The Gubernatorial Coattails Effect: Federalism and Congressional Elections in Brazil

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Competition for executive-level offices can influence competition for legislative office, and federal institutions can provide an "opportunity structure" that shapes partisan competition. In Brazil, unlike in systems where the presidential election might drive congressional elections, electoral incentives are *state-centered*. Candidates for Congress focus on the gubernatorial race, not the presidential race. Specifically, the effective number of candidates competing in the gubernatorial race in each state (electoral district) determines the effective number of lists competing in congressional elections in each state in Brazil. In this article, I use OLS regression analysis of electoral data from Brazil's democratic elections to test this proposition. Regression analysis confirms that the effective number of candidates for governor, and not the effective number of candidates for president, drives the effective number of lists competing in the legislative election.

> "If every politician's first rule is to survive, then we reach the following conclusion: it is use-less to discuss national issues in the electoral process."
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> —Nelson Jobim, two-term Brazilian federal deputy, former
> Minister of Justice, and current Supreme Court Justice.

T he literature on the political consequences of electoral laws typically focuses on how *national*-level variables contribute to the level of party system fraction-alization in national legislative elections.[1] However, as Cox (1997) has recently argued, the dependent variable in much of this literature—the number of parties at the national level—results from a two-step process: votes are first aggregated at the *constituency* level and a degree of fractionalization results in each constit-uency; then these district-level systems of electoral fragmentation are sewn to-gether more or less successfully into a *national* party system, with its concomitant degree of *national* fragmentation.

[1] Examples include Rae (1971), Lijphart (1990, 1994), Taagepera and Shugart (1989), Myerson (1993), Carey and Shugart (1995), Shugart and Carey (1992), Shugart (1995), Jones (1995), and Cox (1997).

Thus, while the electoral studies literature has concentrated on national-level variables, it may have missed the potential impact of district-level or *subnational* variables on the number (and character) of national parties. For example, as Jones (1997) has recently demonstrated, federalism may affect the party system "from below." I agree that the electoral studies literature may suffer from omitted variable bias and, consequently, may fail to adequately explain party system fractionalization in many countries. I will argue that in Brazil, *subnational* variables play a key role in determining the number and nature of national parties.

Scholars have held up Brazil as a classic case of the dangers of extreme electoral fragmentation (cf. Mainwaring 1992; Linz 1994) and have claimed that Brazil's historically highly fragmented party system has factored into the country's governability problems. Overall, for all democratic elections in Brazil since 1945, the average effective number of parties in the lower chamber of Congress has been 6.3 (Lima Jr. 1983; 1997). This number is so high, comparatively speaking, as to almost put Brazil off the map: Sartori (1976, 128) classified systems with between six and eight effective parties as "extremely pluralistic," only one step away from "atomistic."

What are the sources of this extreme fragmentation? Consider the following puzzle: while the average effective number of parties at the *national* level in Brazil is 6.3, the average effective number of parties at the state or *constituency* level (states serve as electoral districts) is only *3.3*.[2] Where does Brazil get 6.3 parties nationally, nearly double the average number per district? I argue that subnational variables drive national congressional elections: candidates for congress scramble to join a state-based political coalition led by a gubernatorial candidate, and gubernatorial elections then drive the congressional election in each district/state. In contrast, national-level variables, such as the presidential race, do not drive congressional elections. Thus, while most states have few parties, because a state-based dynamic drives congressional elections, congress is filled with many poorly nationalized parties. I call this the "gubernatorial coattails effect."

In the next section, I highlight how subnational variables influence national legislative elections in Brazil. Subsequently, I provide a statistical test that confirms the presence of a strong gubernatorial coattails effect in Brazilian legislative elections. I conclude with some observations about how gubernatorial coattails affect executive-legislative relations at the national level.

The Logic of the Gubernatorial Coattails Effect

In this section, I explain why Brazilian congressional candidates tend to coalesce around gubernatorial candidates and how this dynamic drives coalition formation at the state level. In brief, the control of nominations and alliance-making decisions by state-level party organizations, strong state governments,

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[2] This is a weighted average that takes into account differences in district magnitude.

and different timing and procedures for gubernatorial elections versus national legislative elections provide candidates for legislative office with strong incentives to organize their campaigns around a state-level candidate rather than a national-level candidate.

The first factor focuses attention on the weakness of Brazil's national parties. Brazilian national party labels have historically been and continue to be weak, as are Brazilian national party organizations (Mainwaring 1999). Neither the voters nor politicians seem to care much about national partisan affiliations (Samuels 1999): Brazilian politicians change their partisan affiliation frequently (Nicolau 1996), bestow little power on national party organizations, and create and extinguish parties frequently as well, making difficult any voter's desire to maintain a partisan attachment (Mainwaring 1995). Given these factors, as candidates would in any country, candidates in Brazil have few reasons to let national parties or partisan disputes determine their campaign strategies.

However, this does not mean that candidates desire to simply "go it alone." Instead, candidates seek to associate their own campaign with a broader appeal that might attract uncommitted and/or uninformed voters. In the absence of reliable partisan cues, candidates seek other ways to provide voters with information "shortcuts" (Popkin 1990) to increase their probability of success. Politicians recognize this incentive: "A deputy tends to want to insert himself in something larger, and thus tends to associate himself with a campaign for the executive," stated a deputy who had also served as governor and senator.[3] Given that congressional candidates do not rely on their national partisan affiliation to reap votes, the question is then which executive campaign—the presidential or the gubernatorial—provides relatively higher payoffs for an office-seeking candidate?

While presidential candidates are often seen as virtual "foreigners" who depend on state-based leaders to project their own campaigns—particularly given Brazil's dramatic regional disparities—gubernatorial candidates are typically better known "locals" who have developed a stronger and broader clientelistic network in their state. Even when gubernatorial and presidential elections occur simultaneously, this provides a strong reason for a candidate to strengthen his ties to a *gubernatorial* candidate. In short, in the absence of strong national party organizations and labels, candidates may seek other ways to attract votes. In Brazil, candidates have incentives to associate their campaigns with the gubernatorial race, historically the locomotives pulling Brazilian congressional elections (Abrucio 1995, 192).

Candidates possess additional incentives to organize their campaigns around state-based rather than national issues or candidates: nominations for all offices (except president and municipal-level positions) are decided in state-level conventions, and electoral coalition decisions are also made at the state level. Typically, a small clique of state political bosses determines access to the ballot in

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[3] Interview with André Franco Montoro, São Paulo, 3/17/97.

each party, and these leaders also determine with which other parties their party will ally; national party organs have little say in such negotiations.

Between two and four candidates run for governor in each state.[4] These candidates typically lead a state-based party branch, and as their candidacy emerges, they attempt to attract as many politicians as they can to their camp. Because not every party has a candidate strong enough to potentially win the gubernatorial race, politicians in smaller parties line up behind the favorites. These smaller parties are headed by prospective state political bosses who see themselves as potential statewide leaders and who are willing to support a different party's candidate for governor in exchange for promised access to a future state administration. Typically, a gubernatorial candidate agrees with his coalition partners to divide up upon victory his cabinet and other political spoils. After sealing the gubernatorial coalition, state political bosses negotiate slots for federal and state deputy slates, creating joint electoral lists. Votes are pooled in each district at the list level: the number of seats (M) each list wins is calculated, and the top M candidates who receive the most votes on each list win, regardless of their party affiliation.

In short, because every candidate must be a member of a party, every candidate is involved in a district-wide (i.e., statewide) nomination game and coalition-formation game. In each state, these processes involve personalistic negotiations and downplay partisan or policy differences. Legislative candidates strive to attach themselves to gubernatorial candidates, who also make personalistic and nonpartisan appeals.

The second factor highlights the impact of Brazil's strong state governments. In countries with relatively autonomous subnational governments, politicians may have incentives to respond to subnational rather than national political forces when campaigning. Scholars agree that subnational actors in Brazil have historically held, and retain to this day, considerable political prerogatives (Abrucio 1998; Abrucio and Samuels 1997; Mainwaring and Samuels n.d.; Samuels 1998). In particular, governors control sizable budgets and retain extensive power to hire and fire. Thus, an additional incentive for congressional candidates to ally with a gubernatorial candidate is that if he allies with the winner, he can expect privileged access to pork-barrel funds and plum political jobs for his cronies later on. As Abrucio (1995, 141) argues, "Political machines in Brazil tend to consolidate around their relationship with state executives, because the mayors

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[4]This table provides information on the key variables:

	VARIABLE		
	ENEL	ENPRES	ENGOV
Minimum	1.22	1.13	1.00
Maximum	6.18	5.00	5.02
Average	2.85	2.62	2.33
Std. Deviation	0.90	0.65	0.57

and all the local leaders depend highly on the power of the governor. It is the state government, or the regional bosses, almost always linked to the state government machine, that organizes the local brokers and ward heelers." Thus, to assure his clients that he will be able to follow through on promised access, a candidate seeks out his own patron. If he picks a loser, he will have to initiate a rapprochement with the winning candidate, which is facilitated by Brazil's weak party legislation.

The third factor focuses on the impact of electoral rules. As in nearly all presidential systems, in Brazil the method for election of subnational executives differs from the method used to elect congressional representatives. In Brazil from 1945 to 1964, both the president and governors in all states were elected using a first-past-the-post plurality system. In 1989, a two-round majoritarian system was implemented at both levels in all states. National congressional elections in all districts have been held during both periods using a version of open-list proportional representation. Under this system, deputies have been elected at-large, in statewide districts, for four-year terms, with district magnitudes ranging from five to seventy.

This difference matters because scholars hold that presidential elections exert a reductive effect on legislative elections (Cox 1997; Duverger 1986; Shugart and Carey 1992). The logic behind this hypothesis is that affiliating with a strong presidential candidate can bring substantial benefits to legislative candidates, such as organizational support, potential coattail effects, and potential access to a future administration. Think of a presidential system that uses proportional representation to elect its legislators. Candidates for president might recruit candidates for the legislature, both to develop their own campaign and to construct a post-election governing coalition. Legislative candidates might seek out presidential candidates for similar reasons because they might gain organizational support, campaign finance, or media access. Thus, candidates for legislative and executive office may choose to run on the same ticket for mutually beneficial reasons. If there are only two candidates for president, candidates for legislative office, even operating under a PR system, have incentives to line up behind only two electoral lists, not more, independently of district magnitude. Thus, the number of electoral lists ought to reflect the number of *presidential* candidates.

In systems such as the U.S., where both the executive and legislative elections use plurality rules, the number of major candidates for president and the number of major legislative "lists" per district should rarely exceed two; in systems that apply a plurality or majoritarian system for executive elections but a PR system for legislative elections, the number of legislative lists might exceed two, but not by as much as it would were there not two or three presidential candidates pulling legislative candidates into a smaller number of lists. The same logic might hold for gubernatorial elections if governors could offer candidates for congress substantial electoral resources. Whether subnational or national executives matter more depends on how strong the political incen-

tives are to ally with either gubernatorial or presidential candidates. As I have argued above, in Brazil we ought to expect gubernatorial elections to matter more.

Finally, subnational executive elections in Brazil are often concurrent with national congressional elections. In Brazil from 1945 to 1964, the presidential term lasted five years and congressional terms four years. In ten states, gubernatorial terms also lasted five years and were not concurrent with congressional elections, but in nine states, the governor's term lasted four years and was concurrent with congressional elections. In 1950, elections were held concurrently at all levels in all states. In 1989, the presidential election was held alone, with all other elections concurrent in 1990. In 1994 and 1998, Brazil again held elections at all levels concurrently. This hodgepodge of electoral cycles provides us with an interesting mix in the data.

The timing of elections matters because, as Shugart (1995) has demonstrated, the closer the presidential election is to the legislative election, the greater is the coattails effect of the former on the latter, and thus the greater its potential reductive influence. Jones (1997) has argued that concurrent *gubernatorial* elections should also depress the expected number of parties running in congressional elections, demonstrating such an effect in Argentina.[5] Following Shugart and Jones, I hypothesize that if executive and legislative elections are concurrent, then this reductive effect ought to be strongest. If the legislative election were held a year after the executive election, the reductive effect might still be present, but it would likely have faded. Moreover, in Brazil, I hypothesize that the closer gubernatorial and congressional elections are, the more the former will influence the latter. However, I hypothesize that because of weak links between the presidential and congressional races, the presidential race should not have much effect on the legislative party system even if concurrent. I test for these effects statistically in the next section.

In contrast to many countries, virtually all the important "action" in the Brazilian electoral process occurs at the state level: nomination, coalition formation, campaigning, counting votes, and winning seats. Given the weakness of national parties and party labels in Brazil, and despite the individualistic nature of the electoral rules, many candidates find that associating with a candidate for governor (and not a candidate for president) can have high payoffs. In the next section, I test these claims quantitatively, using data from Brazil's democratic elections.

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[5] The logic parallels the argument for the presidential election's reductive effect. Two existing studies that investigate this relationship, Jones (1997) and Mainwaring and Shugart (1997), compare the effect of the electoral *rules* and the *timing* of elections at each level on the effective number of legislative lists. On the other hand, I use the effective number of *candidates* in conjunction with timing instead of the electoral rules because, ceteris paribus, the rules have an indirect effect on the legislative elections, while the candidates have a direct effect: the rules for the presidential election affect the number of candidates for the presidential election, and this result then affects the legislative election. See Cox (1997), pp. 212–13. See Samuels (1998), chapter 5 for details.

A Test of the Gubernatorial Coattails Effect

Given my arguments above, I hypothesize that we ought to see a correlation, conditioned by the timing of the gubernatorial election, between the effective number of gubernatorial candidates and the effective number of congressional lists, above and beyond any effects due to presidential elections and district magnitude. Figure 1 represents the hypothesized causal model:

FIGURE 1

The Relationship Between the Number of Competitors for Executive Elections, District Magnitude, and the Number of Lists in a Legislative Election

District Magnitude

↓

**EFFECTIVE # LISTS
AT STATE LEVEL**

↗   ↖

Concurrence   **Concurrence**

| |

**Effective #
Gubernatorial
Candidates in State**

**Effective #
Presidential
Candidates in State**
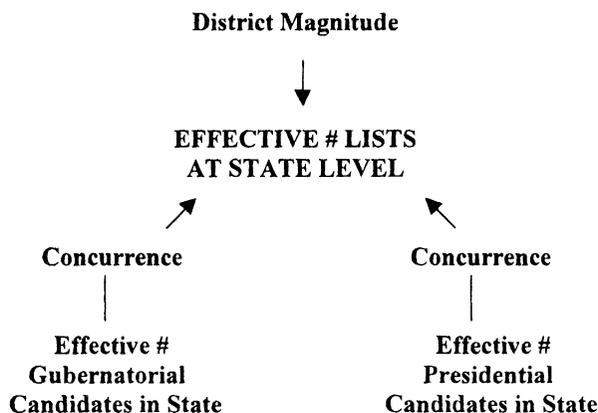
To test this model, I use pooled cross-sectional electoral data from Brazil's democratic periods, 1945–64 and 1989–98.[6] The analysis focuses on five principal independent variables, four of which are interacted, and includes dummy variables for Brazil's states (to control for spatial fixed effects) and for each congressional election (to control for temporal fixed effects).

$ENEL_{st}$, the dependent variable, is the effective number of electoral lists competing for seats in the Chamber of Deputies in state "s" at time "t," calculated as per Laakso and Taagepera (1979), using votes.

$PROXGOV_{st}$ is the *Proximity* of the Gubernatorial Election to the legislative election in state "s," time "t." For an executive election to exert its greatest influence on a legislative election, the two must be proximal, as logic would sug-

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[6] See footnote four for maxima, minima, averages, and standard deviations on my main variables.

gest and as Shugart and Carey (1992), Shugart (1995), Jones (1995), and Amorim Neto and Cox (1996) have demonstrated empirically. If executive and legislative elections are concurrent, they are maximally proximal, and PROXGOV takes a value of 1. In a separation-of-powers system, the least proximal elections are those held at the executive's midterm; in these cases, PROXGOV takes a value of 0. If L_t equals the date of the legislative election, G_{t-1} signifies the date of the previous gubernatorial election, and G_{t+1} equals the date of the subsequent gubernatorial election, we calculate proximity in non-concurrent cases as:

$$PROXGOV = 2^{*|(L_T - G_{T-1})/(G_{T+1} - G_{T-1}) - 1/2|}$$

This formula provides the time elapsed between the preceding executive election and the legislative election ($L_T - G_{t-1}$) as a fraction of the executive term ($G_{t+1} - G_{t-1}$). Subtracting 1/2 from this and then taking the absolute value shows how far away from the midterm the legislative election was held (Amorim Neto and Cox 1996). Then, I interact this variable with ENGOV (see below). I hypothesize that candidates have greater incentives to coalesce around the gubernatorial field the closer are the subnational executive and national legislative elections. The closer the election, the fewer the lists.

    PROXPRES$_{st}$ is the Proximity of the Presidential Election to the legislative election in state "s," time "t." I use the same formula as above for gubernatorial elections, and I interact this variable with ENPRES. However, I hypothesize that the proximity of the presidential election to the legislative election has no effect on the effective number of electoral lists in each district.

    ENGOV$_{st}$ is the Effective Number of Gubernatorial candidates, taken in votes, in state "s," time "t." I hypothesize that as ENGOV increases, so should ENEL. However, as per Cox (1997, 212–15) and as illustrated in the diagram above, I hypothesize that the number of candidates only *indirectly* affects the dependent variable: its effect depends on the timing of the election, operationalized as PROXGOV.[7]

    ENPRES$_{st}$ is the Effective Number of Presidential candidates in state "s," time "t." I hypothesize that ENPRES is unrelated to the effective number of electoral lists in each district. As with ENGOV, ENPRES is interacted with PROXPRES.

    logM$_{st}$ is the log of District Magnitude, the number of seats to be filled in the Chamber of Deputies from state "s," time "t." Typically, as per Taagepera and Shugart (1989), analysts enter logM into the equation instead of M in systems with large district magnitudes. Following established precedent, I hypothesize that as logM increases, so should the effective number of electoral lists in the state/district.

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[7] Suppose that in an election held at time "t," we have two presidential candidates. If the legislative election were held ten years later, we would have no reason to believe the number parties competing at that time also ought to be near two. On the other hand, if the legislative and executive elections were held concurrently, then we would suppose that executive election ought to influence the legislative election.

YEAR$_x$ is a dummy variable for each legislative election year, to control for fixed temporal effects—events or circumstances in a given year that may boost or reduce ENEL—other than those captured by the other regressors.

STATE$_x$ is a dummy variable for each of Brazil's states.

The precise specification of the equation is as follows:

$$\text{ENEL}_{st} = \alpha + \beta_1 + \beta_2 \text{PROXGOV}_{st} + \beta_3 (\text{ENGOV}_{st} * \text{PROXGOV}_{st})$$
$$+ \beta_4 \text{PROXPRES}_{st} + \beta_5 (\text{ENPRES}_{st} * \text{PROXPRES}_{st})$$
$$+ \beta_3 \log\text{M}_{st} + \beta_4 \text{YEAR}_x \ldots + \beta_{11} \text{YEAR}_x$$
$$+ \beta_{12} \text{STATE}_x \ldots + \beta_{33} \text{STATE}_x + e$$

PROXGOV and PROXPRES are included both independently and as interacted variables (the diagram indicates that the proximity of the election has a direct effect). The model focuses on the causal impact of the first five variables. The other variables are included as controls, and for space reasons I do not report their results.[8]

Table 1 relates the results for three models. In 1950, 1994, and 1998, presidential and gubernatorial elections were concurrent in all states. In these years, PROXGOV and PROXPRES would be perfectly collinear, and the computer will throw out one variable. To get around this problem, I ran three regressions, each excluding one of the concurrent elections. The results from all three equations demonstrate that my key variables, those associated with the gubernatorial race, are significant. This suggests the findings are robust.[9]

Overall, these results confirm my expectations: the variables associated with the gubernatorial race are strongly significant in all three equations, while the variables associated with the presidential race exhibit no statistically significant impact. The state-specific fixed effects (not reported) wash out any effect that district magnitude has.

To explain these results, consider a series of cases with concurrent gubernatorial elections (where PROXGOV = 1). If the effective number of gubernatorial candidates increases by one, the effective number of legislative lists in the state increases, on average, by about one-half. If we consider a series of cases where the legislative elections are halfway through the gubernatorial term (PROXGOV = .5), then if the effective number of gubernatorial candidates increases by one, the effective number of legislative lists in the state increases, on average, by about one-fourth.

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[8] Excluding the fixed-effects variables does not affect the significance of the results. This model of course cannot account for variation in levels of multipartism during both the 1945–64 period and the post-1985 period. I suggest that competition for the statehouse in each state has increased, driving up the number of parties at the national level as a result.

[9] Moreover, a model that included only the "gubernatorial" variables came up as expected, while a model with just the "presidential" variables failed to provide a good fit.

TABLE 1

Determinants of Effective Number of Lists in
Brazilian Congressional Elections

Independent Variable	Estimated Coefficient (S.E.)					
	Excluding 1950		Excluding 1994		Excluding 1998	
LogM	.92	(.53)	.92	(.53)	.92	(.53)
ProxGov	−1.17**	(.38)	−1.17**	(.38)	−1.17**	(.38)
ProxGov*ENGov	.51***	(.13)	.51***	(.13)	.51***	(.13)
ProxPres	−.53	(.73)	−1.07	(.80)	−.80	(.81)
ProxPres*ENPres	.20	(.14)	.20	(.14)	.20	(.14)
Constant	2.24		2.07		2.93	
R-Square	.69		.69		.69	
S.E. of the Estimate	.57		.57		.57	
Degrees of Freedom	139		139		139	

*$p < .05$, two-tailed test; **$p < .01$, two-tailed test; ***$p < .001$, two-tailed test.

In sum, this statistical test confirms my hypothesis that all else equal, guber-
natorial elections exert a strong coattails effect on Brazilian congressional
elections.[10]

Conclusion

In this article, I demonstrated that unlike in systems where elections for the
national executive are an important influence on legislative elections, Brazilian
coattails are more gubernatorial than presidential. What conclusions can we draw
from this finding?

First, this result explains why Brazil has 6.3 effective parties nationally, whereas
it only has 3.3 effective parties on average in each state: politicians do not obtain
resources necessary to advance their careers from parties or presidents, but from
state-level connections, they have few incentives to coordinate around national

[10] Since 1945 Brazil has held ten democratic congressional elections (1945, 1950, 1954, 1958,
1962, 1982, 1986, 1990, 1994, and 1998), seven presidential elections (1945, 1950, 1955, 1960,
1989, 1994, and 1998) and either nine or ten gubernatorial elections, depending on the state. I ran a
Chow test (see Gujarati, 444) to see if the pre- and post-authoritarian elections pool. I created a
dummy variable for post-authoritarian elections and coded these cases as 1 and all others as zero.
Then, I multiplied this dummy by ENGOV * PROXGOV, ENPRES * PROXPRES, and logM, and ran
the regression including the undummied variables as well as the dummied variables. If the post-
authoritarian cases were different, then the dummied variables should have significant coefficients,
but none did. I exclude the 1982 and 1986 democratic legislative and gubernatorial elections because
the president had not been democratically elected, so I cannot compare the impact of the presidential
and gubernatorial elections. A regression including these years and only including the gubernatorial
variables comes up as expected.

parties or line up behind strong presidential candidates. This dynamic drives electoral fragmentation at the national level in Brazil.

The state-centeredness of legislative elections in Brazil plays itself out in executive-legislative relations. Brazilian deputies know that no matter how strong a presidential candidate is, he has few tools to influence congressional elections. This has been clear in the last three presidential elections: for example, in 1990, after Brazil's first democratic presidential election in almost 30 years, the president's party won just 8% of congressional seats, up from 6.3% the year before.

Gubernatorial coattails consequently weaken the president's ability to construct a governing coalition. When elected deputies arrive in Brasília to serve their terms, they must continue to pay attention to the incumbent governors in their states, so as not to create powerful political enemies. Incumbent deputies are also thinking strategically about their own political futures: during political campaigns, when pondering their futures, deputies weigh state-level political considerations heavily, and gubernatorial power can influence those considerations. In contrast, because of their weakness electorally and in terms of deputies' careerist calculations, the president and national party leaders have few carrots or sticks to use to entice or enforce cohesion in the legislature. Consequently, the President inevitably has a hard time constructing a stable governing coalition.

Two examples from Brazilian history illustrate this difficulty. Brazil has elected two presidents, both of whom had vast popular appeal but scant links with political elites: Jânio Quadros in 1960 and Fernando Collor de Mello in 1989. Both men campaigned on anti-party and anti-elite platforms, both ended up facing a hostile congress, and both administrations ended in disaster. In 1961, after seven months of chaotic gridlock, Quadros resigned (for reasons still mysterious), setting off a chain of events that culminated in the military coup three years later. As for Collor, his Bonapartist attempt to govern virtually alone also backfired, and his failure to cultivate links with congress contributed to his impeachment in 1992.

Current president Fernando Henrique Cardoso has assiduously cultivated links with congress, and in particular with state governors. Although he has had markedly better success than many predecessors, nevertheless, his task is still made difficult by his and his party's weaknesses. The contrast to U.S. President Bill Clinton is instructive. Clinton can typically count on the votes of some baseline number of Democrats; he does not have to give each of his copartisans individual attention on every proposed bill. In contrast, Ames (1995) has demonstrated that in Brazil, the president cannot necessarily count on members of *his own party* to follow orders, much less the members of the dozen or so other parties in his coalition. Brazilian presidents have to start from practically zero with each new proposal, "renting" votes individually with promises of pork or jobs.

The president has to operate this way because he and his allied national party leaders in congress have so few other tools besides individualized trips to the pork barrel to generate legislative support. This indicates executive weakness: to gain strength, and to cut down on the time and expense of dealing with nearly

400 deputies on each vote, from the start of his administration Cardoso has wooed state governors to lobby the deputies from their states on his behalf, with promises of federal pork going to the governors, not the deputies.

In sum, executive-legislative relations in Brazil involve a "fourth branch" of the presidential system: state governors. Because governors control resources that can influence other politicians' careers, and national parties and the president lack such resources, federal and intergovernmental disputes play a key role in defining executive-legislative relations. Many of the issues on Brazil's current agenda, such as bureaucratic reform, tax reform, privatization, and decentralization, confront state governors who favor the status quo, wherein they have tremendous political power. Moreover, governors' interests as a group focus on politics in their individual states; interstate cooperation has proven difficult during Brazil's democratic transition. Thus, the state-centeredness of elections in Brazil tends to increase the weight of subnational interests in Brazilian national politics and to weaken and fragment Brazil's parties.

My findings should encourage challenges to some of the received wisdom about the impact of national-level variables on elections in general: in addition to Brazil, we now have some evidence that subnational variables influence national elections in several countries, such as the U.S. (Cox and Munger 1989), Argentina (Jones 1997), and India (Chhibber and Kollman 1998). Scholars have also suggested, but apparently not yet demonstrated empirically, that subnational variables influence national elections in Canada (Sharman ed. 1994), Spain (Linz and Stepan 1992), and Russia (Ordeshook 1996). Given the important link scholars such as Riker (1987) have posited between federalism and party systems, we ought to expand this study to other federal systems, particularly those undergoing some sort of political transition, such as Mexico. Still, within this group of countries, we do not know how to qualify or quantify the variation in the impact of subnational variables on national elections: where or when are they more or less important? Cox (1997, 12), citing Taagepera and Shugart (1989, 117) called for studies that would "fill the gap . . . between our electoral theories (mostly district-level) and data (mostly national-level)." As more and more district-level data become available, future analyses may unveil additional political systems in which subnational variables influence national elections.

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