clustering. Conversely, the conservative machine sees a dispersion of its support.

[Figures 4 and 5 here]

The consistency of the overall spatial patterns in the two electoral cycles belie the role of the Bolsa Família as a game-changer in 2006 or the upending of the old governista tendencies in the interior municipalities. The spatial evidence shows that BF actually aided conservatives in the interior. Figure 6 demonstrates not only a dispersion of BF coverage with Wagner’s share of the vote but a clustering of BF coverage and support for conservatives, mostly in the poor interior districts (os grotões). Despite Wagner’s personal connections to Lula and to BF, Souto
was able to gain more concentrations of support in the *grotões* enjoying high levels of social disbursements from the federal government. This demonstrates that credit-claiming from a popular social policy does not uniquely favor leftist oppositions. Conservatives can hijack these messages in their campaigns and retain dominance over poor, interior districts (Montero 2010).

[Figure 6 here]

To be sure, Lula’s coattails coincided with support for Wagner, but in the interior of Bahia, the coattails dynamic was different. The continuity of clientele networks bolstered right-wing voting, and particularly in areas that had benefited most from Lula’s own landmark social policy, the BF. In this regard, Zucco’s (2010) conclusions that *governo*ismo remains vibrant can be reconciled with the overturning of conservative establishments in states such as Bahia even as a popular presidential incumbent is re-elected. Poor voters in poor places voted for the presidential *and* the gubernatorial incumbent, while poor voters in *urban places* voted for the leftist opposition. In the latter cases, it was the personalistic dimension of Lula’s coattails that mattered, not the programmatic aspects of his government that could otherwise have prompted urban voters to “reward” the president.

Conclusions

The present study demonstrates that historical and spatial patterns of partisan mobilization explain conservatives’ electoral decline and the cumulative success of leftists in subnational gubernatorial contests in 2006. The different organizational strategies of conservative and leftist parties in the Northeast in particular reflect erstwhile tendencies that played out earlier in the New Republic in the more developed states of the South and Southeast. Regional and urban-mobilizational predictors are more consistent and powerful predictors of the
distribution of the vote in the statistical models. These findings contrast with growth, socio-economic development, and social policy factors that are shown to be either insignificant or operate contrary to the expectations of the alternative arguments.

The role of Lula’s coattails and his administration’s landmark social policy, the *Bolsa Família*, deserve additional study using spatial analysis. The present study indirectly confirms Zucco’s (2010) preliminary findings of a vote for Lula emerging from poor voters in rich and poor places, but it also shows that the down-ticket effect predicted by the coattails argument is *geographically and demographically differentiated*. Evidence from the statistical tests and the spatial analysis demonstrates that poor voters in *urban* places voted for Lula and down-ticket leftists such as Jacques Wagner for governor. In the *grotões*, however, conservative parties retained their organizational advantages in mobilizing localized clientele networks in favor of machine incumbents. This spatial distribution of the *governista* tendency explains the puzzle of why Lula could win re-election even as leftist candidates in gubernatorial races upended incumbent conservative machines. Leftist gubernatorial candidates received a boost from Lula’s coattails in urban areas but the statistical and spatial evidence also shows that mobilizational dynamics contributed in roughly equal measure.

The findings for the role of the conditional cash transfer program, *Bolsa Família*, suggest that in an electorate with weak partisan and ideological self-identity such as Brazil’s, credit-claiming can be easily hijacked by campaigns with little actual connection to a popular policy. This finding is consistent with survey work done on BF recipients by Figueiredo and Hidalgo (2009) in Recife, Pernambuco which shows that voters can be convinced to support campaigns that invoke BF whether they are associated with Lula and the PT or not. One implication of this result is that the separate organizational ways of conservative and leftist parties provide each
with a viable strategy for self-preservation as well as eventual victory. If the right can build on their domination of interior districts in the poor states, they can retain these bailiwicks as a base to make a comeback. Of course, what leftist *incumbents* first elected in 2006 do in terms of distributing public goods in these poor, interior areas may undermine these strategies. In that case, it will be conservatives who find themselves excluded from the state apparatus and without the grassroots base that enabled leftists to survive the political wilderness and find a way to win state elections in the old redoubts of conservative power.
Figure 1: Leftist Governorships, 2002
Figure 2: Leftist Governorships, 2006
Table 1: Regional Averages for Conservative Parties, Share of the Vote in Gubernatorial Contests, 1982-2006

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>-39%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>-18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>-10%</td>
<td>-37%</td>
<td>-41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>-7%</td>
<td>-19%</td>
<td>-14%</td>
<td>-40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N+NE</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>-1%</td>
<td>-14%</td>
<td>-25%</td>
<td>-40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>-15%</td>
<td>-8%</td>
<td>-17%</td>
<td>-41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>-1%</td>
<td>-4%</td>
<td>-25%</td>
<td>-30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE+S</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>-8%</td>
<td>-6%</td>
<td>-21%</td>
<td>-35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>-2%</td>
<td>-16%</td>
<td>-18%</td>
<td>-37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Tribunal Superior Eleitoral (TSE) and Jairo Nicolau, “Dados Eleitorais do Brasil, 1982-2006.”

Note: Conservative parties are the 18 parties listed as right-wing by Mainwaring et al. (2000: Table 6.3). See text for discussion of largest conservative parties.

Table 2: Regional Averages for Leftist Parties, Share of the Vote in Gubernatorial Contests, 1982-2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>-3%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<td>15%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
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<td>2%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N+NE</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>-8%</td>
<td>-3%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE+S</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>-3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Tribunal Superior Eleitoral (TSE) and Jairo Nicolau, “Dados Eleitorais do Brasil, 1982-2006.”

Note: Leftists parties are the PT, PDT, PCB, PPS, PCdoB, PSB, PSTU, PV, PSOL, and PCO.
Table 3: Determinants of Vote Shares of Leftist Gubernatorial Candidates in 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>(3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BF Scope</td>
<td>10.561</td>
<td>-11.325</td>
<td>.126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.560)***</td>
<td>(2.537)***</td>
<td>(2.556)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP growth</td>
<td>1.230</td>
<td>-2.11</td>
<td>.572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.162)</td>
<td>(.819)</td>
<td>(.951)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita (2005) (log)</td>
<td>-1.191</td>
<td>-.447</td>
<td>-1.226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.451)**</td>
<td>(.400)</td>
<td>(.422)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gini coefficient</td>
<td>9.193</td>
<td>4.270</td>
<td>8.639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3.421)**</td>
<td>(3.236)</td>
<td>(4.277)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lula's vote share (2006)</td>
<td>.378</td>
<td>.280</td>
<td>.301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.023)***</td>
<td>(.023)***</td>
<td>(.023)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous share of the vote (2002)</td>
<td>.583</td>
<td>.541</td>
<td>.546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.020)***</td>
<td>(.020)***</td>
<td>(.020)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast dummy</td>
<td>16.534</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.756)***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urbanization (Northeast)</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.720</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1.344)***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-6.088</td>
<td>-1.850</td>
<td>-.245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4.0702)</td>
<td>(4.240)</td>
<td>(4.632)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>4919</td>
<td>4919</td>
<td>4896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-squared</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures are unstandardized regression coefficients from ordinary least squares estimation. Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors. Coefficients in bold are statistically significant: * $p<.1$; ** $p<.05$; *** $p<.001$. 
Figure 3: Lowess Regression of Lula’s Coattails and Vote Shares of Left and Right Gubernatorial Candidates in the Northeastern States, 2006 Elections
# Table 4: Determinants of Vote Shares of Conservative Gubernatorial Candidates in 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Conservative Models</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BF Scope</td>
<td>5.931 (2.869)**</td>
<td>5.679 (3.010)*</td>
<td>6.373 (2.857)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP growth</td>
<td>-.122 (.1789)</td>
<td>-.159 (1.796)</td>
<td>-.038 (1.794)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita (2005) (log)</td>
<td>-1.264 (.620)**</td>
<td>-1.213 (.633)*</td>
<td>-1.288 (.628)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lula's vote share (2006)</td>
<td>.236 (.032)***</td>
<td>-.237 (.032)***</td>
<td>-.228 (.032)***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous share of the vote (2002)</td>
<td>.425 (.020)***</td>
<td>.425 (.020)***</td>
<td>.425 (.020)***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast dummy</td>
<td>.340 (1.182)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urbanization (Northeast)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-2.361 (1.260)*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>36.312 (7.134)***</td>
<td>35.975 (7.166)***</td>
<td>35.897 (7.308)***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1426</td>
<td>1426</td>
<td>1422</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-squared</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures are unstandardized regression coefficients from ordinary least squares estimation. Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors. Coefficients in bold are statistically significant: * p<.1; ** p<.05; *** p<.001.
Figure 4: Localization of Left and Conservative Support, 2002 Gubernatorial Election
Figure 5: Bivariate Spatial Correlations Between Urbanization and Localization of Left and Conservative Support, 2006 Gubernatorial Election
Figure 6: Bivariate LISA Spatial Correlations Between *Bolsa Família* Coverage and Localization of Left and Conservative Support, 2006 Gubernatorial Election
Works Cited


Notes

1 The work on the characteristics of Bolsa Família is extensive. See Fenwick (2009), Melo (2008), Hall (2008), and Hunter and Sugiyama (2009).

2 Evidence for an incumbency effect for Lula is somewhat mixed since districts that voted for him in 2002, when he was the challenger, voted for him in 2006, when he was the incumbent. Canêdo-Pinheiro (2009: 11) reports that this continued support rather than an incumbency-induced shift in support is four times stronger than reported by previous studies, including Zucco (2008).

3 The survey was conducted with nine leftist and six conservative respondents in three capital cities: Salvador (Bahia), Fortaleza (Ceará), and São Luís (Maranhão). The author discussed the most common answers across respondents with academic experts in each state to identify the norms represented by partisans’ responses.

4 These state-by-state codings and their rationales are available from the author on request.

5 I tested alternative operationalizations, including coverage as the number of households receiving BF (see Zucco 2008; Borges 2007), and did not see different results from those reported here.

6 Specifications were designed to minimize multicollinearity. Variance inflation factor diagnostics indicated that the reported models were all within accepted tolerance levels.

7 In the censuses of 1991 and 2000, IBGE defined an “urban situation” in its Manuais de Delimitação de Setores as the physical space between a perimeter and an urban center as measured by census officials at the time of a municipal survey. Urban populations are those inhabitants of that physical space and they may be compared to those in “rural situations” located outside the urban perimeter.

8 A smoothing bandwidth of .8 was used to generate the nearest neighbors algorithm for the regressions.

9 There are fewer observations for the right models due to coding of fewer candidacies and parties as conservative.

10 Author interview with special adviser to Governor Wagner, Jones Carvalho, Ouvidor Geral do Estado, Salvador, June 18, 2009.

11 Given p-values are tested against 999 permutations for spatial randomness.