# FROM SOCIALISM TO SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

Party Organization and the Transformation of the Workers' Party in Brazil

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Luis Inácio Lula da Silva's victory in Brazil's 2002 presidential election brought to power Latin America's largest leftist party, the Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores [PT]). The PT won because it moved to the center, and voters regarded this shift as credible. The party's transformation is puzzling, because political scientists do not expect strategic flexibility in "mass bureaucratic" parties, which the PT resembles. Although exogenous factors are important, the key to understanding the party's strategic adaptation lies with its internal institutions, which generate substantial leadership accountability. The weight of pragmatists in the rank and file grew in the 1990s following the party's success in subnational executive elections and its consequent need to demonstrate results in office. These rank-and-file members could influence the party's direction because of the party's internally democratic institutions. The PT's transformation reveals that strategic flexibility can emerge in mass parties even when the leadership lacks autonomy.

Keywords: Workers' Party; Brazil; Lula; political parties

In October 2002, Luis Inácio Lula da Silva won Brazil's presidential election with 61.3% of the vote, and Lula's Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores [PT]) became the largest party in Brazil's fragmented legislature. Lula and the PT achieved victory because both moved to the center of the political spectrum, and voters regarded this shift as credible, accepting the PT's "deradicalization." What explains the PT's transformation? The

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Thanks to Octavio Amorim Neto, Kent Eaton, Kathy Hochsteller, Fábio Kerche, Herbert Kitschelt, Scott Mainwaring, Steve Levitsky, Vicky Murillo, Bill Summerhill, and the anonymous reviewers for helpful comments.

change was substantial: In 2002, the party's campaign emphasized morality in public office and administrative experience, a far cry from the 1982 campaign, when the party's platform affirmed that "elections represent only part of our long-term goal, which is constructing a socialist society without exploiters or exploited," or even from 1993, when the national convention approved a resolution affirming that "our struggle relies on increasing the tension and strain in the existing order" (*Folha de São Paulo*, 1998f, p. 15, 2001a, p. 8). In 2002, Lula and the PT discarded long-held elements of the party program and even committed the party to maintaining key "neoliberal" elements of incumbent president Cardoso's economic program, such as budget surpluses and paying the country's external debt. The party also broadened its alliance strategy, teaming up with the right-wing Liberal Party (Partido Liberal [PL]), known more as a haven for evangelical Christian preachers, and letting PL nominate Lula's running mate.

The PT's growth, transformation, and conquest of power in an age of neoliberal dominance and partisan disintegration around the region merit attention. Yet although the PT of today is a much different animal from the PT of 1980, little is known about how and why the party changed. Scholarship has yet to account for its transformation: Mainwaring (1995, p. 382) likens the PT to Duverger's model of a mass party; Alcántara and Freidenberg (2001, p. 176) affirm that "the PT continues to propose socialism"; Mainwaring (1999, p. 172) suggests that the PT continues to eschew a vote-maximizing strategy because its leaders fear losing ties with organized elements of civil society; and Mainwaring, Meneguello, and Power (2000, pp. 184-185) suggest that the PT's position on the left-right scale has not shifted. Since Keck's (1992) book, which necessarily focused on the party's formative years, no research in English has focused on explored the party's evolution as a national organization. Even in Brazil, only one scholarly article on the PT's national evolution has been published since the early 1990s (Lacerda, 2002).

The PT's transformation is also puzzling because of confusion in the political science literature about how to classify the party. The PT fits Katz and Mair's (1995) description of a "mass" party perfectly: It was founded externally to the legislature; it has a relatively large membership; there is a strong mobilizational element to its organizational and campaign work; its campaigns are highly labor intensive; much of its resources come from members' fees, not public coffers; it has well-established channels of internal communication; it possesses an institutionalized, hierarchical structure link-

<sup>1.</sup> Instead, scholars have focused research on the PT's innovative local government policies. See, for example, Abers (1996, 2001), Baiocchi (2001, 2003), Couto (1995), Macaulay (1996), Nylen (1997, 2000, 2002), Santos (2000), and Schneider and Goldfrank (2002).

ing local to state to national organizations in which decisions at higher levels supersede those taken at lower levels; and it can and does discipline its members and legislators.

Yet the PT is not a "mass populist" party (Levitsky, 2001), such as the Argentine Peronist party. These are formed from the top down, often by state actors, and are characterized by personalistic, charismatic leadership and a relative lack of formal institutionalization. If the PT is instead what Levitsky (2001) calls a "mass bureaucratic" party, then its strategic moderation remains puzzling, given what some scholars suggest: Mass involvement in and the "bureaucratic" organization of a party tend to impede leadership autonomy and are a recipe for strategic inertia (Kitschelt, 1994, p. 212; Levitsky, 2001, p. 54; Panebianco, 1988, p. 58).

The final reason the PT's transformation is puzzling is that after the cold war, the party moved to the left, and only after 1995 did it begin to move to the center. That is, in the years after the most obvious "exogenous" forces had been acting on it, the factions in the party that scholars predict would gain control did in fact gain control: the "organizationally entrenched" radical factions. What then explains the PT's subsequent reversal of course?

In general, both exogenous and "endogenous" factors explain party strategy change (Harmel & Janda, 1994; Katz & Mair, 1995; Kitschelt, 1994; Levitsky, 2001; Panebianco, 1988; Strom, 1990). Neither are sufficient, but both are necessary elements of any explanation. For example, exogenous environmental factors can "set the stage" by describing whether political space exists for parties to attempt to move in the political spectrum. However, one also needs to explore parties' internal dynamics to obtain a complete explanation of party strategy change.

Exogenous forces are certainly important in explaining the PT's shift. After all, parties elsewhere have undertaken similar shifts because of changes in the regional and global ideological context (Castañeda, 1993). Although changes in the international scene are important, I argue that they are insufficient to fully explain the PT's path of change. Instead, the PT's internal institutions of leadership recruitment and accountability provide the key to understanding the party's transformation. What distinguishes it from most other leftist parties is the high degree of rank-and-file participation and the concomitantly relatively low degree of leadership autonomy from the rank and file. In such a party, strategic flexibility is a function of the degree to which the preferences of the leadership and the rank and file overlap. This began to occur in the PT only after 1995. Prior to that time, Lula and his group favored moderation but could not impose their views. After 1995, the weight of rank-and-file pragmatists gradually grew because of the party's electoral successes at the subnational level. The need to provide "results" as opposed

to merely criticizing the government as an opposition party in the legislature pushed preference change among party members and encouraged strategic moderation. Moderates could influence the party's upper ranks because of the party's internally democratic institutions of participation and contestation.

In the next section, I detail the PT's transformation. I then explore how exogenous forces changed the environment in which the PT competes. These changes opened opportunities for PT strategy change but do not provide a complete explanation, so I then explore how the party's internal organization permitted moderation to take root.

## THE EVOLUTION OF THE PT

To what extent has the PT actually changed? The party was founded in 1980, soon after the reigning military regime permitted independent political parties to form for the first time since a 1964 coup. At its formation, the party united a hodgepodge of Marxists of all shades of red, liberation theologyoriented Catholic base community activists, moderate intellectuals, and union and social movement leaders. The party's heterogeneity and formation from the "bottom up" made it unique in the history of Brazilian parties, and perhaps in Latin America (Keck, 1992; Meneguello, 1989). Although the PT deliberately never identified itself with a particular "brand" of leftism (Partido dos Trabalhadores, 1991), it nevertheless "always defined itself as socialist" (Keck, 1992, p. 246) and espoused many radical positions. For example, at Brazil's 1988 constitutional convention, the PT advocated the repudiation of Brazil's external debt, the nationalization of the country's banks and mineral wealth, and radical land reform. In addition, as a form of protest and as a signal that the party did not fully accept the "rules of the game," the PT's delegates refused to sign the draft constitution.

Over the next few years, the party moderated a bit, but it never clearly shed its radicalism, and it undertook no major reforms of party principles, even after Lula's defeat in the 1989 presidential elections (Árabe, 2001; Azevedo, 1995). For example, the resolution from the party's eighth national meeting in 1993 reaffirmed the PT's "revolutionary and socialist character" (Azevedo, 1995, p. 209), condemned the "conspiracy" of the elites to subvert democracy (Partido dos Trabalhadores, 1998, p. 545), stated that the party advocated "radical agrarian reform and suspension of the external debt" (Partido dos Trabalhadores, 1998, p. 556), and concluded that "capitalism

and private property cannot provide a future for humanity" (Partido dos Trabalhadores, 1998, p. 561).

In 1994, Lula ran for president again and during his campaign dismissed Fernando Henrique Cardoso's recently implemented Real Plan as an "electoral swindle." The resolutions from the 1994 national meeting condemned the "control by the dominant classes over the modes of production" (Azevedo, 1995, p. 212) and reaffirmed the party's "commitment to socialism" (Partido dos Trabalhadores, 1998, p. 581). The PT's Program of Government that year also committed the party to "anti-monopolist, anti-latifúndio, and anti-imperialist change . . . as part of a long-term strategy to construct an alternative to capitalism" (Árabe, 2001), statements that "sent shivers down the spine of the international financial community" (Azevedo, 1995, p. 158). Thus, one observer states that as of 1995, "little or nothing" had changed in PT official ideology since the early 1990s (Azevedo, 1995, p. 243).

Yet after Lula's 1994 loss, the party began a slow process of self-examination (Azevedo, 1995, p. 210). The resolution adopted at the party's 10th national meeting in 1995 stated that "our 1994 defeat invites a cruel reflection about our image in society, about the external impact of our internal battles, [and] about our ideological and political ambiguities" (Partido dos Trabalhadores, 1998, p. 629). The move from self-examination to transformation did not involve a clean break with the past, as in other socialist and communist parties after the end of the cold war. The process was gradual, full of contradictions, and replete with intraparty tension (Árabe, 2001). By 1997, the national meeting resolution redefined the PT's version of socialism as a "democratic revolution" (Partido dos Trabalhadores, 1998, p. 653), emphasizing a political rather than economic vision of socialism as "democratizing the State" that aimed to make the state "more transparent and socially accountable" (Partido dos Trabalhadores, 1998, p. 659).

Lula's third presidential campaign platform in 1998 cut socialist proposals and even the mention of a transition to a socialist society (Árabe, 2001), but the party's self-definition remained highly ambiguous: The resolution from the party's meeting that year affirmed that Lula's platform "should not be confused with the socialist program of the PT" (Partido dos Trabalhadores, 1998, p. 675). Thus although the PT had begun to distance itself from its original socialist rhetoric and proposals by 1998, a clearer shift did not occur until after Lula lost again that year and after Lula and his group had more fully digested the impact of Brazil's changing political context and of President Cardoso's economic reforms.

The clearest evidence of moderation emerged before and during Lula's 2002 campaign. In June of that year (the election was held in October), amid speculative pressure against the Brazilian currency due to Lula's early lead in the polls, Lula released the "Letter to the Brazilian People" (Silva, 2002), signaling to the public (and to Wall Street and Washington) the extent to which he and the PT had changed. The letter prefaced Lula's campaign themes: the unfulfilled promise of the Real Plan and Brazil's grave economic and social situation, as well as his campaign's general tone: propositional and not merely oppositional. The document also revealed Lula's commitment to what, just a few years before, the PT had damned as neoliberal policies: price stability and a budget surplus. It also emphasized a "respect for the country's contracts and obligations" and expressed opposition to radical and unilateral solutions.

In addition, the PT's official Program of Government for the 2002 campaign did not contain the word *socialist* or *socialism* and used the word *radical* only when it affirmed bland commitments to "radically defend the public's welfare" (Partido dos Trabalhadores, 2002, p. 2) and to "radicalize" Brazil's democracy (Partido dos Trabalhadores, 2002, p. 4). The program contains no blustery rhetoric and instead is laden with policy proposals ranging from tax and social security reform to industrial, health, housing, and telecommunications initiatives. The degree of moderation of the platform is remarkable given the party's history. For example, the land reform proposal states simply that any expropriation will be done "within the established parameters of Brazil's 1988 constitution" (Partido dos Trabalhadores, 2002, p. 21)—and those parameters are quite rigid (Helfand, 1999, p. 34). Finally, by allying with PL and thus dramatically abandoning its restrictive alliance policy, the PT in 2002 clearly adopted a broad "vote-seeking" strategy.

By the late 1990s, Brazil's media had begun to note the PT's moderation. The media had long fixated on the party's radicalism, but after the 1998 elections, the largest newspaper in Brazil's largest city recognized that Lula had become more "pragmatic" (Folha de São Paulo, 1998d, p. 13). By 2001, Folha de São Paulo (2001b, p. 4) concluded that "where once there was discourse on the transformation of the productive model, today there is discourse of morality and administrative experience" (p. 4). And by 2002, the more conservative O Estado de São Paulo (2002, p. 6) also recognized that the PT had moderated, while Folha de São Paulo (2002c, p. 6) noted extensive similarities between the party's platform and Cardoso's economic programs. By 2002, the PT had shifted so far that some commentators to its right criticized the party platform as too "economistic" for ignoring pressing social problems (Folha de São Paulo, 2002c, p. 8)!

## CHANGING INTERPARTY DYNAMICS

What explains this transformation? One party's strategy is partly a function of what other parties do. As Brazil's transition to democracy began, the PT emerged on the left and the Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro [PMDB]) dominated the center. In 1988, several PMDB leaders (including Fernando Henrique Cardoso) accused their party of becoming too conservative and thus left the party to form the Party of Brazilian Social Democracy (Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira [PSDB]). As a result, PSDB emerged to the left of PMDB but to the right of the PT. Since 1988, both PSDB and PMDB have grown more conservative. PMDB participated in President Collor's (1989 to 1992) cabinet and in Cardoso's administration, but what mainly characterizes it is a desire to hold office (Mainwaring, 1999). As for PSDB, in 1994, Cardoso won election in alliance with the Party of the Liberal Front (Partido da Frente Liberal [PFL]), a conservative party that stayed in Cardoso's cabinet up through the spring of 2002. PSDB has moved more to the right than PFL moved to the center as a result of this partnership (Power, 2001).

Given these two parties' shifts, space opened on the center left of Brazil's political spectrum. In 2002, the PSDB candidate, José Serra, attempted to return to the center left by allying only with PMDB and spurning PFL. However, Serra failed to lock in any part of the political spectrum. More important, the fact that political space existed on the center left cannot explain the PT's strategy, because it begs the question of whether it or some other party would attempt to fill that space, including parties both to the PT's left and to its right. This point is especially valid for Brazil, given the conventional view that most Brazilian parties have relatively weak ideological commitments, giving them flexibility to move if they desire to, except for the PT, which one thus expects to be less likely to adapt. In sum, interparty politics provide the context but do not explain the PT's particular path. To do so, one needs to better understand changes in the party's base of support as well as its own internal politics.

## **CHANGES IN BRAZILIAN CIVIL SOCIETY**

Another source of "environmental" change is the evolution of the PT's union and social movement support base. Some have suggested that as the PT has grown and institutionalized, it has "lost touch" with its popular base, from which it draws its militants (see, e.g., Nylen, 2000, p. 143). This argu-

ment assumes that unions and social movements have remained rooted to self-perceived status as "outside the system" and "confrontational," whereas the party has become more pragmatic and abandoned its own earlier confrontational tactics. This assumption is false. Political and economic change in Brazil has also encouraged many unions and social movements to adopt more pragmatic postures.

Unions have long provided a major component of the PT's membership, and leaders of Brazil's "new unionism" movement of the late 1970s not only formed the nucleus of the PT's founding group but continued to play critical roles as the party evolved (Keck, 1992, pp. 61-85; Meneguello, 1989, pp. 42-64). Around the globe, unions today are under siege because of industrial restructuring, increased competition due to globalization, labor market deregulation, and the end of the import substitution industrialization model. Brazil is also experiencing such transformations. How have these forces contributed to change in the preferences and strategies of the PT's union base?

Unions did not moderate their strategy because of a decline in membership, because the number of union members has actually remained relatively stable in Brazil, declining only from 28.77% to 28.51% of those formally employed from 1988 to 1998. Overall unionization has declined from 21.94% of the economically active adult population to 20.09% because of an increase in the number of informal-sector jobs, for which unionization levels are lower. Cross-nationally, the stability of unionization levels in Brazil is unusual, considering that many more countries have experienced sharp declines in unionization over the same period (Cardoso, 2001, p. 25-26).

However, union contraction in some sectors did force the moderation of union strategy in those sectors. The greatest declines in union membership have come in industrial and bank worker unions, which lost over 600,000 members from 1988 to 1998 (Cardoso, 2001, p. 32). These sectors provided a substantial portion of the PT's organized labor base during its formative years, and the evisceration of the party's core organized labor base has encouraged pragmatism within the new unionism. Unions in sectors hard hit by job losses began to concentrate on preserving existing jobs rather than achieving higher salaries or expanding benefits (Araújo, Carneiro, Cartoni, & Mello Justo, 2001; Santana, 1999) and became "defensively realistic . . . reducing the ideology in and politicization of earlier union activity" (Rodrigues, 1999, p. 90).

Despite union membership declines in some sectors, other sectors exhibited both job growth and increased unionization, particularly the public sector. Teachers' unions gained over 400,000 members from 1988 to 1998, health care workers' unions over 200,000 members, public employees'

unions more than 100,000, and other service-sector workers' unions over 300,000 new members (this explains the relative stability in overall unionization rates in Brazil) (Cardoso, 2001, p. 33).<sup>2</sup> In the 1990s, public-sector service unions gained increasing prominence in Central Única de Trabalhadores (CUT), Brazil's largest labor center and the main source of the PT's union support. Of the 10 largest CUT-affiliated unions currently, 6 are education-sector unions, and the other 4 include the social security system employees' union, 2 bank workers' unions, and the 1 remaining blue-collar union, the metalworkers' union (Silva, 2001, p. 144).

The rise of service-sector unions has changed CUT. In general, one might expect public-sector unions to be more intransigent than private-sector unions because they are less exposed to competition and job loss. However, public-sector unions in Brazil in the 1990s did not unanimously oppose President Cardoso's proposed reforms, and splits between public- and private-sector unions also existed. For example, during the contentious negotiations over Cardoso's proposed pension reform, CUT's largest and most influential union by far, the Association of Public Teachers of São Paulo, favored negotiation with the government, and overall, CUT was divided on the issue (Silva, 2001, p. 144). In December 2002, CUT's president announced that he personally favored reducing public-sector retirees' benefits and that he opposed the reindexation of salaries (*Primeira Leitura*, 2002, #710). These statements reversed CUT's historical stance on these two policies, indicated a pragmatic disposition to negotiate reforms, and were generally consonant with Cardoso's policies.

In sum, the new unionism has changed because of the decline of its traditional base and the rise of public-sector unions. CUT now contains a much wider social and economic base and reflects Brazil's social heterogeneity better. It therefore also contains a greater diversity of political opinions, and its political leanings have grown more difficult to pinpoint (Nogueira, 1999, p. 65). Some unions now advocate moderation in response to changing economic conditions. Others continue to advocate radicalism on some issues but may behave pragmatically on others. This transformation of organized labor implies that the PT has not abandoned its union support base: As union strategies diversified, the party's environment has changed. Its leaders no longer have to worry as much about a trade-off between adopting an electorally pragmatic approach and losing organized labor's support.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2.</sup> Until the 1988 constitution, teachers and public servants were prohibited from unionizing.

<sup>3.</sup> See Rodrigues (2002) on how changes in unions have changed the nature of the PT's electoral base and legislative contingent.

In addition to transformations in the new unionism, changes in Brazil's "new social movements" that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s have also expanded the space open to the PT. This contradicts the view that the PT and social movements have simply parted ways (see, e.g., *Veja*, 1999, pp. 38-41; *Folha de São Paulo*, 2002b, p. 16) and the notion that the fear of losing social movement support has constrained the party's efforts to expand its voter base (Mainwaring, 1999, p. 172). Like unions, social movements in Brazil have evolved a great deal since the mobilizational era of the early 1980s. In fact, mobilization has followed an expected "protest cycle" pattern in Brazil as democratization advanced with time (Hochstetler, 2000). Initial social movement growth led to expanded mobilization, which led to state response and greater interaction between movements and the state and a subsequent decline in mass mobilization.

This cycle is normal and found elsewhere. Like the PT, as democratization advanced, social movements have increasingly faced a tension between working within civil society or within the state. Hochstetler (2000) notes that in the 1990s, "new citizens' groups stepped closer to the state—lobbying it, accepting contracts from it, participating in its process, and consequently trading off some of their hard-won autonomy" (p. 165). In addition, "movement lobbies" and "institutionalized issue-specific networks" (Alvarez, 1997, p. 104) became increasingly entangled in formal institutions, which allowed social movements to weave their goals into official policy debates. Consequently, activists "have increasingly come to view critical engagement with formal processes of representative democracy as a complementary means for furthering goals of empowerment" (Alvarez, 1997, p. 102). In short, social movement discourse and action have moved far beyond the sphere of civil society and into the state. As this approximation advanced and as the cycle of social mobilization evolved, many social movements developed different "repertoires of collective action" that involved a much more pragmatic and instrumental approach to achieving their ends, working within institutions to change those institutions. As with unions, this development has reduced the trade-off between the PT's adopting an electorally pragmatic approach and losing social movement support. In sum, unions and social movements have not "stayed in place" while the PT has "moved to the center." Instead, changes in the composition of the party's union base and the continuing evolution of the social movement cycle because of economic and political developments have opened up greater possibilities for the PT to strategically adapt to changes in the nature of interparty competition.

## ENDOGENOUS SOURCES OF CHANGE

#### INSTITUTIONS

I now turn to how the PT's internal organization affected its strategic flexibility. The political science literature suggests that mass bureaucratic parties ought not to exhibit substantial strategic flexibility, because organizational institutionalization tends to limit the degree to which new demands can filter up through the party (e.g., Levitsky, 2001, p. 35; Panebianco, 1988, pp. 262-267) and because rank-and-file participation tends to limit leadership autonomy and promote a "policy-seeking" orientation (Strom, 1990, p. 577).

Yet with some modification, Kitschelt's (1994) and Strom's (1990) explorations of the relationship between party organization, rank-and-file participation, and party strategy are useful here. Let us map party organization according to the degree of organizational entrenchment and of leadership autonomy. When organizational entrenchment is high, parties are unlikely to be strategically flexible, because interests are highly institutionalized. Similarly, low leadership autonomy suggests that rank-and-file participation has consequences and that leaders cannot simply impose their preferences. Figure 1 illustrates this classification scheme.

To understand the PT's strategic flexibility, one must identify its degree of organizational entrenchment and leadership autonomy. Despite being well organized and highly institutionalized, the party's organizational entrenchment is relatively low.4 The variables that operationalize organizational entrenchment are the member/voter ratio, the availability of state patronage, the size of party bureaucracy, and the degree of internal ideological pluralism (Kitschelt, 1994, pp. 221-223). The PT had approximately 800,000 members in 2000 (Folha de São Paulo, 2001d, p. 6), and it obtained 8.8 million votes in 1998 (Tribunal Superior Eleitoral, 1998), giving it (at most) a member/voter ratio of approximately 9%, an intermediate level. Patronage availability is relatively low because the PT never held national power and did not control access to positions in the national civil service or in state-owned industries. The party employs 180 people at the national level (Folha de São Paulo, 2002b, p. 16), making its bureaucracy large for Brazil but medium sized in comparative perspective, especially for a country as large as Brazil. Finally, the party exhibits substantial internal ideological pluralism, meaning that the

4. A party may be highly "routinized" without being highly "entrenched" (see Kitschelt, 1994, pp. 221-223). The most important difference between the PT and other Latin American leftist parties is not the degree of societal entrenchment but the degree of leadership accountability. It resembles other Latin American parties in terms of entrenchment but resembles no other in terms of the degree of institutionalized leadership accountability (cf. Levitsky, 2001).

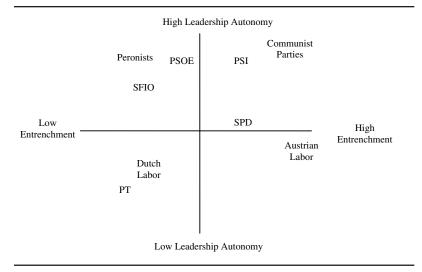


Figure 1. Left party structure.

Source: Adapted from Kitschelt (1994, p. 227).

Note: PSI = Partito Socialista Italiano (Italian Socialist Party); PSOE = Partido Socialista Obrero Español (Spanish Socialist Party); PT = Partido dos Trabalhadores (Workers' Party); SFIO = Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière (French Socialist Party); SPD = Sozial-

demokratische Partei Deutschlands (German Social-Democratic Party).

organization is open to the influence of new ideas or to shifting factional control. Overall, the PT is thus on par with the French and Dutch socialist parties (cf. Kitschelt, 1994, p. 227) along the horizontal axis of Figure 1.

For a party in the upper left quadrant of Figure 1, high leadership autonomy is the driving force that explains party strategic adaptation. What puts the PT in the lower left quadrant and approximates it to the Dutch Labor Party is the relatively low autonomy of its leadership. Strom's (1990, p. 578) approach is most useful for this variable: The critical factor is the degree to which the preferences of the rank and file percolate up through the party ranks. The operational indicators of this aspect of the degree of leadership autonomy are the formal institutionalization of internal participation and contestation at all levels of the party and the extent of turnover at the top. When such mechanisms reveal the ability of the rank and file to hold leaders accountable, strategic flexibility will follow only when the preferences of the rank and file match those of the leadership and both prefer to adapt.

5. According to Kitschelt (1994), only the British Labour Party also falls into this quadrant, meaning only two of nine socialist parties are of this type. Levitsky's (2001) Latin American mass populist parties would fall near the Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière (French Socialist Party).

Internal elections can generate leadership accountability. The PT has developed highly formalized and institutionalized yet at the same time open mechanisms of internal leadership contestation, which are used at all levels. The party's founders created these institutions because they believed that the only way the PT could put its principles of grassroots empowerment into action was if its leadership were accountable to the rank and file (Keck, 1992, p. 239). The system works as follows: In each municipality, members hold municipal meetings at regular intervals (from 1981 to 2001, they were held every 2 years) to elect the Municipal Directory, composed of a maximum of 45 members (Partido dos Trabalhadores, 2001, p. 16, Article 74). The Municipal Directory then elects the Municipal Executive Committee, composed of up to 15 members (Partido dos Trabalhadores, 2001, p. 16, Article 78). A similar process exists at the state and national levels. The delegates to the municipal meeting also elect the delegates to the state meeting. Similarly, delegates from each state elect delegates to the national meeting. Each state sends at least 1 delegate to the national meeting and 1 more for each 1,000 active party members in the state. There were 554 delegates at the 2001 meeting. These delegates then elect the National Directory (84 members), which then elects the National Executive Committee (28 members).

At all levels, the rank and file have many opportunities to participate in party deliberations and manifest their preferences. Dissidence is permitted and institutionalized, and, in contrast to many mass populist parties (Levitsky, 2001), competition for leadership posts at all levels is highly institutionalized, and the rules are always followed. Since 1983, elections to party directories at all levels have been decided on the basis of proportional representation of slates running candidates. This encouraged factionalization, which the party formally regulated in 1987 (Partido dos Trabalhadores, 2001, pp. 41-42, Articles 233-239). The institutionalization of factions created an image of an internally divided party, but it also clarified internal debates within the party and for the public. More important, the use of proportional representation for leadership elections and the institutionalization of factions impeded behind-closed-doors or "informal" leadership selection mechanisms (Keck, 1992, p. 113). The institutionalization of regular, free, and fair internal elections instead made leaders responsive and accountable to the rank and file and imbued the winners with substantial internal legitimacy.

Table 1 reveals the factional evolution of the PT since factions were institutionalized.<sup>6</sup> From 1983 to 1993, Lula's faction, called Articulation, domi-

6. Table 1 simplifies the factional division of the party for expositional purposes. For more detailed information on PT factions, see Keck (1992), Azevedo (1995), and Lacerda (2002).

Table 1
Division of Factions' Running Slates for National Directory, 1984 to 2001 National Partido dos
Trabalhadores Meetings

Meeting	% Left Factions	% Center Factions	% Articulation	% Right Factions	
1984	34.2	_	65.8	_	
1986	27.8	_	72.2	_	
1987	40.6	_	59.4	_	
1990	27.0	17.0	56.0	_	
1993	55.6	3.5	29.3	11.6	
1995	46.2	5.9	40.3	7.6	
1997	37.8	11.1	39.3	11.8	
1999	32.8	12.7	46.5	8.0	
2001	32.5	13.0	51.6	_	

Sources: For 1984 to 1997, Partido dos Trabalhadores (1998); for 1999, Lacerda (2002); for 2001, Folha de Sao Paulo (2001d, p. 6).

Note: Several minuscule factions that could not be classified are not included in 2001, so the totals do not add up to 100%.

nated the party. Yet in 1993, following Lula's 1989 loss and the party's worse-than-expected performance in the 1990 and 1992 elections, Lula's faction split and lost control of the party, even though Lula eventually was returned to the party's presidency. The split revolved over the extent to focus on electoral work, which many on the party's left perceived as detrimental to the PT's grassroots work (Azevedo, 1995, p. 157). Subsequently, the factions also divided over the causes of the party's loss in the 1994 presidential election. The "moderate" factions concluded that the PT's platform had been too narrow, whereas the "radical" factions denied that the blame rested with the party's strategy and instead blamed the loss on media manipulation, federal government favoritism, and huge campaign donations in Cardoso's favor (Azevedo, 1995, p. 158).

Table 1 shows that Articulation suffered heavily after 1990 and that leftist factions gained considerably in 1993. However, the leftists could not maintain control of the party because they could not agree on how to put their plans into action, and none of their leaders emerged as potential long-term substitutes for Lula and Articulation's other leaders. At the 1995 national meeting, Lula refused another term as party president and supported his close associate, ex–federal deputy José Dirceu, for party president (Lacerda, 2002, p. 64). Dirceu won the election with 54.0% of the votes, and he remained party president until 2002.

After 1995, the radical factions slowly lost ground while Articulation grew. Although a clear internal shift to the right occurred, the radical factions

have contested Articulation's leadership at every opportunity. Retaking the party's presidency in 1995 did not mean that Lula's group won every battle from then on; in fact, his positions have been frequently voted down. For example, in 1996, Lula and his allies lost several battles over whom the PT should nominate in the upcoming municipal elections, including the most important contest, for mayor of São Paulo (*Folha de São Paulo*, 1996, p. 10). In 1997, several party "centrists" abandoned Dirceu and supported a more left-leaning candidate for party president. Dirceu won by only 52.6% to 47.4% that year. In 1998, a dispute over whether to nominate a candidate for governor of the state of Rio de Janeiro or to support another party's candidate deeply split the party at the national level, but at the 1999 national meeting, the radical factions lost ground, and Dirceu won reelection with 54.5% of the vote. In 2001, Dirceu increased his vote total to 55.6% (*Folha de São Paulo*, 1999b, p. 10, 2001d, p. 6).

Factional competition characterizes the party at not only the national level. The party's hierarchical structure means that factional disputes emerge at the local level, work up through the state level, and arrive full blown at the national level. This again demonstrates the importance of bottom-up internal contestation within the PT. An example comes from party elections in Brazil's largest city and state. In 1997, the São Paulo city municipal meeting had 917 delegates, elected from the numerous zones around the city (Folha de São Paulo, 1997a, p. 6). Lula's supporters and the radical factions battled for control of the Municipal Directory and the Executive Committee because the municipal-level election would affect the balance of forces at the state meeting, which had 1,446 delegates (Folha de São Paulo, 1997b, p. 5). Lula's group desperately needed to win the state-level election in São Paulo by a large margin because the proportional representation of slates elected at each state meeting determines the balance of delegates at the national meeting. The state of São Paulo sent 97 of the 550 delegates to the party's national convention in 1997, and 64 of those 97 supported Lula and Dirceu (Folha de São Paulo, 1997c, p. 5). This victory compensated for losses in other states such as Minas Gerais, where the radicals obtained 43 of the 78 delegates (Folha de São Paulo, 1997c, p. 5, 1997d, p. 7). Ultimately, Dirceu won reelection at the national convention by only 28 votes (Folha de São Paulo, 1997e, p. 6). The PT's mechanisms of internal contestation reveal that small shifts in the balance of power can mean the difference between victory or defeat.

Permeability at the top is the final indicator of leadership accountability. If leadership exhibits little turnover, then regardless of the frequency or formal-

<sup>7.</sup> The leftist factions supported a PT candidacy, whereas the rightist factions supported another party's candidate to obtain that party's support for Lula's presidential bid.

ity of internal elections, there is little true internal contestation, and leadership is relatively unaccountable. The PT's National Executive Committee has experienced between 30% and 84% turnover in the 14 internal elections the party has held since its founding (calculated from Partido dos Trabalhadores, 1998). For example, of the 17 members elected to the party's first Executive Committee in 1981, none remained by 1989, including Lula. Even after Articulation had regained control in 1995, extensive turnover continued: By 2001, only 7 of the 21 Executive Committee members elected in 1995 remained. Despite Articulation victories, the leadership of the PT has not ossified but remains fluid and accountable.

By adapting existing approaches to understanding the strategic flexibility of leftist parties, one sees that the PT combines comparatively low organizational entrenchment and low leadership autonomy. The main mechanisms of leadership accountability are formal institutions of internal participation and contestation at all levels of the party. This makes leaders aware that they must be responsive to the rank and file, or else they will be deposed from party office. These mechanisms also endow the rank and file with strategic capacity, making the critical variable for determining whether and how the PT would strategically adapt the preferences of the rank and file. A shift of a few percent of all party members would be sufficient to change internal party election results at all levels and thus support a shift in party strategy. One must therefore explore the sources of this gradual shift in the party's median member since 1995.

## **PREFERENCES**

In the PT, institutions of participation and contestation allowed the party at the national level to be open to changes from below, generating fluidity in the representation of members' interests. This affected the factional balance of power at the national level. Lula and his group of close associates had long favored shifting the PT to the center, but he could enact a strategic change only when his group's preferences conformed with the majority of the rank and file. In the 1990s, a shift toward favoring strategic moderation within the party's rank and file resulted from the party's growing participation in Brazil's democratic institutions, which pushed many active party members to reevaluate the tactical implications of their ideological beliefs. Table 2 provides information on the PT's growth at all levels of government.

Although some have suggested that the party's growth in the national legislature focused its energies on institutional struggles as opposed to the party's original emphasis on social struggles (Lacerda, 2002, p. 63; Novaes, 1993, p. 228; Nylen, 2000, p. 143), a more important source of endogenous

Table 2
Partido dos Trabalhadores Electoral Growth

Deputy Delegations			Municipal Level			
Election	Federal	State	Election	Mayors	Councilors	
1982	8 (1.6%)	13 (1.4%)				
1986	16 (3.2%)	40 (4.1%)	1985	3 (0.5%)	118	
1990	35 (7.0%)	81 (7.9%)	1988	38 (0.9%)	900	
1994	50 (9.7%)	92 (8.8%)	1992	54 (1.1%)	1,100	
1998	59 (11.5%)	90 (8.6%)	1996	110 (2.0%)	1,895	
2002	91 (17.7%)	142 (13.4%)	2000	187 (3.4%)	2,485	

Sources: Partido dos Trabalhadores (1999, pp. 246-247), Folha de São Paulo (2002a, pp. 15-17).

change was the party's growing experience holding subnational executive office. As the party grew and won power at the municipal and state levels, it confronted new demands for pragmatic approaches to problem solving and greater pressure to broaden its campaign appeals and electoral alliance options, pressures that its legislators do not face, particularly given the extremely high district magnitudes in Brazil's open-list proportional representation system, which permit a party such as the PT to adopt a policy-seeking approach.

Change within the party occurred for two reasons. Moderates within the party gained ground because their candidates tended to do better at the polls (*Veja*, 2000, p. 40; *Folha de São Paulo*, 1998e, p. 8E, 2000b, p. 4). The relatively greater electoral success of moderates matters because it affected the composition of the factions within the municipal and state party directories, which send representatives to the national convention.

Yet more important, moderation and pragmatism gained ground because many radical leaders altered their evaluations of the relative weight of "ideological" versus pragmatic concerns and gradually moderated their views after serving in government. Pressures to moderate the party's ideology and strategy increased not only on those who confronted the demands of electoral competition (as the party's elected legislators do) but also on those who face the daily reality of dealing with public demands, of proving the party's "competence," of actually governing (Folha de São Paulo, 2000a, p. 12). These were either candidates or elected officials themselves, or their appointees, and their own jobs as well as their positions within the party came to depend on public approval of their institutional performance and their continued electoral success. They thus paid relatively more attention to voters' preferences and demands and appreciated the importance of results versus rhetoric. Winning elections made greater numbers of the party's rank and file account-

able to the general public as opposed to merely internal party constituencies, which generated incentives for the party to place greater emphasis on electoral and institutional activity and less emphasis on mobilizational and extrainstitutional struggles.

For example, in the 1999 national meeting, members of the Trotskyite Socialist Democracy faction began to detach themselves from the more orthodox Left and ally themselves with more centrist factions, "because . . . their leaders now have the responsibility to govern" at both the municipal and state levels, particularly in the state of Rio Grande do Sul (*Folha de São Paulo*, 1999a, p. 15). Vicente Trevas (1999), PT national secretary of institutional affairs since 1997 and a member of the National Directory, explained that although many of the PT's first municipal governments enthusiastically attempted to implement radical plans, "this posture often made it difficult to really understand urban problems . . . our experiences of governing not only made explicit the insufficiencies in our political formulations but also revealed the limits of our party culture" (p. 54). Consequently, many elected officials began to reconsider the more radical positions within the party's ideology.

Experience in government makes the PT understand the programmatic rather than doctrinal implications of the commitments the party made at its foundation. When we assume a government, we are obliged to provide the practical implications of the objectives that we affirm in our party resolutions, or else contradict them. When we try to do this, we perceive that the content of these resolutions was often formulated simplistically, failing to take into account the complexities involved. (Trevas, 1999, p. 52)

Electoral success also increased the weight of the party's extrapartisan bureaucratic apparatus relative to the party organization. As the PT won subnational executive elections, it gained access to government resources, which supplanted selective and collective incentives obtained through movement or union politics. For example, although the PT still governs relatively few Brazilian cities, it has historically done better in larger urban areas. Along with state governments, these cities have larger bureaucracies and thus allow PT officials to hire more of their associates. Larger cities also have denser webs of civic organizations, so when the PT attains power, many activists take official roles within PT administrations or participate in its policy-making councils. The party's rise to executive office has thus facilitated many social movements' approximation to the state.

The PT's ability to build political networks outside the party thus provided the base for "new blood" to enter the party later on: As they faced increased pressures to emphasize their achievements in office, moderates' weight grew within the party. By 2000, approximately 80% of the party members who are either elected officials or who work for a PT administration were members of Lula's faction (*Folha de São Paulo*, 2000a, p. 12). Not all active party members (the rank and file) are elected officials or work for one, but their numbers have grown rapidly through the 1990s, and thus their weight in party organs has grown. Although the party's bureaucracy has grown since the 1980s, its growth is dwarfed by the party's army of elected officials and their appointees. As Table 2 shows, prior to 1987, the party had fewer than 200 elected officials, about the number of party employees today. After 1988, the party grew more rapidly in the electoral arena, especially in terms of the number of mayors it elected. As the PT gained experience governing, the weight of party elected officials and these officials' appointees grew within the party (Baiocchi, 2003; Novaes, 1993; Nylen, 1997; Singer, 2001).

The weight of elected officials and those who work for them is also increasingly felt in party finances. Currently, approximately 10,000 party members pay the "tithe" that the PT imposes on its elected officials or those employed by elected officials (Folha de São Paulo, 2002b, p. 16). Twenty million reals of the party's 2001 budget of 61 million reals was generated by this tithe, suggesting that the party depends heavily on contributions from its elected officials. The PT currently has about 3,000 elected officials, which means that approximately 7,000 paid administrators also pay the tithe. These two groups vastly outnumber paid party bureaucrats, and one can assume that those who pay the tithe have an interest in getting something for their money, not in material but in ideational terms. They want to see the party adopt their favored positions. In short, winning subnational executive elections has increased the incentives for moderation and pragmatism among PT rankand-file members. Today, 4 of 5 PT elected officials and those who work for party elected officials are party moderates. This has provided the basis for Articulation's return to and consolidation of power within the PT.

## INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE FOLLOWING PREFERENCE CHANGE

Since retaking power, rank-and-file moderates have supported institutional changes that have delegated additional autonomy to party leaders. Dis-

- 8. Unfortunately, data matching party convention delegates' socioeconomic characteristics or type of employment to how they voted on party platforms or leadership are unavailable.
- 9. This payment is set on a sliding scale, with the top "bracket" of elected officials paying 22% of their salary directly to the party and the top bracket of advisors to elected officials paying 10% (the limit had been higher earlier). To have voting rights, rank-and-file members also must pay, on a sliding scale, with the top contribution being 1% of take-home pay (Partido dos Trabalhadores, 2001, pp. 30-31, Articles 170-173).

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tinguishing the sequence here is critical for my argument that leadership autonomy increased because moderates took control of the party, not vice versa. That is, the PT's moderation was not simply a result of Lula moving to the center and dragging the party with him. Instead, the rank and file moderated and then chose to delegate additional autonomy to Lula. Up through 2000, party candidates for executive offices were officially subject to Executive Committee "guidance" at the level of the election. 10 Thus until 2002, Lula lacked technical autonomy from the faction that controlled the National Executive Committee. This was problematic in both 1989 and 1994, when Lula had to submit his decisions to a council on which his allies did not hold a majority (Folha de São Paulo, 1998b, p. 8), and it led to repeated conflicts between Lula and the party (Folha de São Paulo, 1994, p. 6, 1998c, p. 5; Jornal do Brasil, 1994, p 3). Lula believed that one of the reasons for his two losses was his lack of control (Folha de São Paulo, 1998a, p. 11), and in 1998, he demanded carte blanche (Folha de São Paulo, 1998c, p. 5) and made a take-it-or-leave-it demand: total autonomy to run his campaign, or he would refuse the party's nomination (Folha de São Paulo, 1997f, p. 6).

Lula obtained this autonomy only after the party's National Directory created the Citizenship Institute (Instituto Cidadania [IC]), an extrapartisan organization, in 1996. IC employs 11 people full-time. In 2001, it raised about 800,000 reals (about US\$275,000 as of January 1, 2003), of which 276,000 reals came from the PT's national organization (23,000 reals per month). The rest comes from individual donations and from corporate sponsors of specific research projects (Folha de São Paulo, 2002b, p. 17). Lula presided over IC from its creation until he assumed Brazil's presidency. IC enhanced Lula's autonomy by permitting him to develop an organization staffed by hand-picked personnel that is independent of the party bureaucracy, which let him prepare his platform and develop his public image free of party influence (Folha de São Paulo, 2002a, pp. 15-17). IC has essentially taken the place of the party in terms of preparing policy proposals for various sectors. In 2002, IC released Lula's preliminary platform. The document was discussed for 2 months in the media as if it were a party document, but it was not. Only after Lula and his advisors gauged public reaction did they present the document for internal party debate. This was a clear example of agenda setting. Once Lula had obtained the party's nomination, IC gave him a free hand. Not surprisingly, radical PT members have accused IC of "usurping party functions" (Folha de São Paulo, 2002a, pp. 15-17).

<sup>10.</sup> This rule can be found in Article 76 of the party's 1980 statute (Partido dos Trabalhadores, 1980) and Article 103 of the 1995 version of the statute (Partido dos Trabalhadores, 1995). Article 103 was simply deleted from the statute during the 2000 reform.

The autonomy of the party's organizational leadership has also been enhanced since 1995. In 2000, the PT reformed the party's statute (*Folha de São Paulo*, 2000b, p. 4; Partido dos Trabalhadores, 2001). The principal change is the advent of direct membership elections for the National Directory and for party president. Until 2001, delegates to the national meeting, held every other year, elected the party president and the party's National Directory, and the National Directory then elected the party's Executive Committee. The reform also extended the term of office for the party president and other leaders from 2 to 3 years, which should reduce the frequency and intensity of factional conflict, and it also limited the number of successive terms anyone can serve in leadership positions to three. Finally, the new statute allows internal plebiscites, allowing leaders to skirt organized factions and appeal directly to the rank and file. These changes increased the importance of the average party member at factions' expense, particularly the radical factions that tend to dominate the party bureaucracy.

The fact that Articulation has won internal elections since 1995 supports the notion that the PT's leadership has not simply "left the base behind." Even better evidence comes from the results of the party's first internal direct election, which reveals moderates' support among the rank-and-file, "grassroots" members. In 1999, 496 of the 914 delegates to the second national congress (54.3%) voted to reelect Dirceu, while in 2001, 113,713 of the members who cast votes (55.6%) voted for Dirceu (approximately 221,000 votes were cast) (Folha de São Paulo, 2001c, p. 4, 2001d, p. 6). The party's leadership is not out of touch with its base or leaving its supporters behind in the leftist dustbin of history: Participants in its internal election are the party's core militants, the rank and file out there organizing, protesting, educating, handing out campaign information, lobbying local and state governments, or otherwise involved in the party's "mobilizational" efforts. There is no reason to assume that more radical militants are not attempting to increase their prominence in the party by discouraging their associates from voting in the internal elections; the intense factional battles in the party throughout the 1990s indicate the opposite. Radical militants did not sit out the 1990s but instead lost ground relative to moderate leaders' mobilization of now moderate activists and militants.

### CONCLUSION

Several factors drove the PT's moderation. The broad, general factors at work around the globe only partly explain the party's transformation. I have argued that the way in which PT adapted to critical changes in its external

environment was a function of its comparatively high degree of leadership accountability. In general, strategic flexibility in parties with high leadership accountability depends on the degree of preference overlap between the leadership and the rank and file. Scholars expect strategic inertia rather than flexibility in such parties because leaders are not able to move the party without the consent of the rank and file, and because one expects leaders to be relatively more vote seeking than rank and file, whom one expects to be relatively more policy seeking (e.g., Kitschelt, 1994; Levitsky, 2001; Panebianco, 1998; Strom, 1990).

Preference divergence between the majority of the rank and file and the leadership of the party did emerge in the years immediately following the end of the cold war. However, the PT confounded the expectation of strategic inertia after 1995, when it began to moderate its position and broaden its electoral strategy. This change followed the PT's growth within Brazil's federal institutional structure, as the party began to win more elections at the subnational level. Being held accountable to a broader electorate as opposed to merely criticizing the government in the legislature increasingly generated incentives among party rank and file to moderate the party's political strategy as the 1990s wore on. These increasingly pragmatic party members could influence party decisions because of the PT's internally democratic institutions. This article thus adds to scholarly understanding of the sources of strategic flexibility in parties in which leadership accountability is high.

What significance does this development have for Brazilian democracy? On one hand, the party's ability to grow while moderating reveals the absence of truly radical partisan options in contemporary Brazil. The PT has changed more than Brazil's democracy has; the party's shift to the political center meant accepting both the structure of existing discourse about Brazil's economic problems and many of incumbent President Cardoso's attempted neoliberal solutions. On the other hand, Lula's victory also indicates that Brazilian democracy has changed a great deal, in the voters' acceptance of a party with a radical history and a decidedly different notion of representation from Brazil's traditional elites and in the voters' choice of a nonelite political leader. Moreover, the PT's evolving economic pragmatism remains separate from its radical (for Brazil) vision of democracy, which places heightened value on civic participation, equality, and the inclusion of those who have historically been excluded from politics.

The PT has sought to reconstruct the way in which power is conceived in Brazil. The party's notion of democracy as self-empowerment has long generated internal tension between working "outside" the state or "within" the state. At the end of the 1980s, Keck (1992) concluded that in spite of the party's rapid institutionalization it had "not lost its character as a movement,

a 'community of fate' whose development remains primarily based on collective incentives" (p. 251). This interpretation no longer holds. During Brazil's transition to democracy, the PT's greatest opportunities for political action lay outside rather than within political institutions (p. 252). Today, especially given Lula's presidential victory, the party's main sphere of opportunity lies within political institutions, at all levels of government, rather than in civil society. The PT has lost its character as a movement, and its evolution no longer depends primarily on its character as a movement. Its development today depends first and foremost on how well its leaders perform in government, on how well the party can put its formative ideals of "radical democracy," however retooled for contemporary Brazil, into practice.

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