



UNION TO THE RIGHT: THE ALLIANCE BETWEEN MBL AND PATRIOTA IN THE 2020 ELECTIONS

Victor Finkler Lachowski¹

Abstract: This exploratory research has the goal to study the Movimento Brasil Livre (MBL) and the Patriota party, describing the historical narrative of both political actors, based on a bibliography and document analysis. The MBL being an extension of a neoliberal Think Tank financed by foreign entities, and Patriota, a recently founded party, that opted for a general rebranding of their political brand to adapt itself to a nationalist speech, drifting away from the worn out image of the party. Both MBL and Patriota represent the tendency of a reemergence of the national right-wing in the 2010's. Descriptions and comparisons about the ideological values, paths and alliance between both in the 2020 municipal elections in São Paulo are made, as well as their results and future prospections.

Keywords: Partisan Rebranding; Social Movement; Think Tanks; Neoliberalism; Conservative.

1 Introduction

Civil society organizations are increasingly present in the direction of regional and national political scenarios. Examples of these organizations are social movements: groups that seek changes in institutions through political guidelines and interventions in society. Movements of this kind can have diverse political ideologies and defend broader values, including regressive and reactionary tendencies influenced by neoliberalism and conservatism, and can attack democracy and its institutions. There is an ideological clash between these groups, represented by the support/promotion of the free market, the end of state intervention in the economy, Christian religious expression, individual legal freedoms, and traditional family values, in opposition to movements in defense of the right to abortion (pro-choice), legalization or regulation of drugs, and maintenance of the minimum age of criminality (BARBOSA, 2015).

The *think tanks* conservatives (opposed to *think tanks* progressives), research institutions and political activism aimed at influencing government bodies and public opinion for the adoption of certain public policies, providing superstructural support to reactionary organizations. They are maintained through the financing of corporations, entrepreneurs, politicians, parties, among other groups with political interests (ROCHA, 2015). Approximately two-thirds of these institutions defend conservative values and ideals (SILVA, 2018).

Thus, they intervene in various fields of society, such as culture, religion, economy, civil rights, among others. These organizations exert international influence and increasingly gain rhetorical power in debates in the media, with the planned use of communication tools such

¹ Bachelor in Advertising & Advertising (Universidade Federal do Paraná) -UFPR. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2607-4756> E-mail: victorlachowski@hotmail.com

as journalism, propaganda, public relations, with which they publicize actions (orchestrated) to raise the support of public opinion (BARBOSA, 2015).

Despite presenting themselves as autonomous, these conservative organizational structures are extensions that act in favor of economic elites, in conducting an environment favorable to neoliberal ideals. Spread all over the world, including with a large presence in Brazil, one of the *think tanks* conservatives in the country was the consolidation of a neoliberal and conservative youth on the internet, through forums, blogs, profiles, and social media funded by them (SANTOS; CHAGAS, 2018). The Movimento Brasil Livre (MBL) emerges as one of the examples of this set of social actors who act strongly in the digital environment, in line with the conservative ideology advocated by *think tanks* (national and international).

The MBL is a social and political movement created in 2013 and formalized in 2014 as an extension of the Brazilian *think tank Estudantes Pela Liberdade*, Brazilian arm of the international *Students for Liberty*, funded by meta *think tank Atlas Network* (AMARAL, 2015).

These types of *think tanks* act as public relations arms using various strategies, promoting the ideology of their funders in the media, presenting themselves as independent institutions with “neutral” opinions. The supposedly “exempt” positioning is a strategy to acquire credibility, thus showing themselves as technical and non-partisan alternatives to elaborate and implement public policy proposals. These organizations function as “sellers of ideas”, and use the media and political activism as showcases for their ideologies and that of their funders, not always transparently connected (SILVA, 2018).

As a consequence (also) of organizations like these, traditional political institutions tend to lose public trust and adherence, as is the case with political parties. A 2019 DataFolha survey showed that only 4% of Brazilians highly trust parties, while 36% trust a little, and 58% do not trust political parties, being the institution with the highest index of distrust among respondents (DATAFOLHA, 2019).

With the growing rejection of political parties, some have used marketing tools to minimize rejection and rescue the trust of the electorate. The Partido Ecológico Nacional (PEN), founded in 2012, was one of them.

Initially positioning itself as a center party (GUERLENDIA, 2012), it increasingly redirected its proposals to the right-wing of the political spectrum through dialogues with politicians with this alignment, such as Jair Bolsonaro, in 2017 (VENTURINI, 2017). The PEN conducted a total *rebranding* to adapt the party to these ideological discourses and move away from the traditional perception of party, which will be detailed below, modifying its missions, visions, and values, its visual identity, and renaming itself Patriota.

Both MBL and Patriota represent the *re-emergence of the national political right-wing* (Miguel, 2018), which corresponds to the “increasing visibility and relevance of groups that bluntly assume a conservative or reactionary discourse” (p. 17, our translation). According to

the author, this conservative right-wing wave was growing throughout the PT governments, up to its points of public demonstrations with broad popular support from 2013 to 2016. The groups of this reactionary moment are positioned in three main strands: libertarianism, religious fundamentalism, and recycling of anti-communism. Libertarianism when they use the Austrian School of Economics as a reference for their libertarian economic views, based on the minimum State and free market. Religious fundamentalism is identified as the defense of social or public health policies, such as the antiabortion perspective. Economic, such as against the Bolsa Família Program, against laws promoting culture, etc. Finally, anti-communism as an update of what was preached during the Cold War, with the omnipresent threat of the Soviets gaining a new appearance with Venezuelan Bolivarianism in Brazil and Latin America and contemporary progressive guidelines, which represent danger to their values and cultural concepts (family, morality, religion).

The main activities of the MBL are in libertarianism and anti-communism, and the Patriota in religious fundamentalism and libertarianism. Both organizations operate within the three strands that characterize the conservative values associated with the political spectrum of the national political right-wing (MIGUEL, 2018).

The MBL gained notoriety with the demonstrations of 2013, and later for its communication on social media, using *memes* and other types of posts with humorous content. This was to attack political opponents and defend their right-wing ideals, with emphasis on a strong anti-political discourse against the “old way” of promoting politics. For the MBL, this consisted in physiologism, practices favorable to personal or partisan interests, and patrimonialism, refining the boundaries between the public and private. However, over the years, the MBL has become a conventional political actor, with the launch of candidacies to the National Congress, State Chambers, City Halls, and Municipal Chambers as a form to disseminate its ideological values and public policy proposals throughout the country. This means the increasingly significant participation of members in electoral races at the municipal, state, or federal levels.

The Patriot, when it was still PEN, having politicians that were part of the Evangelical Parliamentary Front in its base, tried for years to attract Marina Silva to be a candidate for the party, through positions, speeches, and proposals aimed at environmental issues. After a few years and negative responses, the party decided to focus its efforts on attracting right-wing conservative politicians and thus benefit from the reemergence of the Brazilian right-wing. Jair Bolsonaro almost came to the party in September 2017, when the party decided to reposition its brand and name, electing Patriota the winning alternative. The rebranding attracted new political names and new voters. Cabo Daciolo received attention for inflammatory religious discourses of anti-communism in the 2018 presidential elections, and the party went from 71,696 members (September 2017) to 337,084 (January 2021) (XAVIER, 2017; CORRÊA,

2021).

The most recent political strategy of the MBL and Patriota, to acquire structure and influence in political spaces and from the electorate, was an alliance between both for the municipal elections of 2020. This can possibly represent a reversal of roles and a synergy conducive to the interests of both parties: the party wants to present itself as a movement, and the movement wants to have the organization of a party. Launching Patriota candidates who are MBL members, party positions for movement leaders, and using cheap campaign strategies aimed at younger audiences are some of the results to be detailed in this survey.

2 Methodology

This exploratory research uses documentary analysis and literature review to narrate the historical trajectory of these two organizations that aligned pragmatically in a symbiotic political action, symbolizing the growing movement of emptying the parties and the strengthening of civil movements in civil society (AZEVEDO JUNIOR; CALDAS, 2017), and understand the ideological integration of these political actors. We study the MBL and Patriota, as well as phenomena surrounding them, such as *think tanks*, *rebranding*, election results, among others. For this, we used a Bibliographic Review, understood by Bittencourt and Mendes (2010) as a form to encompass materials already published regarding the objects, and provide methodologies, perspectives, and perceptions of authors who contributed with their studies on the themes and observations of concepts that permeate them.

From the perspective of these authors, the documentary analysis employs sources of journalistic cues disseminated in large media, mainly news websites. Journalistic sources are understood as relevant for information on specific demands and as historical documents. This is essential for this article, which seeks to build a historical narrative about objects through information and data. Documents linked to the objects made available by the Superior Electoral Court, Patriota, and MBL complement the items analyzed.

The research is divided into four parts. The first part conceptualizes social movement and associates it as a strategic option for the performance of *think tanks* under the perspective proposed by Joaquim Barbosa, Daniel Silva (2018), Lucas Araldi (2017), and Gilmar Oliveira (2017) that define concepts and methods of action, complemented by the bias of the Brazilian right-wing insurgency under the perspective of Luis Miguel (2018).

The second part structures the historical narratives of each object, beginning with the MBL, its relationship with foreign *think tanks*, and additional explanations given by Marina Amaral (2015). Next is the turn of the Patriota Party to be presented, with its partisan rebranding based on the researches of Aryovaldo Azevedo Junior and Luciana Panke (2017) and Azevedo Junior and Ana Caldas (2017).

The third part brings the proposals and political views of both to be evaluated

concerning different standards. They were referenced with Ludwig von Mises (2009) since this is mandatory reading for MBL members, besides the author defending several guidelines also adopted by the Patriota Party. Noah Chomsky (2004) and Robert McChesney (2004) were cited to elaborate criticism to these ideological values, as were Lucas Araldi (2017) and the concept of “Transant Right-Wing” employed by João Santos and Viktor Chagas (2018).

The fourth and final part connects the political context that led the party and the movement to ally, describes how this agreement took place, its results and expectations for the future, with a scenario projection based on the relationship history of these organizations and the economic political context drawn.

3 Social movements and think tanks: the MBL

O modelo dos *think tanks* surgiu para criar um manipulador racional de tomada de decisões políticas, deixando de lado o sentimento partidário para implantar propostas de políticas públicas. Começaram a se proliferar nos EUA e Europa nos anos 70 e no resto do mundo a partir dos anos 90 (SILVA, 2018).

Em 1981, é fundada a *Atlas Economic Research Foundation* (também chamada *Atlas Network*), um *meta think tank* de ideologia neoliberal atuante no mundo inteiro, cujo objetivo é dar aporte financeiro (ARALDI, 2017) e na formação de lideranças de *think tanks* pelo globo. Esse modelo é utilizado ideologicamente para fins neoliberais, para disseminar os ideais de grupos empresariais e defender interesses de grandes empresas e corporações ao redor do mundo (OLIVEIRA, 2017).

Em 2005, foi fundado no Brasil o Estudantes Pela Liberdade (EPL), embaixada brasileira do *Students For Liberty (SFL)*. O *SFL* é um *think tank* financiado pela *Atlas Network*, planejado para engajar estudantes nos ideais neoliberais e no ativismo político destes desde jovens.

Em 2013, os protestos ao redor do país deram margem para o surgimento e/ou desmembramento de grupos ativistas políticos de diferentes espectros políticos. O que começou com a pauta do transporte público organizada pelo Movimento Passe Livre (MPL) se dividiu nas mais diversas pautas e deu o início aos acontecimentos que culminaram em atos pró *impeachment* da então presidente Dilma Rousseff em 2015 e 2016 (BARBOSA, 2017).

Os membros do Estudantes Pela Liberdade (EPL) eram impedidos pela Legislação da Receita (IRS) de participar das manifestações organizadas pelo MPL, uma vez que organizações americanas são proibidas de doar recursos para atividades políticas. Since EPL receives resources from Atlas and *Students for Liberty*, members could participate as individuals, not as an organization, due to income tax and tax rules issues in the U.S. The EPL leadership decided to launch the "Movimento Brasil Livre“, or MBL, as a brand to "sell itself" in the demonstrations. Over the months, the brand gained relevance and declared itself as a non-

partisan political movement (AMARAL, 2015).

The movements were contested at the demonstrations by traditional political parties, from the PSDB to the PT, and by the traditional press, and showed new political forces using social networks to acquire relevance and supporters, as well as new sources of coverage of the acts, which began to surpass traditional communication companies in visibility and relevance. Movements such as the MBL were responsible for the change of the guidelines in the demonstrations, initially focused on public transport, beginning to extend to several different political and social issues, such as corruption, infrastructure, health, education, etc. (SILVEIRA, 2015).

The MBL had a massive role in the scheduling and organization of the 2013 protests, disappeared for a few months, and resurfaced on November 15th, 2013, around the campaign of the “Raio Privatizador”, with political proposals for the privatization of various public services, such as a substitute for the “Movimento de Renovação Liberal”, of the same leadership of the MBL (ROCHA, 2018).

The MBL is officially launched in November 2014, shortly after the end of the second round of the elections for President of Brazil (OLIVEIRA, 2017). Initially, in 2014 and 2015, they were said to be nonpartisan. In 2015, when asked about the intention to form a political party, one of the leaders of the movement, Fábio Ostermann, stated that “we do not rule out this possibility [...] because, there is no liberal party today in Brazil” (ROSSI, 2015, our translation), and stressed that they intended to support candidates, not parties.

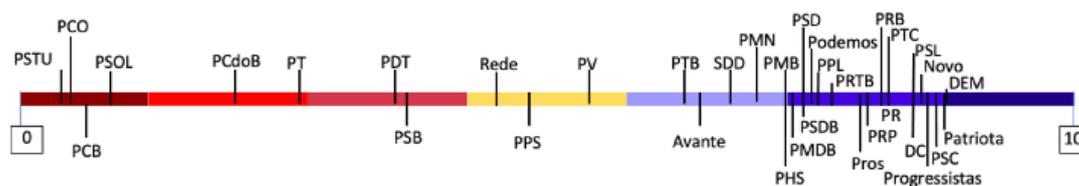
Throughout 2015, despite criticizing politicians and parties, especially those of the left-wing, they participated in acts against the Government of Dilma Rousseff, funded by parties such as DEM, PSDB, SOLIDARIEDADE, and PMDB (LOPES; SEGALLA, 2016). Along with the acts, came the confirmation of the candidacies of members, which made the movement change its positioning from “nonpartisan” to “supra-partisan”, that is, its interests would be above any party (CARTA CAPITAL, 2016).

That same year, the MBL's “Manual de Instruções para Núcleos Municipais” was launched, where the movement presents rules and guidelines for affiliations, candidacies, and alliances with parties. The document presents as parties closest to the movement the Democratas (DEM), Partido Social Cristão (PSC), and Partido Novo. Parties PSDB, PMDB, PV, PSC, PRP (current REPUBLICANOS), PSB, PPS, PTdoB (current AVANTE), and PRTB are considered “neutral”. PT, PSOL, PCdoB, PSTU, PCO, and REDE are considered antagonistic parties and prohibited from joining (BARBOSA, 2017).

The parties considered “supportive” indicate that the position of the MBL in the ideological spectrum as a right-wing force, valuing economic libertarianism, draining the State, and the favoring entrepreneurship. This is even more visible when observing the positioning of the parties in the poll conducted by the Election Observatory, in November 2020

(BOLOGNESI; RIBEIRO; CODATO, 2020):

Figure 1 – Ideological position of Brazilian parties



Ideological position of Brazilian political parties

- Alliance**
- extreme left-wing
 - left-wing
 - center left-wing
 - center
 - center right-wing
 - right
 - extreme right-wing

Source: Election Observatory.

In the municipal elections of 2016, the MBL launched one candidate for mayor and 44 for the council for Brazil. The parties with the most affiliated were PSDB and DEM, with ten each. There were also candidates for the PP, PSC, Novo, PEN (current PATRIOTA), PHS (incorporated into PODEMOS), PMDB, PPS, PRB, PROS, PSB, PTB, PTN, PV, and SD (Appendix 1).

Importantly, PP, PEN (PATRIOTA), PHS (PODEMOS), PRB, Pros, PTB, and PTN (PODEMOS) are identified as right-wing parties, SD as center-right, and PV as center. All of these were not mentioned in the movement's Manual, but it follows that these parties are considered “neutral” and acceptable to the MBL since almost all are from the spectrum of the right-wing.

Eight of the 45 member candidates were elected in the first election of the group: Zé Pocai (PPS); Fernando Holiday (DEM); Ramiro Rosário (PSDB); Filipe Barros (PRB); Leonardo Braga (PSDB); Caroline Gomes (PSDB); Marschelo Meche (PSDB); and Homero Marchese (PV) (CARTA CAPITAL, 2016).

In 2017, the MBL set up strategies to launch more candidates for political positions at the state and federal levels, planning to attract audiences and members of parties that show support to the group (PIAUI, 2017). In 2018, the year of the national elections, the MBL announced to put 16 coordinators as candidates, eight running for seats in the Chamber of Deputies, seven in the Legislative Assemblies, and one candidate for vice-governor. The PSDB made a national alliance with the MBL and received five candidacies, in addition to candidates

in the DEM, PR, and PP (which were part of the coalition around the candidacy of Alckmin); Novo, PMDB, PSC, and Pros (nationally united to the PT) close the parties with candidate members of the movement (BALLOUSSIER, 2018).

Marcos Rogério (DEM-RO) and Eduardo Girão (Pros-CE) (who testify in the covid CPI) were elected to the Senate. In the Chamber: Kim Kataguirí (DEM-SP), Zé Mario (DEM-GO), Jerônimo Goergen (PP-RS), Arthur do Val (Mamãe Falei) (DEM-SP), and Sóstenes Cavalcante (DEM-RJ) were elected (BOLDRINI, 2018). In the end, seven of the 16 candidates were elected.

In the course of its historical trajectory, the MBL adhered to “aspects of journalistic texts, images, and figures provoking politicians, parties, and sympathizers or members of ideals considered as left-wing and the symbolic struggle to implement neoliberal ideals” (ARALDI, 2017, p. 7, our translation). It used the repetition of criticism of the left-wing and other opponents to grow on social networks and reach the mainstream traditional media, with interviews on websites, TV, radio, and opinion columns. With the municipal and national elections, it managed to elect candidates to implement public policy proposals consistent with the ideology of the movement and its *think tanks* financiers.

4 From center to right-wing: Patriota and its rebranding

Pen (Partido Ecológico Nacional), now Patriota, was founded in August 9th, 2011. Its creation was approved in July 19th, 2012. At the time, it was defined by its president, Adilson Barroso, as a party that “defends various causes but always with a focus on sustainability” (GUERLENDIA, 2012). Despite the initial environmental character, the party is seen as a political extension of the “Assembleia de Deus” - Assembly of God (SIUDA-AMBROZIAK, 2014), with some of its elected politicians being members of the congregation and integrating the Evangelical Parliamentary Front (GRILLO, 2017).

In 2014, PEN participated in the first election in its brief history. Its main focus, sustainability, would be a pretext to attract Marina Silva, a member of the Assembly of God, to run for president, by the party, in 2014 (SIUDA-AMBROZIAK, 2014), which did not materialize. As an electoral result, they got their first three seats with federal deputies, and 13 with state deputies (GRILLO, 2017).

Two years later, in the 2016 municipal elections, the PEN, now more experienced in electoral races, launched 170 candidates for City Halls and 9,832 for City Councils. It managed to elect 13 mayors and 523 councilors (TSE, online).

A year before the 2018 national elections, the PEN, tired of Marina Silva's refusals, decides to invite the federal deputy of the PSC at the time, Jair Bolsonaro, to be pre-candidate for the presidency for the 2018 elections. On the same day of the confirmation of the politician for the party, the PEN made an online poll for its affiliates to choose the new name of the party

to adapt to its new member - contrary to the environmental agenda - (VENTURINI, 2017), and the Patriota alternative came out the winner.

Bolsonaro gave up his transfer to the newly renamed party, as president Adilson Barroso refused to change members of the party's leadership (POMPEU, 2019). He subsequently chose PSL², where he convinced its president, Luciano Bivar, to let Gustavo Bebianno lead the party during the 2018 elections.

This process of changing the party brand from PEN to Patriota involves much more than the name. Called *rebranding*, it is the cultural change of a brand and its values. A rebranding seeks to change the naming (brand name), its values, mission, objectives, language (written, visual, sound), communication strategies. Seen as a marketing solution, it aims to stimulate the consumer (voter) to buy (vote/affiliate) products and services (proposals/vision) that provide some kind of benefit (AZEVEDO JUNIOR; PANKE, 2017).

One of the first strategies adopted was the renaming, when a brand changes its name for various reasons. In the case of the PEN, the removal of the word "party" was done to renew the brand and avoid the discredit of voters with its association with political entities (AZEVEDO JUNIOR; CALDAS, 2017). The "ecological" was removed to adapt the new name of the party to an agenda whose environmental focus is left aside, and "National" is replaced by a more sonorous and impactful synonym. The new naming was chosen in an online vote held by the party itself, being "PATRIOTA" the winner among the affiliates. As a complement, the expression "Brasil acima de todos" - Brazil above all - is used as a slogan in the party logo (PATRIOTA, 2019).

We can notice how this party brand should be related and transmit ideological consistency, performance history, credibility, and perceived quality, dialoguing with existing and desired voters, reinforcing their *share of mind* (brand reminder) (AZEVEDO JUNIOR; PANKE, 2017). being an international tendency for parties to show themselves as "movements" and move away from the worn image of traditional politics.

As for the visual and sound aspects of the new brand, article 4 of the Patriota statute (2019) highlights that "the colors green, blue, yellow and white - the colors of the Brazilian flag are present in the entire visual configuration of the alliance" (p. 2-3), which is seen in the logo and flag of the party. The party anthem³ it is inspired by the "DNA" of Brazilian music, with a vibrant and captivating rhythm. Thus, the new Patriota brand has a visual, written, and even sonorous language, inspired by the maximum national symbol - the flag - and a chauvinistic approach.

² The President's eldest son, Senator Flávio Bolsonaro, joined Patriota-RJ in May 2021, and claimed his father's interest in joining the alliance for good (FERNANDES, 2021).

³ Patriota Party anthem. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Di4GL_UbIh8

Image 1 and 2: (1) PEN logo (right), (2) Patriota logo (left).



Source: Images extracted from the party website.

With this partisan rebranding, the Patriota began to develop and reaffirm a morally conservative and economically liberal discourse, with a commitment to the defense and promotion of the free economy and private property, and conservative, patriotic, Christian values (PATRIOTA, 2019).

In 2018, the Patriota contested its first election after the renaming and incorporation of the Partido Republicano Progressista (PRP). It managed to elect five federal deputies and 14 state deputies (EBC, 2018). Its first presidential candidate, Cabo Daciolo, obtained more than 1.3 million votes, or 1.26% of the total (BRASIL, 2018). The party launched 13,422 candidates for city council and 439 for mayor in the municipal elections of 2020, electing 704 councils and 49 mayors (BRASIL, 2018).

The party, as we could see, replaced its priorities, which reflected in its own nomenclature, language, visual identity, and positioning. A profound change of brand carried out in the context lived by the party and the national political scene, increasingly reinforced a nationalism focused on national security, the defense of the free market and private initiative, reinforced by the project of reducing State interference and influence (as will be highlighted below).

5 Political positions

For the most part, the *think tanks* belong to the conservative/neoliberal right-wing political spectrum, more specifically 2/3 of them. As Rich (2011) points out, this is because these organizations have unlimited funding from large business groups, which potentiates their influence on parties and political actors that embrace their political proposals, helping in the creation and implementation of public policies with popular support, thanks to the actions of public relations and press assistance practiced by the public *think tanks*.

The EPL, and consequently its “extension” MBL, are part of these right-wing ideology *think tanks*. In both, the essential reading for members, supporters, and enthusiasts is the work “Seis Lições” by Ludwig von Mises (2009). It is a criterion for effective participation within the

MBL that members and recruits develop knowledge of liberal doctrine and its authors (BARBOSA, 2017). Mises' text defends a capitalist perspective where the dynamics of buying and selling, supply and demand, and mass production govern a just economic and social order, provided without State intervention, both in legal and ethical issues, in capitalist productions and negotiations (MISES, 2009).

The statute of the Patriota Party, last updated in 2019, approved by the Superior Electoral Court, describes that the party can be characterized as a "Center Party" (PATRIOTA, 2019). This party-political position implies a party that votes for interests and negotiations, depending on the proposal. In its creation, when it was still PEN, it chose to be "exempt" during the Dilma government, voting according to each agenda (GUERLENDIA, 2012). It was part of the block allied to the Temer government (VENTURINI, 2017), and, during the first year of the presidency of Jair Bolsonaro, was the 4th party with the highest alignment to the government during voting, with 93.2% of its votes being favorable to the president (MAIA; BRANDINO; GOMES, 2019).

In the economic field, MBL and Patriota defend "the promotion of free economy based on the right of private property" (PATRIOTA, 2019). Their proposals, available in their website, highlight the free market as responsible for the last 250 years of advances in humanity, a point also defended by Mises (2009). Both believe that the distribution of goods and services is provided more efficiently by entrepreneurs, through the free market, than the state routes, considered bureaucratic and discouraging to the market. They support the end of labor rights and their replacement by "bilateral agreements" between employer and employee (MBL, 2015). In the legislature, they vote in favor of the economic proposals of the Bolsonaro government, such as the pension reform (PODER 360, online).

A central feature of libertarian ideology is the set of policies and processes that allow "a relatively small number of private interests to control as much of social life as possible with the aim of maximizing their individual benefits" (McCHESNEY *apud* CHOMSKY, 2004, p. 7, our translation).

Considering the individual above the public is one of the points defended by the movement and the party, as in the example of the "Minimum State", that is, a reduced and limited State in terms of economic issues (OLIVEIRA, 2017).

If in the economy they favor a neoliberal agenda and anti-state intervention, in the moral guidelines they go against conservatism. The MBL, with a punitive discourse that defends reducing the criminal age, and disqualifies as "victimists" the discourses of black, LGBTQ, and feminist movements, with projects that propose the end of racial quotas in São Paulo and the end of the day for black awareness (BETIM, 2019). The statute of Patriota clarifies the intention of the party to promote "conservative, patriotic, Christian values, respecting the other creeds" (PATRIOTA, 2019). The entity's website reinforces that it is a "morally conservative,

economically defender of the free market, and confessionally Christian party " (PATRIOTA, online).

The party and the movement are antiabortion and against the legalization of drugs, against "gender ideology", and "political correctness" (ROSSI, 2017). The discourse of respect for Christian indoctrination emphasizes that the diversity of ideas "must be contained only when the way of life in question threatens order, social peace, freedom, property, and social customs" (PATRIOTA, online, our translation).

Security is a topic addressed by the MBL and central to the Patriota. Both are pro-armamentists and in favor of overturning the disarmament statute (PATRIOTA, online; and ROSSI, 2017). However, the party encourages a large investment in the armed forces, both in equipment, wages, and contingent increase. Such expenses could be inconsistent with what is proposed in the Minimum State. However, Mises (2009, our translation) attributes that the State has a duty to "protect people within the country against violent and fraudulent attacks by bandits, as well as to defend the country against external enemies. These are the functions of government in a free system, in the system of the market economy" (p. 45).

In education, the two political actors complement each other. While the party defends the practice of technical education and courses aimed at civil rights, the movement opts for the privatization of the public education system at all levels, with the exception of risk areas, where in its view, schools should be militarized (MBL, 2015).

Environmental agendas are treated similarly by both political actors. In the case of the party, the statute aims at industrial production and the preservation of Natural Resources, fauna and flora, and emphasizes that it can be considered the "Sustainability Party" (PATRIOTA, 2019). However, they repudiate any environmental solution that interferes or seeks to abolish the free market and accuse environmental movements of subverting the "values of the west", which in their view are: national sovereignty and development propagated by free initiative (PATRIOTA, online). This position is similar to that of the MBL, which defends benefits such as tax exemptions, tax reductions, and premiums for companies that reduce their pollution rates (MBL, 2015).

This transition of agendas within the political spectrum of the right-wing, ranging from economic libertarianism to conservatism, is what Santos and Chagas (2018) call the "Transant Right-Wing", precisely because of taking advantage of this strategy, where these agents embrace specific ideological causes and rhetoric when such themes are in view of debate on the national scene.

Both measure no efforts to raise different audiences for their interests. The party has some nuclei, aimed at reaching varied segments, being: Patriota woman, Patriota youth, and the FEN - National Ecological Foundation -, the latter performs "political training through several projects, among them, regular courses, study cycles, research, and debates, in addition to

creating and applying content and projects”, not having ecology, environment, sustainability, etc, in the agenda (FEN, online, our translation). The movement seeks to form a youth with liberal-conservative ideals to gain space in schools and academic centers (AMÂNCIO, 2018).

The neoliberalism of the Patriota and MBL acts for the interests of the bourgeois capitalist class, in a regressive character, which aggravates social inequality, with the removal of civil rights and the rights of ethnic minorities and disadvantaged socioeconomic groups (ARALDI, 2017 and BARBOSA, 2017). These goals are achieved through policies favorable to financial liberalization, which concentrate wealth in few hands, and attack social programs (CHOMSKY, 2004).

They use a language that reinforces the individualism present in neoliberal ideology. The "LIVRE (FREE)" of the MBL is only for the market, and not for the freedoms of obtaining space, and emancipation of the individual (OLIVEIRA, 2017), and intensify the repression of those still devoid of voice or in the process of emancipation. On the other hand, the PATRIOTA is only an aesthetic device and an enhancement of the armed forces, while national sovereignty and the public machine must be dismantled for the sake of private power.

Despite all the conservative positions, the Patriota Party and the MBL seek to highlight the defense of the democratic regime, multipartism and freedom of the press. However, the appreciation of democracy and freedom seems to remain only in the discourse, since members of the MBL (many affiliated to the Patriota) carry out attacks on the media - mainly from 2013 to 2017 - and promote the extinction of democratic institutions and the right to freedom of expression, in addition to discrediting the press, which is often portrayed as the enemy and persecutor of the movement, its members and supporters, in what Gomes (2016) describes as “perception of hostile media”.

They embrace causes of broad popular support to publicize their economically neoliberal and morally conservative agendas, and to have their proposals and projects approved in political spaces, even if they go against a conservatism that, in theory (and only in theory), could not walk along the liberal ideological positioning of the market. This behavior, of passerby between agendas, going from liberalism to conservatism, characterizes them as "transant right-wing" (SANTOS and CHAGAS, 2018). This concept understands that the discourses of objects do not focus on collective social action, such as traditional social movements, but appeal to the individual as a political protagonist, to the molds of the neoliberal vision. Although their speeches put pressure on the power of action of the State, they call on it to demand a supervisory and regulatory role of the attitudes of its political opponents, such as progressive/left-wing movements, parties, politicians, and personalities.

6 The relationship between both

The MBL had a turbulent 2019. The first year of the movement's history with members serving at the state and federal level led to a series of protests and repositioning of the group.

The first chapter was the group's non-adherence to the pro-government protests held on May 26th, 2019. Kim Kataguirí (DEM) claimed that, even if he did not regret having supported Bolsonaro in 2018, the calls demonized politics (BENITES, 2019), and that there were anti-democratic attacks within the protests with which the group could not condone (PIMENTEL, 2019).

However, the movement called demonstrations on June 30th, 2019, to support Sérgio Moro, Operation Lava Jato, and pension reform. The group was met with physical violence and swearing in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, being accused of condoning with the “Centrão” and the “old politics” (HERDY; CAETANO, 2019).

This occurs because some members of the MBL were elected by the DEM, the traditional party where the movement has been launching candidacies since 2016. The party has politicians of expression in the House and Senate, favoring an also traditional political ascent, which should interest the movement. In this scenario, the MBL focuses on its libertarian proposals, trying to gain visibility by approving them, distancing itself from its previous anti-political and enemy speech of Congress. As a result, the MBL ceases to adopt the tone of attack and “virtual militia” used since its emergence. This is strategic so that it looks less like a disorganized movement (BRUM, 2019).

Throughout 2019, the Patriota took advantage of the increase in seats in the House and Senate to vote in favor of the Bolsonaro government in a good part of the opportunities, with 93.2% of the votes with the government. This position demonstrates that the current government has proposals and perspectives of interest from the party (MAIA; BRANDINO; GOMES, 2019).

In November 2019, Arthur do Val (Mamãe Falei) (DEM-SP) launched his pre-candidacy for the mayor of São Paulo, during the 5th National Congress of the MBL (LARA, 2019). The deputy was expelled from the Democratas by the act since the party declared previous support for the PSDB candidate, Bruno Covas, and for the criticism he had been making to the president of the Senate at the time, Davi Alcolumbre, from the DEM (SANZ, 2019).

Almost a year later, in September 2020, Patriota-SP opened the doors for Mamãe Falei, Fernando Holiday (who was also from the DEM) and other MBL members to join and launch their candidacies for the party. The alliance was formed to increase the bench of councilmen in large cities, being the first test in the city of São Paulo. The MBL highlighted that it chose the party because it supported the non-use of electoral funds and negotiation of positions but demanded the presidency of the municipal directory of the party in São Paulo, which was handed over to Renan Battista, one of the first leaders of the movement (PEREIRA, 2020A).

As a result of this alliance, Arthur do Val obtained 9.78% of the votes (TSE, 2020) - 5th place in the 1st round -, a result much higher than that indicated by the polls, which indicated an average of 4% to 6% of the votes in the weeks before the election (NEXO, 2020) and surpassing several traditional candidates or expression parties, such as Jilmar Tatto (PT - 8.65%), Joice Hasselmann (PSL - 1.84%) and Levy Fidelix (PRTB - 0.22%). The Patriota candidate's campaign was marked by the use of social networks, little structure, numerous attacks on opponents, and only 16 seconds of time on TV and radio at the HGPE (BOTACINI, 2020).

In this election, 14 members and coordinators of the movement were elected as council in São Paulo: Fernando Holiday (Patriota-SP), Rubinho Nunes (Patriota-SP), and Marlon do Uber (Patriota-SP). Representatives in the Municipal Chambers of important cities of the state also won the elections, such as Paulo Gaspar (NOVO-SP) in Campinas, Lucas Sanches (PP-SP) in Guarulhos, Márcio Colombo (PSDB-SP) in Santo André, Glauco Braido (PSD-SP) in São Bernardo do Campo, Italo Moreira (PSC-SP) in Sorocaba, Thomaz Henrique (NOVO-SP) in São José dos Campos, and Gabriel Bueno (MDB-SP). Completing the list are Ramiro Rosário (PSDB-RS), Dhonatan Pagani (PSDB-RO), Adenilson Rocha (PSDB-MT), and Diogo Franco (MDB-RS).

We can see the relevance achieved by the movement in São Paulo, with ten of its 14 councilmen being elected in the federative unit, and all elected in the capital from the Patriota. Both the Patriota and MBL stated that the alliance would continue to 2022, with the plan to launch candidates for Senator and Governor of São Paulo. The MBL denies the intention to form its own party (PEREIRA, 2020A). For Patriota leaders, the party's exposure with the movement represents the pro-life initiative, for family and the private initiative, all common guidelines between both, as highlighted earlier, and that the union was beneficial for both sides and, provided there is respect for the party's statute, there is no risk of termination (PEREIRA, 2020b).

7 Final considerations

The historical narratives described in this research showed the emergence of the two objects, their initial political proposals and actions, and their changes of course. MBL presents an extension of *think tank* created for a direct political action, actively participating in demonstrations with anti-political discourse gradually resembling a party, and capable of creating and voting on public policy proposals, with members being elected to different positions. Patriota underwent *rebranding* from a self-proclaimed sustainable "center" party to a political actor who seeks to distance itself from the traditional vision of a political party, taking advantage of the growing right-wing nationalist wave to position itself as an agent aligned with this neoliberal discourse, with economically libertarian and morally conservative proposals.

The description and comparison between the two indicates that they are identified as

ideologically conservative concerning social customs and Christian views, and support the vision of dismantling the public apparatus and perform privatizations in economic, environmental, and public functionalism issues. State intervention must be restricted only to public security and national defense. Thus, the "transant right" of both parties ranges from the liberal spectrum in economic issues and freedom of action for the market, to conservatism in policies that address individual freedoms and the emancipation of excluded and historically persecuted social groups, such as black populations, women, the LGBTQI+ community, and the low economic power classes in general.

It is simple to understand how both allied with a certain ease and speed, which is reinforced by the freedom that the party gave the movement to organize and use the alliance to launch candidates. In exchange for leadership positions, the Movimento Brasil Livre achieved the desired party structure in São Paulo, and the Patriota took another important step in its distancing from traditional party definitions, now with the accession of a nationally known movement.

However, events of 2021 eventually broke this alliance. With the affiliation of Flávio Bolsonaro to the Patriota, Fernando Holiday separated himself from the party and opted for Novo to continue his political career, Rubinho Nunes was expelled for criticizing the admission of the new affiliate, while Arthur do Val and Renan Battista remain in the party. The party intends to receive the affiliation of Jair Bolsonaro and his family and supporters, which would be contrary to the interests of MBL, which seeks to make opposition to the right-wing of the government.

Thus, no matter how positive the results were in 2020, the alliance between Patriota and MBL reflects an opportunism between both, with a shallow and momentary relationship that enabled its rapid dismantling despite the plans for 2022.

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Apêndice 1 - Siglas partidárias

DEM - Democratas

PSC - Partido Social Cristão

NOVO - Partido Novo

PSDB - Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira

PMDB - Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (atual MDB)

PV - Partido Verde

PRP - Partido Republicano Progressista (atual REPUBLICANOS)

PSB - Partido Socialista Brasileiro

PPS - Partido Popular Socialista (Atual CIDADANIA)

PTdoB - Partido Trabalhista do Brasil (atual AVANTE)

PRTB - Partido Republicano Trabalhista Brasileiro

PT - Partido dos Trabalhadores

PSOL - Partido Socialismo e Liberdade

PCdoB - Partido Comunista do Brasil

PSTU - Partido Socialista dos Trabalhadores Unidos

PCO - Partido da Causa Operária

REDE - Rede Sustentabilidade

PP - Progressistas

PEN - Partido Ecológico Nacional (atual PATRIOTA)

PHS - Partido Humanista da Solidariedade (incorporado ao PODEMOS)

PRB - Partido Republicano Brasileiro (atual REPUBLICANOS)

Pros - Partido Republicano da Ordem Social

PTB - Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro

PTN - Partido Trabalhista Nacional (atual PODEMOS)

SD – Solidariedade