



DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND POLITICAL PARTIES: WHAT DOES THE BRAZILIAN ELECTORAL THINK?¹

Guilherme Augusto Batista Carvalho²
Robert Bonifácio da Silva³

Abstract: The present article intends to discuss the correlation between the so-called democratic values and the social perception about political parties in Brazil. This analysis will happen, first, on the light of relevant literature and secondly, from the presentation and analysis of data compiled in the Brazilian case in Barometer of the Americas of 2014, in respect for democratic values, presidential powers, democratic ambivalence, and sympathy for parties political, based on gender and ethnic profile. This paper aims to answer if democracy is an irrefutable value for people who have sympathy for political parties. It is concluded that democracy does not present a direct correlation with sympathy for political parties and does not represent an undisputed value for those who show appreciation for parties.

Keywords: Democracy; Political Parties; Representation; Self-expression.

1 Introduction

The present article intends to expose, first, what are the traditionally conceived political parties. Second, it will present indicators pointed out by Inglehart and Welzel (2009) on democratic institutions and democratic values. The next step will be to present and discuss data from the Barometer of the Americas of 2014 and assess what Brazilian voters have answered about the role of parties and their conception of democracy and democratic values.

The key question of this work is: what is the role of democracy and democratic values for voters who have some kind of sympathy for political parties in Brazil? From this question, we intend to understand if the structural changes presented by Abranches (2017) were in fact reflected in the voters' perception of the political parties in Brazil.

2 Political parties and political representation

According to Charlot (1982), modern parties are subdivided following to certain criteria that make them distinct from each other, as an ideal of society and state, political ideology, attitude, moral qualifications, social classification and sometimes color - for example, the identification of social-democratic parties with the blue and the revolutionary parties with the red. These distinctions, he says, are what make a religious party a natural opponent of a revolutionary

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² Bachelor in International Relations, Specialist in Public Policy and Master candidate in Political Science from the Federal University of Goiás. Research on parties and parliamentary behavior (guilherme.rel1404@gmail.com)

³ Master's degree (Unicamp), PhD and Post-Doctorate (UFMG) in Political Science. Coordinator of the Social Sciences Course with qualification in Public Policies of UFG (rbonisilva@gmail.com)

party, or a liberal party converge with a conservative party, in defense of the "necessary freedoms".

In his work *Models of parties*, Angelo Panebianco (2005) believes that the parties are representations of social demands, but organizations with performances in elections and exercise of government. The parties seek to maintain the cohesion of proposals internally in the same way as they compete for spaces in the public arenas externally. In this sense, Panebianco (2005) believes that the parties are in fact strategic organic entities.

Panebianco (2005) proposes the understanding of the parties based on their differences in terms of organization. In a rationalistic view, parties have to organize themselves in terms of their goals. That is, they set goals and organize themselves according to their pretensions. In a more natural view, according to the author, the central objective is not properly achieve something, but that the organization survives, and for that it is necessary to draw up pretensions.

The survival of the party organization depends on the participation and collaboration of the "associates". For this, incentives are offered in terms of party membership. Panebianco (2005) separates incentives in collectives - identity, solidarity and ideology - that are given equally by the parties, in order to maintain internal cohesion, and selective incentives - positions and personal advantages - that are distributed only to some of the members of the party, in order to satisfy the demands of members with great political influence.

But parties survive not only because of distinctions. There is the dimension of "speaking in the name of", that is, of the representation. For Hanna Pitkin (1967), the representation does not consist only in pretending to be someone else, but in the distinction that the act of speech delegation promotes.

For Miguel (2014), political representation is one of the founding elements of politics itself. Such construction incurs two practical problems. The first is that any political action would require a representative. The second is that it is automatically assumed that any representation has a democratic background.

The first one raises questions for restricting political actions to the act of voting, that is, delegation of representation, emptying out, for example, possibilities for collective actions arising from the demands of society. The second problem is worse because it does not imply a direct correlation with democratic freedoms and rights because a dictatorship, for example, can govern based on the representation of specific interests of some sectors of society.

Katz (2006) asks the three questions that are central to this debate, which at first glance are simple but compile much of the debate about parties and competition: Who does it represent? Who is represented? What does the representative do for the represented? Among all the characteristics pointed out with regard to problems of representation, there are very common traits that permeate all parties.

Every modern discussion of parties does not only pertain to the electoral and

parliamentary sphere, but also to the effective representativeness in the sense of the identification and trust of society in the entities that present themselves as the legitimate holders of the capacity of translation of the desires of divided sections of the population, political parties. In the next section, the distance between parties and society will be discussed.

3 Indicators of changes in democratic values

Political participation is traditionally described in terms of laws, systems of government, parliament, networks of contestation or even the simple act of voting. But there are two competing elements in its interpretative margins, alluded to by Almond and Verba (1980), which have gained great expression in political science of the twentieth and twenty-first century, especially in works on political culture.

The first is the institutionalist element. According to the authors, institutions induce political behavior in their public spheres. That is, elements such as laws, legal decisions and elections would lead to political mobilization. The second element is the cultural element, according to which the actors' subjectivity, such as interest in politics, trust in political parties and institutions would better explain participation and the formation of democratic values.

These democratic values cannot be confused with political values. The values are analyzed by Alexis de Tocqueville (1997), under the prism of the French Revolution, as symbolic constructions around identities. For the author, public symbols are capable of mobilizing collective actions that create affective and evaluative imaginaries. While the socioeconomic, religious, ethnic differences are situated in the political values, according to Tocqueville's (1997) narrative democracy is built as a value that encompasses freedom and equality. But it is clear that as far as formal democracy is concerned, there are more specificities.

According to Inglehart and Welzel (2009), formal democracy can be imposed on almost all societies. Such a fact would derive only from political elites, but the effective freedoms as well as the central autonomy of choice depend on the values of the mass.

There is at this point a central distinction between liberal democracy and the values that lead to self-expression. In conducting a test to measure the dissemination of self-expression values in a society, the authors conclude that "the proportion of people in a society that emphasize self-expression values is strongly correlated with both economic development measures and democratic institutions" (Inglehart and Welzel, 2009, 188). To the authors, self-expression, economic development and democratic institutions would be responsible for broadening the autonomous choice of individuals in society.

The indicators that the authors refer to are "constitutional democracy", which is based on the mechanisms that allow electoral competitiveness and political recruitment; "standards of authority", which refer to patterns of regulation of governments and societies; "electoral

democracy", which is an index that relates to inclusion and competitiveness in national elections. When measuring the latter, the authors verified that when the turnout increases, there is a direct correlation with the decrease in the power concentration of the parties, presenting a direct relation with the self-expression protest values ($r = 0.62$).

Liberal democracy, represented by the electoral side, has a very strong relation with mass self-expression ($r = 0.75$). According to the authors, it is the measure most used by Freedom House to measure the quality of democracy. This is due to the fact that "values of self-expression exploit the values of individuals ... in which the institutions of particular societies provide political rights and civil liberties" (INGLEHART, WELZEL, 2009, p.191).

In light of the arguments about parties and representative democracy, as well as from the discussions made by Inglehart and Welzel (2009), when measuring the fundamental role of public opinion in relation to the contestation as a means of proposing structural changes, this article will proceed based on the data will be given sequence in the work based on the data of the Barometer of the Americas of 2014, as a way of measuring the perception of people in a correlation between political parties and democratic values in Brazil.

4 Presentation and analysis of the data of the Barometer of the Americas of 2014

The Barometer of the Americas is a public opinion survey conducted from the application of around 20,000 questionnaires annually throughout Latin America. Consistent with the aforementioned theoretical bias, the questionnaire allows us to measure what people perceive about various public issues in their countries. The focus here is to understand, by crossing some data on at least two questions, whether democracy is an immutable value for respondents who have some kind of sympathy for political parties.

The first table shows the cross-referencing of the answers to the questions about the interest in politics and whether they have already participated in some type of party meeting.

Table 1: Interest in politics in relation to participating in some type of party meeting

Interest in Politics.	Does not attend political party meetings	Participates in political party meetings	Total
Very high interest.	81 68,6%	37 31,4%	118 100%
Some interest.	169 86,7%	26 13,3%	195 100%
Low interesting.	570 90,3%	61 9,7%	631 100%
No interest.	518 95,2%	26 4,8%	544 100%
Total	1338 89,9%	150 10,1%	1488 100%

Source: based on data from the Barometer of the Americas, (2014).

Firstly, low interest in politics (n = 118) is emphasized. And in the same sequence, the low degree of participation or militancy in some type of political party, among those that have some interest by politics (n = 26). Those who never participated reached 89.1% and this is reflected in the sample of those who say they have no interest (n = 518). These data, however, do not allow us to infer anything about contestation, or even about political participation - unless this is understood only by formal means.

However, the clearest reflection of these data is the distance between political issues and society as a whole. The lack of interest shown by political parties is in line with Manin's (1995, 1996) postulates, which believes in a split with the process known as partisan democracy due to discrediting with respect to representation.

It is also believed that the text of Abranches (2017) is quite symptomatic if confronted with these data, since, besides covering the dissidence between parties and society that Manin (1995, 1996) already postulated, the author manages to make a current reading that the filter between society and the state represented by the parties has broken down and is in transition to a new model of representation in which society is able to engage in political processes without the parties necessarily having to organize or protect it, as carried out by the militant path (PANEBIANCO, 2005).

As well as low participation in party meetings, party sympathy also has a low sample. Among them, the ones with the greatest sympathy are PT, PMDB and PSDB. The others were grouped as "others".

Table 2: Sympathy for political parties by gender

Genre	PT	PSDB and PMDB	Other Parties	Total
Female	71 57,3%	34 27,4%	19 15,3%	124 100%
Male	110 52,4%	61 29%	39 18,6%	210 100%
Total	181 54%	95 28,4	58 17,4%	334 100%

Source: Based on data from the Barometer of the Americas, (2014).

It is noted that the sympathy of the men for parties is almost double of the women. The main highlight is PT, in both genders, which has 54% (n = 181) of the 334 supporters. PSDB and PMDB together (n = 95) have almost double compared to the "other parties" (n = 58), however the discrepancy becomes more representative when measured among women, in which PSDB and PMDB have 27, 4% (n = 34) of female sympathizers, while other parties - not the PT - have almost half, with 15.3% (n = 19).

The issue of gender deserves special mention, both because of the debate that surrounds it and for the problem of disproportionate representation in Brazil. Paiva, Henrique e Silva (2013) show how the female representation in the state and federal legislatures is disproportionate. According to the authors, based on data from the Superior Electoral Court, women make up at least 52% of the total number of voters.

This discussion continues in Paiva, Durães and Carvalho (2018), as the authors show that in the current legislature (55th) women occupy only 9% of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies, even though they are the majority of voters. In addition, a "gender quota" obliges parties to reserve at least 30% of applications and a maximum of 70% for each sex. However, what the authors found was a number of female candidates who only met the legal prerequisite of gender and a low proportion of elected women due to disproportionate investment (PANEBIANCO, 2005) compared to male candidates. These factors directly influence women's engagement in political-party militants.

In general, although the sample is low (n = 334), it appears to be representative when the data are cross-referenced with the gender indicator. However, the ethnicity indicator is also significant, given the discrepancies between whites and all others, which alone merits in-depth study; it is not our goal, however, to accomplish it in this work.

Table 3: Sympathy for political parties by ethnicity

Parties	Whites	Other ethnicities	Total
PT	57 31,5%	124 68,5%	181 100%
PSDB	35 36,8%	60 63,2%	95 100%
PMDB			
Others	22 37,9%	36 62,1%	58 100%
Total	114 34,1%	220 65,9%	334 100%

Source: Based on data from the Barometer of the Americas, (2014)

In addition to greater female participation, the PT is also the party with the highest degree of ethnic integration. However, the sample of white people (n = 57) is very high, showing that even though there is a significant sympathy of other ethnicities (n = 124), the number of whites still seems to be the majority. The same pattern is repeated in the PSDB and PMDB, with more than half of people declaring themselves white in relation to all other ethnicities. The pattern gets lost in the "other" category, as there are much more - proportionally - white people than in the PT, PMDB and PSDB.

As mentioned earlier, in addition to exposing these data on the general characteristics of people who have some kind of sympathy for political parties, the central intention of the article is to analyze this relationship from the democratic value.

Table 4: Identification with parties and democracy as value

Identification with political parties	Democracy or ambivalence⁴	Democracy as the best form of Government	Total
Yes	122 37,4%	204 62,6%	326 100%
No	363 34,3%	696 65,7%	1385 100%
Total	485 35%	900 65%	1385 100%

Source: Based on data from the Barometer of the Americas, (2014).

⁴ The idea of ambivalence is that: 1 ° the democratic regime would not make a difference in the life of the interviewee; 2 ° Under certain circumstances an authoritarian government would be preferable to a democratic government.

In a reasonable sample (n = 1385), people with identification with political parties (n = 326) did not show to be expressive regarding the democratic regime (n = 204). However, people who do not have sympathy for political parties have a much more substantive identification with democracy as the best form of government (n = 696).

The data confirm, to a certain extent, the Abranches (2017) hypothesis that the parties would not be a link with the democratic value; however, this does not mean that people are becoming less democratic, just that parties are not the means by which they are represented (Inglehart and Welzel, 2009).

But what most helps us answer our research question is that some people who have some kind of sympathy for political parties may also have ambivalent or undemocratic values, even if their sympathy is for parties that value democracy in their statutes as value invaluable.

And even for that reason, we have the latest data, which is related to trust in democracy, in relation to the granting of "imperial" or even dictatorial powers to the president. Such a cross is justified by the neoinstitutionalist hypotheses widely explored by the Brazilian political science literature (Abranches, 1988; Lamounier, 1991; Amorim Neto, 1994 and 2007; Figueiredo and Limongi, 1998 and 1999; Figueiredo 1999; Carvalho, 2007; Cintra, 2007) that the Iberian roots and the Latin American caudillismo would lead to a social perception of the necessity of the concentration of power in the hands of a single organ or person so that "progress" occurs.

Table 5: Confidence in democracy and concentration of presidential powers.

Trust in Democracy	It is justifiable for the President to close the Congress (YES)	It is justifiable for the President to close the Congress (NO)	Total
Low Confidence	183 21,5%	670 78,5%	853 100%
Average Confidence	87 19,8%	353 80,2%	440 100%
High Confidence	24 31,6%	52 68,5%	76 100%
Total	294 21,5%	1075 78,5%	1369 100%

Source: Based on data from the Barometer of the Americas, (2014).

Among people who have high confidence, as expected, the sample is low (n = 76). However, what the data present reflects the Brazilian neoinstitutionalist hypothesis, as mentioned above. Among those who rely more on democracy, 31.6% (n = 24) believe that, if necessary, the president can close the National Congress. But among those who have low confidence, 78.5% (n

= 670) do not believe that the closing of Congress by the President under any circumstances is justifiable. In general, most respondents (n = 1369) did not believe that congressional closure was justified (n = 1075).

6 Final considerations

The so-called "great transition" pointed out by Abranches (2017) at the beginning of the article, in the proposed case, was verified empirically. However, it should be emphasized that this does not mean that parties will disappear, but a transition from their traditional role, as pointed out in the section concerned, may be seen.

Something that has already been pointed out, but deserves to be closed in this section, is that democracy does not represent an undisputed value for those who show appreciation for parties. And even so this transition in the role of the parties will have to take into account the issues that are encompassed within the framework of social change.

The change of values, however, occurred on a positive scale if it was thought of in relation to the so-called "democratic value": although people did not appreciate the parties so much, they demonstrated a degree of respect for democracy and its institutions.

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