

# Concurrent Elections, Discordant Results

## Presidentialism, Federalism, and Governance in Brazil

*David Samuels*

“Stumping for candidates is a thing of the past, it’s a figure of speech. These days, if you advertise that you’re going to vote for this or that candidate, it doesn’t change anything.” So Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso expressed his belief that his support would not help elect candidates for other offices in *O Estado de São Paulo*, August 3, 1998.

In January 1999 Cardoso became the first Brazilian president to pass the presidential sash to himself. He won a smashing first-round reelection victory in October 1998, defeating his nearest rival by over 20 percent. The parties in his alliance also won sizable majorities in both houses of congress. By all rights, Cardoso’s reelection ought to have rejuvenated his efforts to maintain Brazil’s economic stabilization program (the *Plano Real*) and to pass extensive political reforms. On top of the prestige from his relatively easy victory, the International Monetary Fund agreed soon after the election to provide Brazil with U.S.\$42 billion to give Cardoso extra political and economic breathing room to maneuver for reform. Superficially, Cardoso appeared to possess significant political capital at the start of his second term.

However, Cardoso experienced no second honeymoon. To the contrary, his second term began as a nightmare. Within weeks of his inauguration, the *real* collapsed, losing half its value and raising fears of a return to Brazil’s infamous days of hyperinflation; the country’s foreign currency reserves were drained; two central bank presidents resigned in succession; the Brazilian stock markets went into a free-fall; and former president Itamar Franco, elected governor of the important state of Minas Gerais, effectively defaulted on the debts his state owed to domestic and international creditors. This last straw forced the central government to cover the debts in order to stave off the perception of a generalized government default. The *New York Times* soon concluded that despite Cardoso’s victory “Brazil is struggling against its worst financial crisis in years.”<sup>1</sup> Moreover, as the largest economy in Latin America and the eighth largest in the world, Brazil’s troubles reverberated throughout the region. Leery investors feared that Brazil’s problems could unleash “new global turmoil” or even precipitate a “global financial meltdown.”<sup>2</sup> Brazil’s economic crisis generated a political crisis, and after his inauguration Cardoso’s political prestige quickly slipped with both voters and congress.<sup>3</sup>

Why was Cardoso’s second honeymoon cut short so abruptly? While many fac-

tors were at play, one clearly stood out: how Brazil's federal institutions constrained presidential leadership and impeded smooth executive-legislative relations. The *Plano Real* had serious consequences for intergovernmental relations in Brazil. To keep inflation in check, it maintained high domestic interest rates; after 1994 these high rates dramatically increased the debt burden on Brazil's states.<sup>4</sup> The *Plano Real* thus fixed one problem but exacerbated another. When Franco and several other governors demanded debt relief in January 1999, the bubble burst. Creditors suspected the central government's fiscal credibility and doubted Cardoso's congressional support to pass needed reforms. Consequently, economic and political crises erupted. This view was widespread. Pointing to the federal root of the problem, one *New York Times* headline even reported that "Brazil's economic crisis pits president against governors."<sup>5</sup>

This interpretation jibes fairly well with scholarly opinion about Brazil's inability compared to other nations to institutionalize political and economic reforms. While Brazil's presidency ranks among the world's most institutionally powerful and this concentration of power might lead one to conclude that governing ought to be relatively easy, weak influence over parties and strong federalism restrict Brazilian presidents' capacity to govern effectively. Weak partisan powers, indicated by the fragmentation of Brazil's party system and by Brazilian parties' lack of cohesion, force the president to struggle to construct very broad legislative coalitions with each new policy proposal. Scholars typically point to Brazil's electoral system, open list proportional representation with a low threshold for representation and high district magnitudes, as the source of party system fragmentation and party weakness and of the president's consequently reduced capacity to get what he wants from the legislature.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, Brazilian federalism generates incentives for legislators to pay close attention to state-based issues and scant attention to national partisan issues. Federalism also contributes to partisan fragmentation and uncohesiveness, making legislative coalition building even more difficult. State governors also possess resources, such as pork-barrel funds and the power to hire and fire, to influence legislators from their state. Because of these loyalties and gubernatorial influence over congressional deputies, presidents must negotiate with state governors to acquire legislative support. Governors can therefore influence national politics and restrict the president's range of action.<sup>7</sup>

Even with these institutional constraints, the rapid collapse of the *real* and the abrupt return of generalized crisis in Brazil conflict with the optimistic expectations that Cardoso's victories generated. For example, Linz and Stepan argued that Cardoso would enjoy smoother executive-legislative relations than former president Fernando Collor (1989–92) because he brought "great legislative prestige and experience" to the presidency and because he enjoyed wide popular support.<sup>8</sup> Likewise, Fernando Abrucio claimed that the concurrence of presidential and legislative elec-

tions in 1994 and 1998 would strengthen Cardoso's hand vis-à-vis congress and facilitate passage of his agenda.<sup>9</sup> Finally, Scott Mainwaring deliberately distinguished the chaotic 1985–94 period from Cardoso's presidency and argued that, because of Cardoso's first term success in passing some reforms, "it seems likely that institutional constraints will loom as less deleterious" in the future.<sup>10</sup>

Do the electoral system and federalism help explain the rapid end to Cardoso's second honeymoon? Do these variables also explain Cardoso's relatively limited success in his first term? Strong federalism and weak partisan powers constrain presidential leadership in Brazil and make construction of stable legislative coalitions difficult. A previously neglected aspect of Brazilian electoral politics is especially important: the absence of presidential coattail effects and the presence of gubernatorial coattail effects. Because presidential coattails are so short in Brazil, the president can not use his personal electoral popularity as a tool to influence congress. In contrast, governors have long electoral coattails in their state's national congressional races. Gubernatorial coattail effects therefore help explain the direct impact of federalism on national executive-legislative relations in Brazil.

This explanation of the electoral roots of governability in Brazil is new, but it fits well with previous analyses of the political importance of federalism in Brazil. While some scholars of Brazilian federalism have intimated the importance of the electoral link between the governors and national legislators, none has looked for presidential coattails in legislative elections, and none has empirically explored how gubernatorial coattails drive federal legislative elections and consequently affect executive-legislative relations.<sup>11</sup>

### **Presidential Coattails and Presidential Governance**

Presidential leadership in both the electoral and legislative arenas provides the key to understanding executive-legislative relations in separation-of-powers systems. In the U.S. both politicians and scholars have long known about the potential importance of presidential coattail effects. Coattail effects in American politics are defined as "the ability of a candidate at the top of the ticket to carry into office...his party's candidates on the same ticket," and the concept typically is operationalized as a correlation between the presidential and legislative vote in a given constituency.<sup>12</sup>

Scholars generally assume that coattail effects emanate from the more important to the less important offices, linking the fates of congressional candidates to their party's presidential candidate. For example, because presidential candidates typically obtain the lion's share of campaign finance and of national media attention and because the national party typically organizes presidential nominations, candidates for legislative office may seek organizational and financial support from the national party and/or its candidate. The relative importance of the presidential campaign thus

creates strong incentives for congressional candidates to line up behind the presidential candidate of their party during the campaign.

We can conceptualize the process behind the generation of coattail effects in three stages. This conceptualization assumes that coattail effects emanate from higher to lower offices, because voters tend to pay greater attention to executive races. First, candidates for congress assess the likelihood that a candidate for executive office can help them win election. Second, based on this assessment they act to improve their chances of winning by associating or not associating their campaign with the executive office candidate's. Third, if the executive office candidate is popular and congressional candidates are relatively adept campaigners, voters will respond to congressional candidates' efforts. We should see a strong correlation between the district vote for executive and legislative candidates. In contrast, if congressional candidates make no such effort to coordinate their races with the executive race, we would expect the results for the two levels to be independent of each other.

When the presidential and legislative elections are linked, coattails can swell or even provide the margin of victory for individual congressional candidates. Coattail effects can thus affect the distribution of seats in the legislature. When an electorally powerful presidential candidate helps elect more members of his party, his subsequent task of constructing a stable legislative coalition is made easier. Once in office, legislators who believe the president helped elect them are more likely to cooperate with him, if not out of gratitude then out of a sense of shared fate. In contrast, those who believe they were elected on their own merits have less reason to go along with presidential proposals.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, a partisan tide flowing from the presidential election sends a symbolic message that the electorate has spoken clearly and might cow legislative opposition to the new president out of fear of future electoral punishment.

In short, the degree of linkage between executive and legislative elections has potentially profound implications for national politics in separation-of-powers systems. With the spread of democracy around the globe, scholars ought to explore the extent of coattail effects and the factors that drive them. For all their importance in the U.S., the presence or absence of coattail effects might be even more important for the democratic process elsewhere.

### **Presidential versus Gubernatorial Coattails in Brazil**

How can we assess the linkage between executive (presidential and gubernatorial) and legislative elections in Brazil? To answer this question we must specify more clearly what candidates for legislative office seek from executive candidates. First, they seek access to the ballot. Second, once on the ballot, they seek the resources that a larger campaign might be able to provide. A state-based dynamic drives both

of these processes in Brazil, and gubernatorial coattails explain the dissociation of presidential and legislative elections and the concomitant importance of gubernatorial elections to federal legislative candidates.

In many countries centralized national party organizations choose both the presidential and congressional candidates. Congressional candidates thus have a strong reason to line up behind their national leadership. In contrast, decentralized control of nominations makes it difficult for national parties to promote a consistent policy position across constituencies.<sup>14</sup> In Brazil the twenty-seven federal states serve as electoral constituencies for congressional elections. By law, nominations for all offices except president (and municipal positions) are decided at the state level. Typically, a small clique of state political bosses chooses federal legislative candidates. National party leaders have no say. Consequently, candidates who seek access to the ballot must appease state political leaders. Interviewed politicians candidly detail stories of how state political bosses attract or impede candidacies, and newspapers often report about politicians who were barred from their party's nomination because their rivals within the state did not want competition.<sup>15</sup> In short, at the very first stage of the electoral process—gaining a spot on the ballot—candidates have strong incentives to link their campaigns to a state-based political machine and few incentives to focus on the policy platform or personal electoral popularity of their party's presidential candidate.

After gaining access to the ballot, candidates seek resources to boost their campaigns. Campaigns for executive office provide three kinds of benefits to office-seeking congressional candidates: information shortcuts, organizational resources, and media exposure. Information shortcuts include party labels or a popular candidate's name. Because voters have limited interest in acquiring extensive information about candidates, candidates have tremendous incentives to provide information shortcuts to reduce voters' uncertainty.<sup>16</sup> Association with a readily identifiable party label or with a well-known candidate for higher office is relatively cheap and may provide a high return in terms of votes.

Coattail effects are top-down because higher-level campaigns also provide organizational support to relatively resource-poor congressional candidates. For example, elections for executive office typically garner the lion's share of campaign finance, and they can thus provide funds, personnel, and other organizational resources such as phone banks, direct mail databases, and polling information.

In addition, candidates for legislative office might benefit from publicity associated with the campaign for executive office. For example, if the presidential or gubernatorial candidate visits their constituencies, the legislative candidates may be able to gain significant exposure that otherwise would have been too costly. This free exposure associates the congressional candidate with the policies and personality of the candidate for executive office.

### **Evidence of Gubernatorial Coattails in Brazil**

Since Brazilian congressional candidates seek nomination at the state level, where do they seek information shortcuts, organizational support, and publicity? Coattail effects in Brazil are more gubernatorial than presidential. Scholars hold that Brazilian national party labels and organizations are comparatively weak. Voters receive confusing partisan cues, and candidates have few organizational resources for their campaigns.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, while presidential candidates may enjoy significant personal popularity, congressional candidates have few incentives to line up behind them. In contrast, gubernatorial candidates possess the name recognition and organizational backing that congressional candidates seek. Congressional candidates affirm that, because presidential candidates are political outsiders in every state but their own, association with a gubernatorial candidate, a trusted local, is a better political investment. For example, one candidate stated:

It's important to have a good candidate for the [state] executive. If he's good, then the association with his name can bring you votes. Everybody knows that there are voters out there who are indifferent to you. So, a candidate for deputy puts the candidate for governor's name on his campaign literature, because if the governor's name is on there, the voter might say "well, I don't really think too much of so-and-so, but he's with the guy I like for governor, so I'll vote for them both." The gubernatorial candidate's name brings in the votes.<sup>18</sup>

Not only does association with a popular name help, but in contrast to presidential candidates gubernatorial candidates typically control strong statewide clientelistic networks that can provide organizational support to vote-hungry congressional candidates.<sup>19</sup> One deputy confirmed that a popular presidential candidate can provide little organizational support. "Our electoral base is in the state; it's not national. The presidential candidate can't pay attention to over 5,000 municipalities."<sup>20</sup> In contrast, gubernatorial candidates provide essential support in getting out the vote. Another candidate stated that "it's important to have a tight relationship with someone strong at the state level in your campaign, because he can win over some municipal leaders, some bases of support for your own election."<sup>21</sup> Finally, many Brazilian politicians seek congressional office as a part of a long-term state-based political career. Thus, they regard their connections to state-based colleagues as more important to their long-term success than their connections to national figures.<sup>22</sup>

Although congressional candidates exhibit a good deal of electoral individualism, coattail effects provide them with a strong incentive to associate with a broader campaign. In Brazil candidates confirm that association with a national party's presidential candidate provides little electoral return, while association with a gubernatorial candidate provides a significant return.<sup>23</sup>

**Alliance Patterns and Gubernatorial Coattails** What other empirical evidence backs the statements of congressional candidates that they coordinate their campaigns around gubernatorial rather than presidential candidates? State-based party branches control not only nominations but also the formation and composition of electoral alliances for all offices except president. Nearly all winning candidates gain office as members of a multiparty alliance; votes are pooled for alliances, not for individual parties, in allocating seats in each state. National parties negotiate for the presidential race separately from state races. State negotiations actually precede the nomination of congressional candidates; after an alliance is formed, its members have to decide how to allocate the spaces on the list among the allied parties.

With state alliance control a congressional alliance could parallel a gubernatorial alliance, a presidential alliance, both, or neither. State leaders have the discretion to decide whether to follow national party dictates or to organize races according to local conditions. This autonomy also opens up the possibility that party alliances for gubernatorial and congressional races may differ across states, severely limiting presidential candidates' ability to conduct coherent national campaigns, because their national allies may be enemies at the state level. To further assess the importance of presidential versus gubernatorial coattails, we therefore need to discover the extent to which party alliances are congruent across levels.

A congruent alliance is one in which the parties do not compete against each other in elections across levels, while an incongruent alliance is one in which the alliance parties support different parties' candidates in the other elections.<sup>24</sup> For example, let us suppose there are four parties, A, B, C, and D. Let us further suppose that parties A and B ally to run a presidential candidate (alliance AB), and parties C and D also ally to run a presidential candidate (alliance CD). In congruent alliances parties A and B and parties C and D would also ally to run gubernatorial and congressional candidates in each state. In contrast, if AB and CD run presidential candidates but then the parties form alliances AC and BD for gubernatorial and congressional candidates, then the alliances would be incongruent across levels.

The same logic holds at the state level: parties form or do not form congruent gubernatorial and congressional alliances. In states where congressional and gubernatorial alliances are congruent, we might expect gubernatorial coattails; the gubernatorial candidate would serve as a state rallying point with significant political connections and valuable electoral resources. Where congressional and presidential alliances match, we might see presidential coattails for the same reason. If alliances at all three levels coincide, we would have to weigh statistically the influence of the presidential and gubernatorial elections upon the congressional campaign to check for coattails. Finally, if we observe that a congressional race matches neither executive office race, we might suspect that no coattail effects exist at all. Let us first examine the presidential elections.

In 1989 few parties allied. Winning candidate Fernando Collor's alliance

(PRN/PST/PSL) consisted of three minuscule parties (he created the PRN specifically for his presidential run), while second place finisher Lula's alliance consisted of the Workers' Party (PT) plus two tiny leftist parties.<sup>25</sup> Most other candidates ran on single party platforms. In 1994 more parties allied, but two of the four largest center-right parties still fielded their own candidates. The conservative PPR ran Paulo Maluf, and the centrist PMDB ran Orestes Quércia. Cardoso's centrist PSDB allied with two conservative parties, the PFL and the PTB. In 1998 the PMDB sat out the presidential race, while all the other major center-right parties, including the PSDB, PFL, PTB, PPB, and PSD, lined up behind Cardoso.

On the left, in 1994 the PT (Lula) and PDT (Brizola) ran separate candidates, but in 1998 the PDT and PT (along with three other small leftist parties) allied to support Lula. However, the ex-Communist PPS ran its own candidate (Ciro Gomes) in 1998, whereas it had allied with Lula in 1994. To what extent were the gubernatorial and congressional alliances congruent with these presidential alliances?

Despite his dramatic win in 1989, Collor failed to organize a national party behind him. Less obvious is the degree to which a state-based partisan logic dominated the 1990 campaign for gubernatorial, senatorial, and congressional elections. The last column of Table 1 shows that in 1990 95 percent of the gubernatorial alliances matched the alliances for congress in each state (although these alliances varied significantly from state to state).

With nonconcurrent presidential and legislative elections in 1990, we might have expected this state-driven result. Did this pattern change in the concurrent elections in 1994 and 1998? Alfred Stepan among others has specifically pointed to the lack of concurrent legislative and presidential elections as a source of Brazil's governability problem, and Shugart and Carey have argued that nonconcurrency tends to increase executive-legislative tension generally.<sup>26</sup> Yet despite concurrent presidential

**Table 1** Congruence of Brazilian Electoral Alliances, 1989–1998

YEAR	% Congruent Presidential/ Gubernatorial	% Congruent Presidential/ Deputy	% Congruent Gubernatorial/ Deputy	% Congruent Across All 3 Levels
1989/90	N/A	N/A	<b>95%</b> (N=82)	N/A
1994	37% (N=91)	35% (N=110)	<b>97%</b> (N=91)	31% (N=91)
1998	20% (N=84)	30% (N=90)	<b>94%</b> (N=97)	20% (N=83)

N/A = Not applicable.



elections in 1994 and 1998, and despite the same two candidates' finishing first and second in both elections, the gubernatorial races continued to overshadow links between the presidential and legislative races. Table 1 provides strong evidence of the linkage between the congressional and gubernatorial races in both 1994 and 1998.

If presidents were able to rally their allies around their candidacies, we would expect both the gubernatorial and congressional alliances to match the presidential alliances. However, columns two and three of Table 1 show that only about one-third of all gubernatorial and congressional alliances in 1994 and 1998 matched the presidential alliances.<sup>27</sup> Parties in the rest of the alliances supported two or even three different presidential candidates yet campaigned as a team for the gubernatorial and/or congressional race. Moreover, most of the congruent congressional alliances were on the left side of the political spectrum: 67 percent (N=28) supported PT candidate Lula, 12 percent (N=5) supported other leftists, and only 21 percent (N=9) supported center-right candidates (of these, seven supported Cardoso). The left holds only about 20 percent of the seats in congress.

In contrast to the incongruence of gubernatorial and congressional with presidential alliances, column four shows that the gubernatorial and congressional alliances matched each other in nearly every case in all three elections. In short, neither gubernatorial nor congressional alliances typically follow the presidential alliances. Instead, the congressional race tends to conform to the gubernatorial race.

Table 2 provides an illustrative example of this dynamic from São Paulo, Brazil's largest and economically most important state. The first column lists the year of the election; the second column lists the gubernatorial alliances at a given election; and the third column lists the alliances for congressional deputy. The gubernatorial and congressional alliances match for a given election, but they shift widely over time. For example, in 1990 the PMDB, PFL, and PL allied in the gubernatorial race against the PSDB, which ran its own candidate. In contrast, in 1994 the PFL allied with the PSDB, while the PMDB ran a candidate with two other parties, with only one of which it had been allied in 1990. In 1998 the PMDB ran a candidate, while the PSDB allied with two parties with which it had never previously allied, and the PFL ran on the PPR ticket along with the PL, which had been allied with the PMDB in the previous two elections. These alliances obviously do not consistently match the presidential alliances. The example of São Paulo is typical of patterns in other states. Generally, in each state the presidential, gubernatorial, and/or congressional alliances do not match, but a strong connection exists between the latter two alliances.

In addition, although parties tend to ally for governor and congress within states, parties ally in different combinations across states. For example, Cardoso's PSDB decided in Piauí to ally with the PMDB, PDT, and PPS in 1994 (shaded to the left) but then with the PT and PSB in 1998 (further to the left). In Goiás the PSDB allied

**Table 2** Alliance Patterns in Brazilian Elections

Year	Gubernatorial Alliances (candidate's party in bold)	Federal Deputy Alliances
1990	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>PPR</b>/PRN/PTB/PDC</li> <li>2. <b>PMDB</b>/PFL/PL</li> <li>3. <b>PSDB</b></li> <li>4. <b>PT</b>/PSB/PPS/PCdoB</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PPR/PRN/PTB/PDC</li> <li>2. PMDB</li> <li>3. PFL/PL/PSD</li> <li>4. PSDB</li> <li>5. PT/PSB/PPS/PCdoB</li> </ol>
1994	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>PP</b>/PPR</li> <li>2. <b>PDSB</b>/PFL</li> <li>3. <b>PDT</b>/PV/PRP</li> <li>4. <b>PT</b>/PSTU/PPS/ PMN/PSB/PCdoB</li> <li>5. <b>PMDB</b>/PL/PSD</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PP/PPR</li> <li>2. PSDB/PFL</li> <li>3. PDT/PV/PRP</li> <li>4. PT/PSTU/PPS/ PMN/PSB/PCdoB</li> <li>5. PMDB/PL/PSD</li> </ol>
1998	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>PPR</b>/PFL/PL</li> <li>2. <b>PMDB</b></li> <li>3. <b>PSDB</b>/PTB/PSD</li> <li>4. <b>PT</b>/PPS/PMN/ PCdoB</li> <li>5. <b>PDT</b>/PTN/PSN/PSB</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PPR/PFL/PL</li> <li>2. PMDB</li> <li>3. PSDB/PTB/PSD</li> <li>4. PT/PPS/PMN/PCdoB</li> <li>5. PDT/PTN/PSN/PSB</li> </ol>

with the PP and PTB in 1994 (shaded to the right) and then with the PMDB, PPS, PSB and others in 1998 (a center-left coalition). These alliances can be compared to the PSDB's in São Paulo in each year. The nearly total absence of partisan congruence across states demonstrates that national partisan platforms do not define alliance patterns in Brazil. Rather, personalistic factions determine how parties line up at the state level. These factions limit the capacity of presidential candidates to help elect copartisans based on national partisan support derived from their candidacy.

Because state political concerns tend to trump national issues, not even the leftist parties are immune to this incongruence. In 1998 several national enemies allied at the state level. Most incongruously, the PT and PSDB allied in two states, and the PDT and PSDB in six states, even though the PT and PDT allied behind Lula in opposition to Cardoso and his PSDB that year in the presidential election. The PT even allied with such right-wing parties as the PPR and PTB in some states. In short, alliance patterns reveal a nearly complete lack of national direction across states. This lack of direction limits the ability of a presidential candidate to project a national image on the campaign trail.

This state-level confusion plays havoc with presidential alliances. For example, in São Paulo in 1998 neither Lula nor Cardoso could mobilize a unified following because of incongruent gubernatorial and congressional alliances. Despite allying with Cardoso's PSDB to elect São Paulo's governor, Mario Covas, in 1994, the São Paulo PFL decided in 1996 to switch its support to the candidate of Covas' archene-

my, Paulo Maluf (PPB), for mayor of the city of São Paulo, instead of the PSDB's candidate, José Serra (the PFL is relatively weak in São Paulo). Maluf's candidate won the election, and immediately thereafter Covas fired all PFL nominees in state government. As the 1998 gubernatorial election approached, Covas attempted a *rap-prochement* with the PFL, to no avail. Maluf ran for governor against Covas, and PFL federal deputy Luis Carlos Santos ran for vice-governor with Maluf (Covas won). Thus, the national PSDB-PFL alliance did not hold in 1998 in the home state of Brazil's president, due to local conditions.<sup>28</sup> However, gubernatorial and congressional alliances were congruent.

The PT-PDT-PSB national alliance in 1998 likewise did not hold in São Paulo, Lula's home state. Marta Suplicy of the PT competed for leftist voters in the gubernatorial race with Francisco Rossi of the PDT, who had deputy José Pinotti of the PSB as his running mate. Needless to say, relations in São Paulo between the national "allies" PSDB and PFL, on the one hand, and PT, PDT, and PSB, on the other, are not good. In short, while the gubernatorial race drives the congressional race in each state at each election, alliance patterns are inconsistent over space and time. This inconsistency allows state parties extreme flexibility but limits presidential candidates' ability to present a unified policy platform.

São Paulo is illustrative and important, but how common is it? Many had hoped that the 1998 campaign would strengthen links between the presidential and legislative elections because of the repeat contest between Lula and Cardoso, because Cardoso's incumbent status scared off potential challengers, and because the elections were again concurrent. No viable challenger from the center or right of the political spectrum emerged, giving Cardoso a commanding national presence and attracting an even broader national partisan alliance than in 1994. However, despite the eventual emergence of a two candidate race, and despite concurrent timing, the examples cited above are not exceptions. Across the country, the elections failed to produce concurrent partisan results, and state political arrangements still trumped national politics. As one analyst put it, in Brazil the elections are married, but the results are divorced.<sup>29</sup>

As the campaign began, Cardoso and his advisors attempted to line up gubernatorial and congressional alliances in the states. The president's advisors feared that competing pro-Cardoso gubernatorial candidates and incongruent congressional alliances supporting these competing gubernatorial candidates would damage Cardoso's campaign. His inability to endorse his "allies" would eliminate his capacity to form solid links to state-based political machines and would consequently endanger his candidacy.

To avoid these problems, Cardoso even attempted to suppress PSDB candidacies for governor in some states in favor of PFL, PPR, and PMDB candidates, to compensate these parties' efforts on behalf of his legislative proposals and to avoid the PMDB's and PPB's running rival presidential candidates.<sup>30</sup> However, because state parties have the

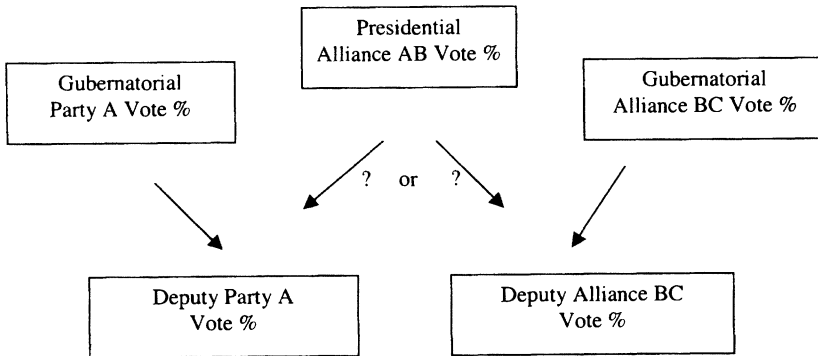
final word on nominations and alliances, Cardoso could not impose his will, and he failed to manipulate state party decisions.<sup>31</sup> (Not surprisingly, this effort also soured relations with his own party). Because of the failure to limit competition, Cardoso concluded in July, with three months left before the election, that he could campaign in only seven of Brazil's twenty-seven states without causing problems.<sup>32</sup>

Newspapers noted that Cardoso's failure to coordinate national and state alliances adversely affected his ability to campaign for his own party and for his allies.<sup>33</sup> The media devoted considerable attention to Cardoso's coordination problems in the states of São Paulo, Minas Gerais, and Rio de Janeiro. Together they hold 43 percent of the electorate and are thus crucial for the presidential election. Gubernatorial (or vice-gubernatorial) candidates from the PSDB and PFL, Cardoso's main national alliance partner, also competed against each other in these states.<sup>34</sup> Several members of the PSDB even threatened the president with legal action if he stumped for candidates from other parties.<sup>35</sup> The party's exasperated secretary-general exclaimed that "it's just not acceptable that the president is virtually prohibited from entering Rio de Janeiro because of a dispute between the PFL and PSDB."<sup>36</sup> In general, when Cardoso hit the campaign trail, he took extreme care not to appear to be campaigning for gubernatorial or congressional candidates.<sup>37</sup> Cardoso was even asked to stay away from several states because of cross-alliance tensions. In a very real sense, the leading candidate for president was physically unable even to attempt to generate coattails for allied candidates to other offices.

The same problems confronted the Lula-Brizola alliance. At one point, Brizola suggested that Lula avoid states with PDT gubernatorial candidates, while he would avoid states with PT gubernatorial candidates, even if they were not competing against each other.<sup>38</sup> The PT and PDT ran competing gubernatorial candidates in three states; in one state the PDT and PSB did as well. Lula admitted: "We're an alliance. If we brought all the state questions to the table, the national alliance wouldn't get off the ground."<sup>39</sup> As with Cardoso, this restriction hurt Lula's campaign, for in some states PDT candidates refused to stump for him.<sup>40</sup>

In sum, alliance patterns reveal that, because the congressional race is intimately tied to the gubernatorial race, presidential candidates have been unable to link their campaigns with the gubernatorial or congressional races in most states. Nicolau has concluded therefore that the electoral process "unequivocally confirms the distance between the national party situation and partisan reality in the states...in truth, the central axis of the Brazilian political system derives from intraelite state political disputes and not from national disputes."<sup>41</sup> Although Cardoso won by a comfortable margin, this problem continues to plague Brazilian presidential candidates despite the concurrence of executive and legislative elections.

**Gubernatorial Coattails: A Statistical Test**      Solid theoretical reasons predict strong gubernatorial coattails and weak presidential coattails in Brazil, and inter-

**Figure 1** Presidential versus Gubernatorial Coattails and Incongruent Alliances

views and alliance patterns show that congressional candidates coordinate their efforts around gubernatorial and not presidential races. This evidence is strong but insufficient, however, because it does not explicitly demonstrate the existence of gubernatorial coattails. To demonstrate that gubernatorial coattails also affect the outcome of congressional races, it is necessary to regress the percentage of the presidential alliance vote as well as of the gubernatorial alliance vote on the percentage of the congressional alliance vote.

Ideally, all the data for presidential, gubernatorial, and congressional races at the district level would be pooled. However, we face a particularly intractable “apples versus oranges” problem. Because votes for deputy are pooled at the alliance and not the party level, and because the vast majority of party alliances are incongruent, we can not conduct a straightforward OLS regression to weigh the impact of each variable. To compare presidential versus gubernatorial alliances, we would require that the parties in each congressional alliance support only one candidate for governor and only one for president. Figure 1 illustrates the problem in most Brazilian states.

Each box represents the vote in a given district for the presidential, gubernatorial, or congressional alliance, and the arrows represent the hypothesized influence of presidential and gubernatorial coattails. In most cases the alliances for deputy match the gubernatorial alliances but not the presidential alliances. In this hypothetical example, the presidential candidate finds that his allies are competing against each other in the gubernatorial and congressional races. Under these conditions we expect gubernatorial coattails, but it is impossible to differentiate accurately the impact of presidential versus gubernatorial coattail effects because we can not match cases of presidential and gubernatorial support.

We are therefore left with a biased sample of the forty-two congruent alliances (26 percent of the total) for the 1994 and 1998 elections that can be used in regres-

sion analysis. I pooled the data and regressed the percentage of the vote received by federal deputy alliance A in state B (DEP%) on the following independent variables. (1) The percentage of the vote received by the gubernatorial candidate (GOV%) supported by alliance A in state B. I expect a strongly positive relationship between GOV% and DEP%.<sup>42</sup> (2) The percentage of the vote received by presidential candidate (PRES%) supported by alliance A in state B. I expect a weakly positive or nonexistent relationship between PRES% and DEP%. (3) A dummy variable indicating whether the alliance supports a leftist gubernatorial and presidential candidate (from the PT, PSB, PDT, PV, or PPS) (LEFTIST). This variable controls for the fact that leftist congressional alliances are often much smaller and less viable in many of Brazil's states, even though they may run popular gubernatorial candidates.<sup>43</sup> (4) The number of incumbents on deputy alliance A (NUMINCS). Following the U.S. literature on coattail effects, I hypothesize that, the more incumbents there are running on the list, the higher the likely vote percentage will be.<sup>44</sup> (5) A dummy variable for the 1998 election year (1998) to control for year-specific effects.

The results (see Table 3) provide evidence of both presidential and gubernatorial coattails. All else being equal, a 10 percent increase in gubernatorial candidate A's vote total results in a 4.2 percent increase in the vote total for congressional list A, while a corresponding increase in presidential candidate A's vote total in a given state results in a 1.8 percent increase in the vote total for congressional list A. The results also show that for every additional incumbent the list's vote total goes up by 0.72 percent. In addition, while leftism alone is not a significant reason for a list to receive a smaller vote total, the sign is in the expected direction.

The finding of both presidential and gubernatorial coattail effects may appear to contradict or at least complicate the argument, but it does not, for two reasons. First, the sample is highly biased toward presidential coattails, because the regression

**Table 3** Coattails Effects in Brazilian Elections, 1994–1998

Independent Variables	Coefficient (Std Err.)	
Constant	5.88	(3.85)
GOV%	0.42***	(0.09)
PRES%	0.18*	(0.08)
LEFTIST	-4.48	(3.17)
NUMINCS	0.72*	(0.34)
1998	0.16	(2.27)
R <sup>2</sup>	.77	
S.E.R.	6.68	
Degrees of Freedom	36	

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

includes only those cases in which the presidential alliances match the gubernatorial and the congressional alliances. This regression says nothing about the other 74 percent of the cases, where we have good reasons to expect no presidential coattails because of the strong links between the gubernatorial and congressional alliances and the absence of such links between the presidential and other alliances. In this sample, presidential coattails have their only real chance, and we still find that gubernatorial coattails are more than twice as strong as presidential coattails. Even when presidential candidates manage to coordinate their alliances across states, the weight of state politics still minimizes their coattails.

Second, the sample is biased towards the PT's presidential candidate, Lula. The PT is widely regarded as the only large Brazilian party with a strong party organization and label, and thus we might expect the success of its congressional candidates to be a function of the success of its presidential candidate, who leads the national partisan charge during the election year. Twenty-eight of the forty-two cases in the sample (67 percent) allied with Lula, while only seven of the forty-two cases (17 percent) lined up behind two-time winner Cardoso. Thus, only seven of a total possible fifty-four deputy alliances (13 percent) lined up congruently behind Cardoso (twenty-seven states over two elections). Although Cardoso may have generated some weak coattails in the states where his alliances were congruent, he was spectacularly unsuccessful in accomplishing this goal, and we can thus conclude that his coattails were very short. Finally, the regression points to the counterintuitive result that even for leftist presidential candidates the relationship between the gubernatorial candidate and the deputy list is much stronger than the relationship between presidential and congressional candidates.<sup>45</sup>

In sum, the evidence from interviews and an empirical analysis of Brazil's presidential elections demonstrates that gubernatorial coattail effects are quite strong, while presidential coattail effects are weak or nonexistent. The positive statistical finding of presidential coattails indicates that they are not impossible in Brazil, just extremely uncommon and limited largely to the leftist presidential candidates, who are relatively more successful in lining up congruent alliances. In any event, even in the few cases where alliances match up across all three levels, gubernatorial coattails still outweigh the impact of presidential coattails. Relative to gubernatorial candidates, presidential candidates in Brazil simply do not possess the resources that congressional candidates need and require to win election.

## **Conclusion**

Winning presidential candidates who can mobilize broad national partisan support will reap significant rewards in executive-legislative relations. In contrast, an electorally weak president might face a more independent legislature, even if his own

party is nominally well-represented, because members of congress did not rely on the president to win election. In Brazil we have good reason to believe that presidential coattail effects are weak, while gubernatorial coattails are quite strong. Consequently, gubernatorial coattail effects are a crucial element underlying the instability frequently observed in executive-legislative relations in Brazil, even between the president and members of his own party. Presidential candidates simply lack the resources necessary to help their allies win elections in Brazil, such as control over nominations and alliances and the organizational backing of well-developed clientelistic networks.

In contrast, gubernatorial candidates typically control such resources, and therefore deputies look to them for support during campaigns. Consequently, if a gubernatorial candidate is popular, he or she tends to help elect congressional candidates from his or her party alliance. No national surges follow a presidential candidate's personal popularity. Interviews with congressional candidates, reconstruction of alliance patterns within and across states, and regression analysis support this contention. In Brazil's recent elections candidates for federal deputy have realized that, no matter how strong a presidential candidate is, he has few tools to influence their chances of winning.<sup>46</sup>

The strength of gubernatorial coattail effects conforms to an emerging academic consensus that state-based politics affect Brazilian national politics in important ways. With their power over members of congress and the president's need to obtain congressional support for his proposals, governors can promise to support, or at least not to interfere with, the president's agenda. Because almost every important issue on the political agenda—fiscal reform, tax reform, decentralization in a wide variety of policy arenas, judicial reform, police reform, and administrative reform—touches on federal relations, Brazilian presidents confront potentially fatal opposition from state governors. Governors can choose to pressure the deputies from their states if the president proposes a policy reform that would significantly reduce states' political autonomy.

Despite this obstacle, Cardoso accomplished several important advances in inter-governmental relations in his first term and has, to a limited degree, freed the executive branch from the governors' grasp. For example, his administration has successfully forced the privatization of many banks owned by state governments, which state governors had previously used as bottomless barrels of politicized pork. The federal government also renegotiated state debts to the central government and privatized many state-owned public enterprises.

Yet despite these advances Cardoso has enacted little permanent institutional change, and his victories have come at a terrible cost to the central government. For example, state governments have been able to ignore restrictions on their indebtedness in the past because the senate, not the presidency, ultimately controls state debt levels. Because of the nature of their constituencies and because many of them have served previously as governors, senators are if anything even more closely linked to state poli-



tics than are deputies, and they have already opened loopholes to avoid the central government's restrictions.<sup>47</sup> Cardoso's limited advances have also come with an imposing cost. Since he took office the central government has had to assume \$103 billion in nearly worthless state government debts and over \$15 billion in deadweight costs to clean up state banks.<sup>48</sup> This backsliding restricts Cardoso's ability to conform to IMF austerity plans and the demands of international capital markets for fiscal stringency and to his own desire to put Brazil's fiscal house in order. There is also no way to calculate the costs to Brazil in lost investment (and subsequently lost tax revenue) from the uncertainty generated by the country's precarious fiscal situation.

It remains to be seen whether Cardoso will have more success in reforming intergovernmental relations in his second term. Brazil has a history of short-lived economic plans, and the collapse of the *real* and Brazil's dependence on IMF rescue packages in early 1999 cast a pessimistic pall over Cardoso's capacity to pass broader reforms. The more permanent institutional changes in intergovernmental relations that he desires require either senate approval or a constitutional amendment (which requires a supermajority in both houses of congress), and both run up against the tremendous influence state governors exert in congress, especially on policies that affect federal-state relations and state finances. In short, despite Cardoso's successes, the state-based logic of elections in Brazil remains virtually unchanged, and consequently we can expect federalism to remain an important institutional stumbling block to presidential reform proposals and to the continuation of Brazil's economic stabilization plan during Cardoso's second term (and after).<sup>49</sup>

In conclusion, contrary to the optimistic expectations that concurrence and Cardoso's two smashing victories generated, Cardoso has turned out to be no more able than Collor to generate strong presidential coattails. Although, in contrast to Collor, Cardoso has assiduously cultivated links with governors and congress, his failure to translate his resounding electoral victories into a solid base of congressional support has limited his capacity to pass his proposals and was an important factor in cutting his second honeymoon so short. In historical perspective, given Brazil's tradition of individually popular presidents who fail to muster consistent legislative support, this result may appear unsurprising. Yet an answer to the question why Brazil's presidential and legislative elections are so poorly linked that relies on the personalistic nature of presidential candidates is *ad hoc*. What explains this lack of linkage in Brazil? For example, as in Brazil, political parties in the U.S. have had comparatively weak organizations, and presidential candidates in the U.S. certainly do not emerge from within national party organizations, yet the coattails idea originated in the United States. In Brazil federalism cuts presidential coattails short—or simply rips the president's coat off his back, cuts it up, and divides it among the governors. The root of this problem—and the reason why it remains so intractable—lies in the impact of the institutions of Brazilian federalism on the party system in limiting the linkage between national executive and legislative elections.

**Appendix: Abbreviations of Brazilian Parties<sup>50</sup>**

PRN	<i>Partido da Reconstrução Nacional</i> (Party of National Reconstruction)
PST	<i>Partido Social Trabalhista</i> (Social Labor Party)
PSL	<i>Partido do Solidarismo Libertador</i> (Party of Liberating Solidarity)
PT	<i>Partido dos Trabalhadores</i> (Workers' Party)
PSB	<i>Partido Socialista Brasileiro</i> (Brazilian Socialist Party)
PCdoB	<i>Partido Comunista do Brasil</i> (Communist Party of Brazil)
PDT	<i>Partido Democrático Trabalhista</i> (Democratic Labor Party)
PMDB	<i>Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro</i> (Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement)
PFL	<i>Partido da Frente Liberal</i> (Party of the Liberal Front)
PSDB	<i>Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira</i> (Party of Brazilian Social Democracy)
PTB	<i>Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro</i> (Brazilian Labor Party)
PPR/PPB	<i>Partido Progressista Renovador</i> (Party of Progressive Renewal, before 1993) <i>Partido Progressista Brasileiro</i> (Brazilian Progressive Party, after 1993).
PL	<i>Partido Liberal</i> (Liberal Party)
PDC	<i>Partido da Democracia Cristão</i> (Christian Democratic Party)
PPS	<i>Partido Popular Socialista</i> (formerly <i>Partido Comunista Brasileiro</i> ) (Popular Socialist Party)
PV	<i>Partido Verde</i> (Green Party)
PSTU	<i>Partido Socialista dos Trabalhadores Unificados</i> (Unified Socialist Workers' Party)
PSD	<i>Partido Social Democrático</i> (Social Democratic Party)
PAN	<i>Partido da Ação Nacional</i> (Party of National Action)

**NOTES**

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8. Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Consolidation and Transition* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), p. 188.
9. Abrucio, p. 227.
10. Mainwaring, p. 106.
11. The only study of coattail effects in Latin America is Barry Ames, "The Reverse Coattails Effect: Local Party Organization in the 1989 Brazilian Presidential Election," *American Political Science Review*, 88 (1994), 95–111.
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13. Gary Jacobson, *The Politics of Congressional Elections*, 3rd ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), p. 156.
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15. Interview with ex-federal deputy Ivo Wanderlinde (PMDB-SC), Florianópolis, April 2, 1997; interview with ex-deputy Marcelo Linhares (PDS-CE), Fortaleza, February 7, 1997; interview with former state secretary of education Carlos Estevam Martins (PMDB-SP), São Paulo, March 13, 1997; *Folha de São Paulo*, July 3, 1997.
16. Samuel Popkin, *The Reasoning Voter* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).
17. Mainwaring. One exception is the Workers' Party.
18. Interview with ex-deputy César Souza (PFL-SC), Florianópolis, April 23, 1997.
19. Abrucio.
20. Interview with deputy Lidia Quinan (PMDB-GO), Brasília, June 12, 1997.
21. Interview with deputy Sandro Scodro (PMDB-GO), Brasília, June 11, 1997.
22. Samuels, chs. 3–4.
23. Interviews with César Souza, Ivo Wanderlinde, Senator Waldeck Ornellas (PFL-BA), Brasília, June 16, 1997; interview with ex-Senator Jarbas Passarinho (PPR-PA), Brasília, June 13, 1997; interview with deputy Alberto Goldman (PMDB-SP), São Paulo, November 10, 1996.
24. I do not count single party lists when calculating congruence because they are tautological.
25. See the Appendix for abbreviations of party names.
26. Alfred Stepan "Towards a New Theory of Federalism and Democracy," paper presented at the Conference on Democracy and Federalism, Oxford University, June 1997; Shugart and Carey, chs. 11–12.
27. The number of cases differs because not all parties ran presidential, gubernatorial, and congressional candidates in every state.
28. *Folha de São Paulo*, May 8, 1997.
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30. *Jornal do Brasil*, June 18, 1998.
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dent of bodily harm." *O Estado de São Paulo*, July 8, 1998.

33. *O Globo*, July 20, 1998.

34. *O Globo*, June 24, 1998.

35. *Jornal do Brasil*, Aug. 7, 1998.

36. *Jornal do Brasil*, July 10, 1998.

37. *Jornal do Brasil*, July 20, 1998.

38. *O Estado de São Paulo*, June 25, 1998.

39. *Jornal do Brasil*, June 27, 1998.

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42. Sources for vote totals are Tribunal Superior Eleitoral, "Resultados das Eleições de 1990" (Brasília: computer files, 1990); Tribunal Superior Eleitoral, "Resultados das Eleições de 1994" (Brasília: computer files, 1994); Tribunal Superior Eleitoral, "Resultados das Eleições de 1998" (Brasília: computer files, 1998).

43. Sources for partisan alliances are Jairo Nicolau, *Dados Eleitorais do Brasil (1982-96)* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Revan/IUPERJ/UCAM, 1998), for 1990 and 1994; Goês Consultores Associados, "Candidatos a governador nos 27 estados" (Brasília: Góes Consultores, 1999), for 1998. For party characterizations, see Mainwaring, p. 144.

44. See, for example, James E. Campbell and Joe A. Summers, "Presidential Coattails in Senate Elections," *American Political Science Review*, 84 (1990), 513-24.

45. Given the purported strength of the PT as a national organization relative to the other parties, further research is required to explain this result.

46. This argument is both retrospective and prospective: deputies do not owe their election to the president, nor can they rely upon the incumbent president to help win the next election.

47. Abrucio and Costa, p. 230.

48. Abrucio, pp. 232-33.

49. For a recent treatment of Cardoso's reform successes and failures, see Alfred P. Montero, "Devolving Democracy? Political Decentralization and the New Brazilian Federalism," in Peter R. Kingstone and Timothy J. Power, eds., *Democratic Brazil: Actors, Institutions, and Processes* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2000).

50. See Mainwaring for descriptions of these parties.

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<sup>11</sup> **The Reverse Coattails Effect: Local Party Organization in the 1989 Brazilian Presidential Election**

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<sup>44</sup> **Presidential Coattails in Senate Elections**

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*The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 84, No. 2. (Jun., 1990), pp. 513-524.

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